

## THE TRUTH ABOUT FICTION

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

We recall that according to Ingarden each literary work of art manifests four strata: the stratum of word sounds and sound-complexes; the stratum of meaning-units or of word-meanings and higher-order meaning complexes (the meanings of sentences, etc.); the stratum of represented objectivities (made up of the characters, actions, moods, scenes, etc. which are represented, for example, in a novel); and the stratum of schematized aspects (made up of the sequences of adumbrations in which the represented objectivities are given to the reader).<sup>2</sup>

Our topic here is Ingarden's account of sentence-meanings, and more precisely his theory of quasi-judgments.

If I say: "The sun is shining", then I express meanings (concepts) by means of these words. These meanings are united together into a meaning of a higher order, the meaning of the whole sentence, and in and through this complex meaning-unit a certain objectivity (a state of affairs) is meant or intended. The object of a sentence-meaning is, according to Ingarden, a "purely intentional object", a correlate of the sentence-meaning which depends for its existence on the existence and on the content of certain conscious acts, acts of judgment and constituent acts of meaning. Ingarden draws a very sharp contrast — and this is the core of the general ontology which stands behind his investigation of the literary work of art — between the heteronomous, mind-dependent

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<sup>1</sup> The present essay goes back to a lecture of J. Seifert on Ingarden's theory of quasi-judgments which was delivered at an International Conference on Ingarden held in Liechtenstein in 1989.

<sup>2</sup> See Roman Ingarden. *The Literary Work of Art*, transl. and introd. by George G. Grabowicz (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973).

purely intentional correlates of word- and sentence-meanings, and the really existing objects and states of affairs in the world.

Here lie deep philosophical problems, linked to what we take to be a serious error especially of Husserl after 1905, and also of Nicolai Hartmann, both of whom held that the only entities which can serve as the objects of conscious acts are "purely intentional objects"; all other objects would either have to be denied as absurd "things in themselves", as the later Husserl proceeds to do, or they would have to be assumed as mere posits. According to Nicolai Hartmann, real properties of things are to be retained, but only as "never given transcendent objects and real categories" which can at best be assumed to coincide in part with the purely intentional objects and categories given in our acts.<sup>3</sup> It is in the acceptance or rejection of the possibility of reaching through to real objects in our conscious acts that there lies the fundamental division between the realist phenomenology of the original phenomenologists of the Munich school,<sup>4</sup> and the new-fangled transcendental, idealist, Neo-Kantian, or existential phenomenologies of their successors.

3 See Nicolai Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik des Erkennens*, 4th ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1949), pp. 47, 61 f., 81 ff., 106 ff. The case of deceptions proves, according to Hartmann, that although the intentional objects of cognition are not immanent contents of consciousness, they are nevertheless distinct from the real objects which as such can never become objects of consciousness. Consequently, he charges Husserl with having presented — in the *Logical Investigations* — an oversimplified critique of the image-theory of knowledge and of having overlooked the radical immanence of consciousness which he expresses in the following way: "It belongs to the essence of consciousness that it can never grasp anything besides its own contents, that it can never reach outside its own sphere." *Op. cit.*, p. 62. In denying what Husserl calls 'the transcendent transcendence' of knowledge and defending instead its 'purely immanent transcendence', Husserl adopted later the same view as Hartmann. For a critique of this epistemological immanentism and subjectivism see Josef Seifert, *Erkenntnis objektiver Wahrheit. Die Transzendenz des Menschen in der Erkenntnis* (Salzburg: A. Pustet, 2nd ed., 1976), pp. 69 ff., 233 ff., and *Back to Things in Themselves. A Phenomenological Foundation for Classical Realism* (London: Routledge, 1987), ch. ii ff.

4 See Adolf Reinach, 'Concerning Phenomenology,' transl. by Dallas Willard, *The Personalist* 50 (Spring 1969), pp. 194-221. Reprinted in *Perspectives in Philosophy*, ed. Robert N. Beck (New York: Holt, Reinhart & Winston, 1961 and 1969); also translated as 'What is Phenomenology?', by David Kelly, *Philosophical Forum*, 1, pp. 231-256; see also the new edition of: Dietrich von Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy?*, with an Introductory Essay by Josef Seifert (London: Routledge, 1991), ch. iv.

The view of the realist phenomenologists is that in the act of authentic cognition the object of which we are conscious is identical with the real thing itself: the thing itself, and not just a "purely intentional object", becomes present to our mind. Real beings or facts or states of affairs that exist or obtain independently of our intentional acts can at the same time serve as intentional objects of cognition and of judgments. Ingarden himself adopts a modified realist position of this sort. A simple positive perceptual judgment to the effect that, for example, "This rose is red" has, it is true, two objects, on Ingarden's view: a purely intentional object and an autonomous object, the latter being a real, mind-independent thing or state of affairs. We are, he holds, directed to the latter only *via* the former. Moreover, Ingarden insists that not all judgments, and not even all true judgments, are directed towards autonomous states of affairs in this sense; thus for example he holds that true negative judgments ("This rose is not yellow") relate to objectual complexes which have no existence in the things themselves.<sup>5</sup> Now certainly it is true that nothing can be known except through conscious acts; yet from this it by no means follows that real states of affairs as such can never themselves become also intentional objects. Moreover, only if the human mind can have real states of affairs as intentional objects of cognition, is knowledge possible and doubt able to be overcome.

That it can be the real object itself which I attain to in at least some of my acts of judgment is seen, for example, by the case in which I judge that I exist. Here I do not have merely "a purely intentional object" which would be the only object of my consciousness and through which I could merely "intend" my real existence. Rather, my real existence itself is given to my consciousness.

