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THE INGARDENIAN FRAMEWORK FOR A PHENOMENOLOGY OF SCREENS

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INTRODUCTION

Thoughts are shaped by what we choose to see. In the age of screens, we have unprecedented freedom and creativity in what can be seen on surface, but it is at the expense of being aware of natural surroundings. Several distinct fields emerged explaining the origins of how screen technologies have impacted individuals and societies at large in this way. As treated in clinical and behavioural psychology, film theory, artificial intelligence, neuroscience, computer science, data science, media and communication studies, and theories of experience, mind and perception within philosophy, screens have been widely recognized as a disruptive technology characteristic of our times. Nonetheless, each investigation involving screens as being in one discipline or other limit the terminologies and conceptual tools available to qualify them as *screens*. Thus, for while film theory may tend towards their artistic potential, neuroscience may tend to their stimulation, and data science may tend towards their statistical input, we do not have as of yet a complete way of determining the necessary and sufficient elements of the object of investigation. In addition, challenges to qualifying screens arise from their being both material and formal objects, used in our common language through analogy. To know what is meant by speaking of screens therefore requires a framework wherein we can draw their uniform qualities. My dissertation seeks to address this need by investigating screens as such, in order to answer the question of what are screens in themselves. The dissertation is comprised of intertwined goals: first to explain the problem of screens in review of the state of the art; second to identify solutions to qualifying screens while indicating their merits and shortcomings; and third, on the basis of the Ingardenian conceptual framework, to propose a more comprehensive answer to the main problem of figuring screens as such.

My dissertation is based on a broad literature on theories of screens, ranging from areas including phenomenology, ontology, the philosophy of technology, film theory, and experiments in psychology. The first hypothesis stemming from my research is that the discipline of phenomenology provides the methods necessary to allow for a comprehensive investigation of screens. My second hypothesis is that Roman Ingarden's particular ontological-phenomenology includes concepts applicable to a univocal understanding of what screens are. Reasons suggesting this are first that the tradition of phenomenology is concerned with the essential qualities of objects and experiences such that the activity of viewing screens can be thoroughly investigated. Second, it is that the mediatory feature of screens is pertinent with theories of intentionality discovered by philosophers of the phenomenological tradition,

and in particular Roman Ingarden such that the screen's relational embeddedness to cognition can be illustrated. As a result, I shall identify essential qualities to screens remaining consistent throughout viewer experiences with the application of these resources.

The problem of understanding screens is rooted in the question of how ideas are recognized through different modes. It is a perennial question that dates back to writings in Plato's *The Republic* circa 375 B.C. In particular, 514a-520 of his work addresses this problem of "enlightenment or ignorance in our human condition" in the *Allegory of the Cave*, where Socrates, in dialogue with Glaucon, considers the situation of prisoners shackled next to a low-built wall that casts shadow figures.[1] While Plato illustrates a setting that captures a sense in how people are attentive to sensed things whether or not they are in fact delusory, he at the same time shows the difficulty in obtaining higher forms of knowledge gained by seeing beyond the cave and towards the Sun which itself requires an immense epistemic adjustment.[2] According to Mauro Carbone, in the allegory "Plato talks about what is often translated as the 'opposite wall' [...], which works like a screen meant as a surface for showing images, since it is precisely on this surface that the Cave's prisoners see shadows of the objects carried by men behind them."[3] In this sense, a screen built for a modern computer or television in the present day appears to share the same basic epistemological and ontological functions as the archaic wall of shadows from Plato. Although the comparisons of the wall in Plato's cave to the modern digital screen may be considered in terms of showing images, there is room to substantiate this consideration. The shared quality among the opposite wall and the screen may be a general property that manifests in two opposing functions: a moment of showing at the same time containing a moment of hiding, As Carbone states, "Plato presents the two fundamental possibilities of the arche-screen, that is, the screen as a concealing surface and the screen as a showing surface, neither of which can be merely opposed or separated from the other, either logically or historically."[4] Such acknowledgement of these two opposed features pertains not only to questioning the nature of knowledge as such, but to the ontological basis from which artefacts serve as mediums in the mode of vision in a form of intellectual affectivity. On the one hand, knowledge is to be prima facie obtained via these mediums vis-à-vis explicitly

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1 Plato, *The Republic,* trans. Desmond Lee, ed. Melissa Lane (Penguin Classics, 2007).
2 Ibid., 516a – 518a
3 Mauro Carbone, *Philosophy-Screens: From Cinema to the Digital Revolution*, trans. Marta Nijhuis (SUNY Press, 2019): 66.
4 Carbone, *Philosophy-Screens: From Cinema to the Digital Revolution*, 68.

presented visual content such as images or figures. While, on the other hand, the same epistemic end-result of these mediums can be, and often are, achieved by an opposite: the absence of figures that may have been considered in potency. For the same reason that Plato's allegory persists as a historically and philosophically significant thought experiment, the investigation into how mediums serve an epistemic and phenomenological role remains vital. To specify the screen as our object of investigation is not only to fixate on the screen as a social or techno-scientific artefact, but as a unique medium in itself that poses the same questions as in the allegory. These questions are not only to be accorded explanations apropos the modern era, but throughout the screen's historical traces.