In his account of the purely intentional correlates of sentences, Ingarden distinguishes between what he calls the 'original' and the 'derived' purely intentional object. The former is the direct object of an individual conscious act of for example imagination. It is such as to draw its entire essence and existence from the acts in which it is imagined. Derived purely intentional objects, in contrast, are as it were abstractions from their original, subjective counterparts, and draw their existence and essence rather from corresponding meaning-units and from the common understanding of a community of readers.

The original purely intentional objects, as Ingarden conceives them, are not immanent parts of the corresponding acts. As Husserl had

5 See *Der Streit um die Existenz der Welt*, vol. II/1, ch. XI.

shown very clearly in his *Logical Investigations*, regardless of whether Jupiter or the house of which I dream is real, it is certainly not a part of my conscious experience. If I search into my conscious acts, I will not find any Jupiter there or any house with windows and doors.<sup>6</sup> The original purely intentional object thus possesses a certain distinctness from the act itself. Yet it is still wholly dependent on my act. It exists only if I think it or imagine it and only according to how I imagine it. It possesses, in Ingarden's terms, a merely heteronomous mode of existence. Thus it is not completely nothing; but its being is dependent entirely on my conscious acts.

The derived purely intentional correlates of meaning-units, in contrast, have with respect to our conscious acts a merely relative dependence — and thus also a relative independence. In this they are similar to the meaning-units of sentences themselves; these too have a relative independence in relation to the intentional acts in which they originated. Thus, for example, if someone writes a book or poem, the meaning-units of his words remain; they are there to be re-activated, even after his original creative acts have passed away.

Both the meanings of the sentences that occur in a literary work of art and the derived purely intentional objects which correspond to them possess a certain intersubjective character, as contrasted with the purely subjective character of the original purely intentional objects. The purely intentional objects of my acts of imagination are not accessible to you. However, as soon as I express in language the content of what I have imagined, then meanings and the associated derived purely intentional objects become intersubjectively accessible.

The derived purely intentional correlates of the sentences and other higher-order meaning units to be found in works of literature thus constitute a certain objective sphere which is absolved of the pure subjectivity by which original intentional objects are characterized.<sup>7</sup> A price has to be paid for this independence, however, in the form of a

<sup>6</sup> The same thesis was reiterated by Adolf Reinach. See his "Concerning Phenomenology", *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> One is reminded here of K. Popper's theory of the three worlds. The objects of Popper's World 3 appear to have just the kind of weak independence which Ingarden grants to the "derived purely intentional objects", though it must be said that Popper's account of this interdependence is less subtle than is that of Ingarden. A decisive difference between Popper and Ingarden consists in this: Ingarden identifies the world of fiction as mind-dependent, while he recognizes many other ideal inhabitants of world 3 which are autonomous in their being, such as ideal objects and essentially necessary states of affairs. All of these are quite generally regarded by Popper as creations of world 2 (the world of the mental).

certain schematization which afflicts the derived correlates as compared to their original counterparts. If, for example, somebody tells me: "I am dreaming of Monterrey; I see myself there now and see before me the mountains around the city," then this original experience is much too rich in content to be conveyed through linguistic meanings alone. The purely intentional objects to which I have access by understanding the meanings of his words are less concrete, less vivid and less richly filled, than are the original purely intentional objects from which they are derived. We can convey by means of language only the general outlines of our experiences, from which the sensory richness and other qualifications have been filtered away.

There are, accordingly, "places of indeterminacy" in all represented objectivities that are made accessible through works of literature. These in turn explain the need for acts of concretizing on the part of the readers of such works.

## 2. THE QUASI-JUDGMENT AND THE APPARENT JUDGMENT

So much by way of introduction. We wish to concentrate in what follows on the central thesis of Ingarden's analysis of the stratum of meaning units, a thesis which is put forward in § 25 of *The Literary Work of Art*. Here Ingarden argues in favour of what he refers to as the quasi-judgmental character of all declarative sentences appearing in the literary work.<sup>8</sup> Earlier Ingarden had delineated literary works in such a way as to include under this heading not only literary works of art but also newspaper articles, scientific works, works of belles-lettres, and so on.<sup>9</sup> All such works are indeed like literary works of art in being characterized by the four-fold stratified structure referred to above. In § 25, however, Ingarden understands "literary work" in a more exclusive manner as a work of *fiction* in a quite specific sense.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 160 ff. See likewise Roman Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, trans. by R.A. Crowley and K.R. Olson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), especially pp. xxiii, xxvi, 12-13, 63-64, 68-69, 71n, 147, 215n, 224.

<sup>9</sup> This is problematic, too, because Ingarden calls his book not *The Literary Work* but *The Literary Work of Art*. See R. Odebrecht's remarks and Ingarden's insufficient replies in *The Literary Work of Art*, p. 8, note 1. The problems linked with this value-freedom and restriction appear especially in the context of such value-laden terms as "the polyphonic unity of the literary work of art" which plays a significant role later in Ingarden's work.

As Ingarden points out, the declarative sentences in scientific works do express judgments in the strict and proper sense, judgments that can be either true or false, and all such judgments make a claim to truth. In fact, a judgment can be false only because it makes a claim to truth which is then contradicted by the relevant actual state of affairs in reality. In literary works of art, in contrast, we find many declarative sentences which do not express judgments and which do not make a claim to truth. It is our aim in what follows to identify the peculiar meaning and character of such declarative sentences, which Ingarden distinguishes rightly from the genuine judgments of science.

If we take a sentence like "My fountain pen is lying on the desk", then there are at least three different ways in which we may understand it:

1) as a mere "declarative proposition", the meaning of a declarative sentence. For example I say in the context of a grammatical discussion: "Let us consider the sentence 'My fountain pen is lying on the desk'." The sentence is here merely considered abstractly; I do not express a judgment by means of it.

2) But if I say: "My fountain pen is lying on the desk" and do really mean that my fountain pen lies on the desk, then of course I do express a judgment by means of the given sentence. There is, in the judgment, an intentional directional factor (here corresponding to the subject-expression "my fountain pen") which relates to an object that is intended as existing; in addition there is in the relation established between subject- and predicate-concept a function of assertion. The state of affairs which is determined by the sentence is posited as truly existing. It is in this that there resides the claim to truth involved in every judgment, a claim to be adequate to the actual state of affairs itself.

3) As it were between these two possibilities lies what Ingarden calls the "quasi-judgment". Such quasi-judgments are not judgments and thus to call them true or false would be to misunderstand their meaning. They share only, as Ingarden puts it, the external habitus of judgments; it is merely as if they were judgments. They serve to constitute a world rather than pass judgments about it; and they serve this purpose by evoking the impression of asserting something about real events and real

characters. The quasi-reality which the artist constitutes thereby has the character of being simulatedly real.<sup>10</sup>

Thus at the beginning of Manzoni's novel *I Promessi Sposi* there is described the cowardly Don Abbondio, pastor of the village, who is supposed to preside over the wedding of Lucia and Renzo. A powerful man who wants to marry or seduce Lucia sends two of his *bravos* — criminal servants of the sort frequently found in the Italy of the 16th and 17th centuries — to threaten Don Abbondio with death should he preside over the wedding. All the mentioned events are described by Manzoni in sentential forms, but these are sentential forms which merely resemble those of bona fide judgments. We may express the nature of the meaning of the declarative sentences in a novel by saying that through them something is asserted but yet not seriously asserted. We deal, in the quasi-judgment, with a fundamental modification of that function of asserting which is proper to the judgment as such. In both cases there is a certain transposition of the pure meaning of the declarative sentence into the real world. Yet the quasi-judgment does not present what Ingarden calls a "real positing matching intention", i.e., it does not assert anything about the real world. Rather, it serves to build up a world which is merely to be considered as real for the purposes of the given novel. In the literary work of art, then, the states of affairs are not seriously posited; there is no setting of these states of affairs or objects into the real world. This is true both on the level of derived intentional correlates as also, in a proper and faithful reading, of our original intentional acts themselves.

### 3. CRITIQUE OF INGARDEN'S TAXONOMY

It is very questionable, however, whether all declarative sentences occurring in works of literary art are quasi-judgments as Ingarden maintains.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> One could refer here to the philosophy of "as if" of Vaihinger. See Hans von Vaihinger, *Die Philosophie des Als Ob* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1911), Eng. trans. by C. G. Odgen, *The Philosophy of "As if"* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1924). While Vaihinger's name does not appear in the indexes of *The Literary Work of Art* or *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, Ingarden himself refers to him explicitly in his *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, p. 214, note 39.

<sup>11</sup> For the absolutistic claims of Ingarden on this point see, for example, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, pp. xxvi; 215, note. See also Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. 180, where Ingarden regards it as unquestionable that poetry "in no case ... is composed of judgments". See Käte Hamburger, *Die Logik*

Ingarden does, certainly, admit that there are historical novels in which a certain matching is effected between the fictional and the real world, where the author intends to match the general types or even strictly individual facts that occur in novels with actual historical events, and personalities. Clearly, however, in the historical novel it is not really claimed that all of the events related took place exactly as described, as if the literary work of art were a historical work and would make judgments for example about what historic personages actually said. The matching relationships involved as between the meanings of declarative sentences in historical novels and real persons and events are, as Ingarden correctly points out, different from those involved in works of history proper.<sup>12</sup> We shall return to this point later.

Ingarden also draws attention to another literary phenomenon to be distinguished from that of the quasi-judgment, namely the apparent judgment. This, too, is a thought-formation of a type that is expressed in a declarative sentence, and apparent judgments can be imputed either to the author or narrator of a novel or to the represented characters.<sup>13</sup> We can in fact speak of three sorts of apparent judgment in the literary work, though these are not explicitly distinguished by Ingarden:

i. "Real judgments" made by the fictional characters represented in a work. These possess all the characteristics of judgments, including the truth-claim, except that they possess these marks in the mode of the constituted, fictional world only. They are authentic judgments, but merely represented ones. They are apparent and not real judgments because the fictional characters who make them are not real. They partake in the irreality of the represented character whose judgments they are.

ii. Poetic judgments of the narrator or author which judge about the constituted world as if it were real. These differ from apparent judgments in the first sense in that it is not the irreality of their subject which makes them apparent, but much rather the irreality of their object. Apparent judgments in the first sense can never be passed by real persons or by the real author when he speaks as such. Their essence lies in the fictional nature of their author. Apparent judgments

*der Dichtung* (Stuttgart, 1957). Her criticism — which must not be entirely dismissed although it shows a number of weaknesses — was examined by Ingarden himself. See his *Literary Work of Art*, § 25a, pp. 173 ff.

<sup>12</sup> See his *Literary Work of Art*, p. 171.

<sup>13</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 172.

in the second sense can be made by real authors when they speak as such, or by parents when they talk with their children about a fairy tale and say: "yes, then the bad wolf came". Apparent judgments in the second sense can be attributed to real persons but they can never be *about* real states of affairs and objects, while apparent judgments in the first sense can deal with any real object; consider e.g. Ivan Karamazov's statements about the suffering of innocent children and the scandal that lies therein.

Apparent judgments in the second sense are apparent only as long as both their *object* is purely fictional and they judge simultaneously about this object *as if* it were real. Thus they are distinguished from genuine judgments about the fictional world (for example on the part of the literary critic or of the author himself), which do not reflect the 'as if real' character of the represented objectivities. Apparent judgments in this second sense are thus opposed to real judgments not primarily because they have the fictional world as object but because they judge about it *as if it were real*. They are distinguished from quasi-judgments in that the latter have the task of building up the world of the novel, where the former judge about this world as it were from without, as something already constituted.

Apparent judgments in the first sense can of course *also* be apparent judgments in the second sense and frequently the two coincide; but this is by no means necessary.

iii. Apparent judgments in a third sense can appear in real life as well as in literature. Take, for example, ironic judgments which appear to judge one thing — and do in a certain way judge it — but in reality they contain their own opposite. Similar cases arise also e.g. in jokes, in witty remarks, etc. In comedies, such apparent judgments in the third sense possess an important function. Think, for example, of Nestroy's *Truth-Couplet* from *Die Anverwandten*, where the refrain 'Ah, d'Wahrheit is in gute Händ' (Yes, truth is in good hands) conveys precisely the opposite of that which is intended.

*Ad i.* Apparent judgments in the first sense are not real because their authors, e.g. Zosima, are not real persons. Consider an example. Suppose that we read in a novel a sentence such as: 'Zosima said, "Every man must die."' Here Zosima's judgment is an apparent judgment in the first of our three senses here distinguished. It makes a claim to truth, is true, sincerely intended, etc. — but its author is not a real human subject but a fictional character. Therefore it cannot be regarded as a real judgment of the author or of any other real person. Therefore

any immediate conclusion from such apparent judgments to real judgments of the author is illegitimate. For example, we cannot infer that Giuseppe Verdi judged that 'after death there is nothing and heaven is a big lie' from the fact that Iago judges this way in Verdi's opera *Othello*. Such apparent judgments belong, Ingarden holds, to the represented world and thus they cannot be viewed as the expression of the opinions of the author or as real judgments. Their merely apparent and unreal character remains the same whether or not their object (the state of affairs which they assert) obtains or does not obtain.

*Ad ii.* Concerning the second meaning of 'apparent judgments' we have to recognize, with Ingarden, the profound modification which judgments undergo when they do not refer to the real world but to a fictional world and when they treat this world *as if it were real*. Ingarden is doubtless correct when he underlines this point and when he sees that the quasi-judgment and the apparent judgment in this second sense differ as much from each other as from real judgments.

On the other hand, however, Ingarden affirms, rigorously, that apparent judgments in our first sense, i.e. the represented judgments of represented characters, can refer *only* to the fictional world. He thereby collapses our distinction between apparent judgments in the first and second sense.<sup>14</sup> We shall consider later the question whether he is correct in this. Certainly it seems that the apparent judgments attributed to literary characters do on occasion speak of the world as such, and not merely of the world represented in a work. One can likewise find cases of apparent judgments which refer to the world of another, distinct literary work or to this other work itself. Think of the pastor's verdict on books treating chivalry and errant knights in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. Or one can imagine apparent judgments (in our first sense) which pertain to general concepts or qualities or other worldly phenomena and therefore are not apparent judgments in the second sense. Consider Portia's remarks on mercy and justice in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*.

*Ad iii.* Apparent judgments of the third kind play a particular role in the dialectics of wit and comedy, where the overt assertion of one state of affairs is in fact the assertion of another, quite different one, in a way which gives rise to countless different combinations. The narrator in a novel very often uses apparent judgments in this third sense.

<sup>14</sup> See Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, pp. 172 ff., 182-185.

In such cases the sentences attributed to the narrator may fail to express judgments merely for reasons similar to those which prevent e.g. an ironic judgment from being a judgment in the strict and proper sense. The lack of seriousness and reality of the judgment is here not grounded in the irreality of the person who thinks or utters it nor in the irreality of the represented world but in an inner modification of the assertive function and of the meaning of the judgment itself. Its truth-claim is modified; it is, as it were, taken back. Similarly, the modification of the assertive function of apparent judgments of the narrator can for purely literary reasons be such as to give to his assertions a pathetic, dogmatic, or skeptical character. All of these forms are, however, encountered also outside the context of the literary work. Their existence in the literary work thus lends no credence to Ingarden's claims as to the quasi-judgmental character of *all* straightforwardly declarative sentences of the literary work.

*Real or genuine judgments of the transcendent narrator*<sup>15</sup>: The cases which seem to speak most strongly against Ingarden's claims in this respect are not apparent judgments at all, however. Rather they are declarative sentences of the narrator or author which express judgments in the strict and proper sense. These are meaning-units which do not serve to constitute the fictional world but rather judge about this world in one of several different ways. Here we are concerned not with declarative sentences that are put into the mouth of the narrator as persona as part of the fictional world. Rather we are concerned with those cases where the narrator or author makes assertions which are as it were transcendent to the action of the novel, for example assertions of the form: "The events described in these pages never happened" or assertions relating, again, to general concepts or qualities having in themselves nothing to do with the action of the novel. In some such

<sup>15</sup> The term 'transcendent narrator' should not be taken as suggesting the separation of a primary narrator/author and some second narrator/persona (who is simultaneously a persona in the literary work). It refers simply to the fact that the narrator — whether real or fictional — takes a stand which is transcendent to the novel, for example when he expresses real judgments which are not simply part of the constituted represented world and which speak about the real world, or when he makes judgments have the character of meta-statements about the work itself and about the values of the characters represented therein. Clearly it will not in every case be clear whether we are dealing with a transcendent narrator in this sense or with a mere persona. There are nonetheless clear cases of each, and it goes without saying that even one clear case of the former is enough to cast serious doubt on Ingarden's claims.

cases, certainly, it seems that we have to do with judgments that are as real and authentic as any that might be found for example in a scientific work. They are real i. because they are real judgments of a real author; ii. because they are judgments about the real objective world (or sometimes about that part of it which is a world of fiction, but which is then explicitly recognized as such); and iii. because they are intended in exactly the sense expressed overtly in the corresponding meaning-units and not in any other sense.

In order better to understand the distinction between quasi-judgments, apparent judgments in our three distinguished senses, and real judgments, it will be useful to introduce some further examples of each.

Some thoughts expressed in literature are certainly quasi-judgments in Ingarden's sense. Thus, when Dostoevski in *The Idiot* describes a train and two men riding on it, then this description consists of quasi-judgments. When, however, Dostoevski gives us the judgments which Zosima makes when he meets three women who ask him for counsel, these judgments are not quasi-judgments but apparent judgments in the first of our three senses above. They most definitely make a claim to truth and resemble in every way the judgments we make in real life — except that they belong to the world of fiction and are uttered by persons who do not really exist. Think of the scene in *The Brothers Karamazov* where a young mother has lost her three-year old boy and is inconsolable. Zosima now says to her something like this: "You should weep and you should not stop weeping, as Rachel wept for her children; but when you weep, you should always think that your son is with the angels of God; when you keep believing this and contemplate it, your pain and suffering will, after a while, be transformed into the joy that you will feel when partaking in the bliss of your son." These statements are certainly not quasi-judgments without any claim to truth; they are apparent judgments which resemble exactly the corresponding real judgments, except that they are situated in the simulated world of fiction and somehow partake in the fictional nature of the latter because their author is not real. As we have seen, Ingarden insists that such apparent judgments can refer only to the represented world and can neither refer to, nor be true about, the real world.

As examples of real judgments of the transcendent narrator, consider Manzoni's reflections in *I Promessi Sposi*, on absolute secrets among close friends which, via other close friends, travel fast and reach on the evening of the same day the person from whom they should have been kept secret. These reflections are certainly true of the real world. Moreover they are meant to be so, or at least: nothing prevents us from assuming that the poet meant them to be real judgments which he

himself held true. Here, too, however, Ingarden holds rigorously to his general thesis to the effect that all declarative sentences to be found within the compass of the work of literary art fall short of the status of judgments in the strict and proper sense. Examples of judgments inserted into the text of the novel which are about this novel as such can be found in very many works of contemporary literature. Judgments of this sort, and the various tricks which can be played therewith, can be said, indeed, to be characteristic of much contemporary fiction (see e.g. the works of Calvino or Borges).

#### 4. OBJECTIONS TO INGARDEN'S ABSOLUTIZATION OF THE QUASI-JUDGEMENT

##### *The problem of dramatic works*

As already mentioned, Ingarden seems not to have sufficiently investigated the different types of modification which a judgment undergoes when it is a quasi-judgment and when it is an apparent judgment in one of the three senses distinguished above.

In some works of literature, namely in dramatic works, there are practically no quasi-judgments in Ingarden's sense at all, but rather only apparent judgments in the first of our three senses. Indeed, Ingarden seems to have had in mind in working out his analyses of literature an overly restricted diet of examples derived especially from the realms of the novel and short story and also from certain related kinds of poetry, such as ballads. His attempts to extend his theory to the drama yield one of the most artificial theses in the book. For Ingarden is led to affirm first of all that there are in fact two texts in each drama: the main text and the side text; and secondly that what is actually the side text, namely the explanations of the author as to the course of the drama (stage directions such as: "Enter Hamlet stage left", etc.), constitute what is really the main text, corresponding in the novel to the story that is told by the narrator.<sup>16</sup> If a drama is lacking in stage directions, then we must imagine quotation marks at the beginning and end of the play, and imagine them prefixed by the expression of a quasi-judgment to the effect that: "The characters say: ..." The declarative sentences in the drama itself would then express apparent judgments in the first of our three senses. The makeshift character of this theory should at least cast suspicion on Ingarden's thesis to the effect that it is the quasi-judgment

<sup>16</sup> See *The Literary Work of Art*, §§ 30 and 57.

which is the only or the principal type of judgment that is to be found in the literary work of art, quite apart from the fact that stage-directions are neither quasi-judgments nor apparent judgments in any of the three senses, but something completely different, namely, instructions meant to be carried out in reality.

The case of the drama without stage-directions is the clearest of those cases where the apparent judgments which are put into the mouths of characters are all we have in the way of text. In ancient Greek tragedy and in some later dramas stage directions are not to be found. Thus the stratum of meaning units and the represented world here partly coincide — or better, the stratum of meaning-units is here completely absorbed by the stratum of represented objects. Something like this may be found also in works of other kinds, for example in Dostoevski's *The Delicate Woman* or in Nikolai Gogol's *Diary of a Madman*, in which almost all the represented world is constituted by the apparent thoughts ascribed to some represented character. Hence one cannot always draw such a sharp distinction as Ingarden seems to indicate between the stratum of represented objectivities and the stratum of meaning-units — the two may largely coincide. This implies a certain crisis for Ingarden's theory of the stratification of the literary work of art; at least his theory must be developed more carefully, by way of a treatment of all major species of literary works of a sort that would overcome the one-sided perspective that is introduced when one concentrates too centrally on the case of the standard, classical novel.

Certainly we do not dispute the important role of quasi-judgments in many works of literature. Our claim is merely that Ingarden overestimated this role. The job of quasi-judgments, we will remember, is to determine or build up in cumulation the fictional reality that is represented in the work. But surely it is a trivial fact that all sentences in the novel do in fact contribute to building up the world of the novel in this way, so surely Ingarden is right after all.

To see the flaw in this argument let us recall the nature of quasi-judgments. As a result of their structure, quasi-judgments are neither true or false nor do they make a claim to truth. Quasi-judgments can be no more true or false than questions can, since neither is in the business of making assertions. At best we might say that quasi-judgments can be quasi-false or quasi-true, inasmuch as they are *adequate* to the world which has been constituted by preceding quasi-judgments. Quasi-judgments can be marked at best by a certain sort of immanent adequacy to the world in process of constitution, in a way which allows a great amount of freedom on the part of the author. In relation to the judgments of what we called transcendent narrators, however, it seems clear

that these may be marked by just the same transcendent adequacy as that with which we are familiar in our normal dealings with the world. Let us take again the example of Manzoni's novel. In it there appear two main narrators: the narrator who represents Manzoni himself, and the narrator of an ancient chronical which is quoted several times through the course of the work. Now Manzoni, or the principal narrator, often says that he finds false what the older narrator has written. He says this not only with respect to the strictly historical statements of the latter, which Manzoni considers in the manner of a real historian, but also with respect to his opinions about the fictional world of the novel. This shows that the fictional world has a certain kind of independence; having been constituted (in whole or in part) by quasi-judgments in a certain determinate way, one can be in error about it. Some, at least, of the judgments of a transcendent narrator in the novel can thus be treated in exactly the way we treat actual truths and falsehoods. Thus they are not *apparent* judgments at all — they are real judgments and they are analogous in this respect to judgments about the relevant fictional world which are made, for example, by the literary critic.

Ingarden, however, appears to hold that the author of a literary work, if he appears explicitly therein, appears always only as belonging to the represented world of the novel.<sup>17</sup> He is himself a character and his judgments cannot therefor have the status of genuine judgments which would be true or false in the strict and proper sense but can be only apparent judgments in our first sense because their author is unreal.

This view is questionable for two reasons. In the first place, as already indicated, we do not see why certain thoughts expressed by the author in the context of the work cannot be his own thoughts just as much as could the thoughts expressed by any other subject. Secondly, it is of course possible that the persona differs from the author. The latter might for example deliberately choose to let a criminal character tell his own story, so that this character is at the same time the voice of the represented author who builds up the whole fictional world of the story. This double role of the persona as represented character and as narrator seems, however, to be a special contrivance, and certainly does not seem to be necessary for fiction and poetry.

<sup>17</sup> This represented world contains, under this assumption, both the author who narrates the story and the story he narrates, and thereby enjoys a peculiar double structure of purely intentional states of affairs — the one layer of events unfolding in the novel proper being embedded within the layer of those states of affairs involving the narrator. See *The Literary Work of Art*, p. 207.



*Authentic judgments and value-judgments about the constituted world and about the work itself*

An author *qua* transcendent narrator might, for example, say that in such and such a chapter such and such an event was described, and then he says something true. Similarly he may analyze truly or falsely the characters of persons he has earlier introduced. In *The Betrothed*, for example, we find many fine and true analyses of the characters of Renzo, Lucia, Don Abbondino, etc. These are certainly not the same as judgments about really existing persons or objects. Yet this need not take away their character of truth or their authentic character as judgments.

A further group of authentic judgments in the literary work of art are value judgments about constituted characters, about their moral or intellectual worth, and so on. These, too, we claim, can be no less true or false than the corresponding judgments concerning real people. Note, hereby, that the values of his characters are not constituted by the author in the same sense in which his characters are constituted; whether or not the latter have such and such values (or would have them if they existed) is in a sense beyond his control. He cannot describe a man in a certain way and then ascribe to him a moral character other than the one that objectively results from these and those facts. Just as in reality the moral value of persons and of their actions depends upon those persons and their actions themselves, so also the moral values or disvalues which are found in the actions of literary figures are, at least to some degree, independent of the author and not arbitrarily constituted by him. It is then not at all a fiction that such and such characters possess such and such values — though of course always in the fictional world and in the fictional mode, i.e., as quasi-real values.<sup>18</sup>

It is possible that the author has an adequate understanding of these values and that he expresses correct value-judgments in descriptions of them. Analogously, however, it is also possible that an author judges his characters falsely from an axiological point of view and that we are disturbed in our reading by understanding that he does so. Thus in Robert Musil's work, and in some of the stories of Josef Roth, one finds a conspicuous lack of proper value knowledge. While both authors are greatly to be admired from a literary point of view, in Musil's *Man without Qualities* a certain moral cynicism underlies the neutral, amora-

<sup>18</sup> See on this the dissertation of John Barger, *Quasi-Real Values in the Literary Work of Art* (University of Dallas, 1976).

listic descriptions in the work in a way which can be seen, from certain perspectives, as a flaw of the work.

Value judgments in a novel may be more or less explicit or implicit. In Manzoni, for example, they are very explicit. Manzoni was not only a great novelist but also a philosopher and saintly man.<sup>19</sup> The many value judgments which are interspersed throughout his book add to the value of the work, which Goethe described as the greatest novel ever written. In Dostoevski, to take another example, value judgments are much less directly and explicitly expressed, yet still they are present throughout his work, for example in the descriptions of Zosima or of Alyosha Karamazov. These value judgments have a certain claim to truth about an already constituted world. If they are false, then the novel may suffer as a work of art.

*Truths about individual facts in fiction*

Certain quasi-judgments and apparent judgments in literary works seem to be related to the real world in a way which Ingarden rules out. For Ingarden has a strong conviction, for which he never argues, to the effect that it is impossible for any character who appears in a novel or in a drama to speak of any world other than that which is constituted by the fiction.

Yet there are several different classes of judgmental thought-formations which seem to speak precisely of the real world and which nonetheless appear in literary works of art. Indeed it can be argued that by failing to recognize such formations and their special character one cuts oneself off from an adequate understanding of literature. We shall try to show in what follows that both in apparent and in quasi-judgments, as well as in the real judgments of e.g. the transcendent narrator, literature can refer much more directly to the world beyond the fictional than Ingarden appears to believe.

Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* describes in painstaking detail the legal situation of Italy at the time when the story is set. It belongs to the tone of the historical parts of the novel that we are presented here with an accurate description of historical facts and not at all with a merely incidental similarity to real-world counterparts, as Ingarden himself would have it.<sup>20</sup> Or take again Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*. This is a work of literature, but at the same time it is directly stated in the preface to the work that nothing which follows is going to be anything

<sup>19</sup> It was for him that Verdi composed his *Requiem*.

<sup>20</sup> See *The Literary Work of Art*, pp. 170 f.

but a true account of events which he, the author, has recorded. It seems that nothing prevents one from finding genuine and true judgments in such a work and that nothing in principle prevents such a work from being a literary masterpiece. The same is true of such autobiographical works as for example Goethe's *Aus meinem Leben*. In a case such as the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, the fact that the story is true does not detract from the beauty of the work, and the latter would not be more beautiful if we knew that the whole text of the author contained only quasi-judgments which amounted to a merely fictional biography of its author. In fact, such untruth is disturbing in a biography — even from a literary point of view. It detracts from the beauty of Anna Magdalena Bach's portrait of the life and character of Johann Sebastian Bach when we learn that her *Notenbüchlein* is spurious and that the biography of Bach contained in it is merely fictional.

#### *General Truths in Fiction*

Fully genuine judgments do certainly occur in literary works of certain kinds, above all in those literary works which are at the same time philosophical, biographical or religious works, such as the mystical poems of St. Theresa of Avila or of St. John of the Cross, or many poetic parts of the Scriptures. Similarly, there are many poems which speak about love or suffering and which convey true judgments about these matters in a way which does not at all detract from their status as works of literary art but rather adds to it.

The most important kinds of judgments to be found in literature, however, relate not to individual historical facts or events but rather to general states of affairs about human nature or about other features of the world. Take for example Manzoni's above-mentioned description of the general fate of secrets. What Manzoni here describes is a fact well known to all of us and his remarks are certainly not at all meant as mere quasi-judgments relating to a constituted world. There are many such reflections; lyrical poetry abounds in them, but they are to be found in fact in every kind of poetic work. Take, for example, Gogol's *The Dead Souls*, which contains a long reflection on how many people would have been quite different persons if in their youth they had encountered some spark of encouragement and were not growing up in such a world of darkness. Similar reflections are found in Dickens. Or take the famous words of Solzhenitsyn in the *Gulag Archipelago* on how the line between good and evil goes right through the heart of every man.

We would add that all of these kinds of judgments can occur also in the forms of apparent judgments, that is to say, they can be put into the mouth of the narrator or of the represented characters, but even this may occur in such a way that it is not at all justified to interpret them as mere reflections on a constituted world. To maintain such a view is, we hold, a certain *lapsus mentis* of Ingarden which can hardly be understood in the work of a man of such philosophical rigour and reflection. Think of the philosophical reflections on mercy and justice in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (Portia) or in *Measure for Measure* (Isabel), of the reflections on the meaning of the human body in *Titus Andronicus* or on the theme of suicide in *Hamlet*. Or think of Nestroy's *Gegen Torheit gibt's kein Mittel*, in which there appear an intelligent poet and two brothers, one of whom is very intelligent, the other very stupid. The wiser brother comes to the poet and tells him: "Well, it is not a big problem. My brother is very stupid, but I can support his weakness with my mental strength." And then the poet makes a reflection on the real essence of stupidity. He says: "You would be right if stupidity were a weakness of mind. But unfortunately it is a most terrible strength. It stands unmoved like a rock, even when a whole ocean of reason dashes its waves against it. A flippant character disposed to evil was often cured by the soft breath of love, more often by the rough storm of experience; and even vices have often fled from the light of better convictions; only stupidity has fenced itself off behind a firm bulwark of stubbornness; when attacked it sticks out the pointed knives of maliciousness and thus stands invincible. Sad but true is the Proverb: 'Against stupidity even gods would fight without success' — and you, miserable mortal, want to take upon yourself this gigantic battle?" And in another play of Nestroy, *Der Unbedeutende*, we find: "The essential difference between a mathematical and a social circle is that in the mathematical circle you find just one centre which is exactly in the middle. In the social circle, however, you find in the middle only the apparent centre, namely the tea-table; the real centre, around which the conversation turns, lies almost always outside of the circle, for it is normally the case that it is usually only the ones who are absent who are being maligned."

Many of the apparent judgments which are contained in a literary work of art deal, then, with general states of affairs that pertain to life or to reality, to virtue or vice, to death and life, and they do not at all deal with any constituted world.

We would add that in relation to many of these judgments one can with justice affirm that the author identifies himself with them, that the judgments are made much as if they were real judgments of a philoso-

pher. In fact, many poets must to this extent be regarded also as philosophers who make in poetic form judgments about the general nature of things. Thus in one of Gabriel Marcel's plays there occur the words "Aimer un autre c'est lui dire 'tu ne mourras pas'." (To love somebody means to tell him "Thou shalt not die".) This is one of Marcel's key philosophical statements, and yet it is inserted into the context of a drama. One who reads the drama will understand, further, that it is not just an apparent judgment made by some hero. The intelligence of the literary critic consists partly in his ability to distinguish correctly these two cases. Through protagonists or through other characters the poet frequently expresses reflections which are evidently meant not only as characterizations of a quasi-existing character but also as statements that reveal the nature of reality itself.

Of course, a poem can be beautiful even though it literally says some untruth, as when Keats tells us that "truth is beauty, beauty truth, that is all you know or need to know on earth". This is a false statement, but it is nonetheless beautiful. Thus the beauty of literature is clearly not strictly or solely grounded in its truth and we do not wish to over-moralize or over-philosophize in our treatment of the literary work. We do, however, insist that the truth of literary statements may be crucial to the beauty of the works in which they appear.

Such statements may be decisive for the literary work also for the reason that one may discover in them some of the *reasons* for the formulation of the quasi-judgments or for the appearance of the other forms in and through which the world of fiction is constituted. For the intention to create a world may flow in part from the fact that one wants to convey through this constituted world some understanding of the general nature of things. To the extent that this is true, that it captures the motivation of at least many poets, it follows that the purpose of literary quasi-judgments is to give rise to *bona fide* judgments, to knowledge in the strictest sense. Even if these judgments need not always be expressed, the reader can gain the corresponding knowledge even without its being proclaimed as such.

##### 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Ingarden's discovery that there are quasi-judgments, quasi-questions, quasi-wishes, etc., is a very important one for the understanding of literature, and his reflections on apparent judgments, too, represent a philosophical discovery of note. But his views on these matters can nonetheless be criticized, and part of this criticism touches upon the theory of stratification itself; for it appears that an adequate theory of

the structure of the literary work must be more complex and subtle than the theory which Ingarden defends. Before concluding, however, it will be worth our while to consider how Ingarden might respond to the charges levied against him in the above, for this will reveal that there are in fact two distinct approaches to literature, only one of which has been properly acknowledged by Ingarden himself.

Consider, first of all, the charge that Ingarden ignores or undervalues the role of what we have called the transcendent narrator, and more precisely that he fails to recognize the fact that the author may insert true genuine judgments into the text of his work — judgments for example about the form of the work, about the unfolding of the plot, about the moral value or disvalue of its characters, or indeed about quite incidental issues, which the author holds true and which can be recognized as true by the reader. To this Ingarden might reply, first of all, that the existence of such judgments as true and genuine judgments is of no relevance to the value of the literary work *as a work of art*, and that it is of no relevance either to the properly aesthetic concretization of the work. There are, as already noted, experimental novels which seek to exploit interleavings of more or less incidental commentary on the part of a transcendent narrator for aesthetic purposes. Even in such cases, however, it seems that the question of the status of such commentary as a matter of genuine judgments or as a matter of truths is not relevant to the artistic success of the writings in question.

Moreover, in relation to the putative judgments of a transcendent narrator, the question can legitimately be raised as to how we are to establish that they are sincerely intended by their author as judgments of a *bona fide* sort. Such matters belong, surely, to the author's biography and are not of relevance to the work itself and to any properly aesthetic reading — or where they are of relevance, for example in relation to a work such as Augustine's *Confessions*, then we are dealing, as Ingarden himself recognizes, with a special borderline case of the literary work of art.<sup>21</sup>

In this, as in all things, Ingarden is concerned to maintain clear lines of separation between distinct categories of work of art, where others (including artists themselves — and this with apparently ever-increasing determination) are concerned to break down such lines of separation. Moreover, he is concerned to maintain clear lines between art and other domains (of religion, ethics, science, and so on) even though he is prepared at the same time to acknowledge the existence of border areas

<sup>21</sup> See *The Literary Work of Art*, p. 301.

and sometimes even of borderline cases which span the boundaries of domains which are otherwise separate. Ingarden would surely not wish to deny that one can find genuine and important general truths, for example truths of a moral nature, in many great works of poetry or in many novels and plays. He would not deny, either, that one can use such works, e.g. for edifying purposes, in ways which centrally involve appeals to the truths in question as judgments seriously intended. He would insist, however, that this is to put one sort of thing (a work of art) to a purpose which does not immediately reflect its essence (as one might, for example, use a book as a doorstep).

Is such a defense, however, based on true insights? Does it prove that all literary works contain quasi-judgments or only apparent judgments? Does it eliminate the need for distinguishing quasi-judgments more clearly from apparent judgments and to show that there are in fact three quite different kinds of apparent judgments? Does it prove that apparent judgments can deal only with the constituted world, and does it substantiate Ingarden's claim that there are no real judgments about the real world or about the work itself within the literary work of art? We would suggest that the correct answer to all of these questions is a negative one, so that our criticism of Ingarden's view remains intact. Moreover, if we are right that different varieties of real judgment are contained in literary works of art, then the aesthetic role and value of such judgments can hardly be disputed, and thus our point remains that there are many works of art whose properly aesthetic value is tied inextricably to a dimension of moral or other truths. Ingarden has sought to capture part of what is involved here in his doctrine of metaphysical qualities as well as in his essay on the different senses of truth in the literary work of art. The task remains, however, to understand more deeply how truths of judgmental formations can be involved in the ontological structure of the literary work in a way that can contribute also to its value as artistic and aesthetic object.

## STRATA IN INGARDEN'S ONTOLOGY

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### ABSTRACT

This paper examines the concept of stratum as employed by Ingarden in his ontological investigations of works of art. Attention is focussed on literary works, which are said to have four strata, two belonging to language itself. I find Ingarden's stratified account of language correct in principle but defective in execution. In the ontology of literary works, the stratum of schematized aspects is particularly problematic, and I interpret these as complex meanings, correlated with another element of the work not given sufficient recognition by Ingarden: the Reader. I suggest the terminology of strata for artworks in general is dispensable.

### §1 Introduction

Ingarden is primarily an ontologist, although he is generally best known for his work in the philosophy of art, especially his two books on the literary work of art. Even here, his treatment of artwork is primarily ontological, with epistemological questions as to our access to and mode of cognition of literary works taking second place. A notable feature of Ingarden's ontology of artworks is his emphasis on the concept of strata (*Schichten*). One of the important ways of distinguishing artworks of different kinds, according to Ingarden, lies in the number and kinds of strata possessed by these works. The strata range in number from one to four according to the kind of work in question: one for music; two for painting, sculpture and architecture; four for works of pure literature. Of course the mere number of strata is not the only difference between these different kinds of artwork, but in Ingarden's scheme it is one of the most important differences. The literary work's ontological