While screens have been treated along terms characteristic of the discipline investigating them, these accounts typically shed light on either their being displays, filters, tools, or representations. As the age of information would not be possible without screens showing us new content, the notion of displaying is relevant. The understanding of screens as displays involves an active production of content shown to the viewer. However, it is noted that the screen displaying content in an active manner does not exclude the possibility for the viewer to be active as well. This leads to questions on dependence with the particular contents being displayed, the form of the screen itself, and the viewer's participation with them. In this sense, screens treated as displays includes how they are dynamic, and subject to continuous modulation with respect to what is and can be shown. A particular problem facing the interpretation of screens a displays is that it leaves out the tendency for screens to also hide and limit the contours of full and actual content. Despite screens showing us images, which perhaps could not be seen otherwise, screens also filter out the realm of possible perspectives surrounding the real (non-virtual) object they are displaying. Because of this, screens are understood as filters. Moreover, recent authors have treated this filtering capacity in the sense of questioning the screen's real and semiotic boundaries. It is a problem with the viewer being unaware of that which is beyond the screen. Because the screen's contents are explicit, what could have been shown, but is yet undisclosed, is made implicit or even entirely hidden. Separate from the interpretations of screens as either displays or filters, screens have also been attributed the dual aspect of displaying and filtering, alongside other categories. The use of different categories to describe the screen is achieved by comparative analogies related to their function. For example, screens have been compared with windows, doors, tablets, and paintings because of their similarities. It is in these treatments that screens have been understood as tools. Yet, as a result of drawing several comparisons, screens being described in various ways

of functioning suggests how they are not easily definable along one criterion. Other developments have emphasized the screen's relational aspect through mediation. In these accounts, concepts and methods from phenomenology have been applied to bring about an understanding of what is characteristic to screen experiences. Vivian Sobhack, for instance, offers a wide-ranging account of screen theory with the aid of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception and embodiment. Lucas Introna, Fernando Ilharco as well as Don Ihde have shed light on understanding the elements necessary for screens themselves by reconsidering aspects of mediation between tools to the self. Yet, the existing approaches are inspired mainly by the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger and some lacunas can be identified, such as mediation beyond interaction.

Despite recent developments in the field of phenomenology seeking to investigate how to exactly identify screens, there is room to incorporate the works of Roman Ingarden. As literature on theories of screens may be categorized as emphasizing their existence being displays, filters, tools, and representations, preliminary evidence for the resourcefulness of Roman Ingarden's philosophy rests on how his ontological and phenomenological concepts are applicable to each approach, thereby addressing the need for having a rich conceptual framework to address the question on the essence of screens. Ingarden's concepts of the heteronomy of being, intentional objects, heterogeneous strata, and a distinction between ontology and phenomenology allow for a comprehensive analysis of screens in all four categories.

As mentioned above, there exists a need for having a rich conceptual framework to address the question on the essence of screens. Empirical sciences investigate issues raised over screens, but there is no methodological prolegomena providing an overview of what constitutes them in the first place. Although revealed understandings in the literature point to different ways of accounting for screens as artefacts which operate in varying capacities, these accounts are not conceptually unified. So there lacks a framework identifying what screens are. For this reason, providing such a framework would be useful for both philosophy and the empirical sciences. The significance of incorporating Ingarden's philosophy to the project is evidenced by how his theory serves to help build a framework for grasping that which determines them as such. Moreover, in the domain of phenomenology, and especially within Ingardenian philosophy, there is ample potential to have a user-experience oriented approach to screens. Such approach may encourage other fields, such as psychology and computer science, to also be informed of a vast array of conceptual and methodological resources for a better assessment

of user-orientation and engagement. By accomplishing the aims and objectives of my research, I observe how conceptual gaps pertaining to phenomenological conceptions of screens may be filled in by the application of Roman Ingarden's philosophy.

Four methods and two approaches are used for investigating screens in my dissertation. The first method is text analysis. With this I extract claims from relevant texts and analyze main concepts and their definitions, questions posed which texts are to answer, then the answers and arguments for them. The range of these sources include authors from both the fields treating screen-theory and the philosophical tradition of phenomenology. The second method is synthesis, collecting material to produce a clear and coherent position on screens. The third method is comparative, consisting in discerning the most important factors for the positions on screens in order to identify their similarities and differences. Fourth is the method of phenomenological description. It is a conceptual approach to explain and describe what is given in experience (e.g., a phenomenon, process, state of affairs). This method is for illustrating in sufficient detail the relevant categories of Roman Ingarden's philosophy for understanding the mind's orientation to the screen as a mediatory and relational device. Moreover, for screens being the main object of my investigation, I use both synchronic and diachronic approaches. The diachronic approach is used to consider the term's specific meanings and references by means of etymological and historical research. This is to provide the revealed understandings of screens in terms of their context-sensitive use in language and to address the subtleties of individual differences. The synchronic approach is used for identifying the set of necessary and consistent features belonging to screens that is uniform, and irrespective of historical contingencies – such as would possibly be found in changes to their particular specifications and content.

Three groups of literature constitute the basis of research. The first consists of works on screens within the fields of the philosophy of technology and screen theory. As different approaches to the object of investigation concern screens in their wide-ranging forms of content and capacities, the literature's seeking to explain and resolve issues pertaining to them is to be collected for a comparative analysis. Here the works of authors such as Vivian Sobchack, Mauro Carbone, Dario Cecchi, and Francesco Casetti will be considered. The second group consists of works of some phenomenologists whose considerations are relevant for the dissertation's research. Worth noting are the works of Lucas Introna and Fernando Ilharco, for the two authors investigate essential qualities to screens with the support of Martin Heidegger's phenomenology. The third group includes relevant works of Roman Ingarden: *Controversy*

Over the Existence of the World, *The Literary Work of Art*, and *Ontology of the Work of Art*. The appeal of the first source, *Controversy Over the Existence of the World*, in accomplishing the research objectives, consists in its elaborate account of Roman Ingarden's description of structured conceptual categories used to explain separate modes of existence with wide-ranging applications. By accounting for how the modes of existence illustrated in the source applies to works of art and artefacts of a mediatory nature, we are then able to draw findings from Ingarden's outlined ontology to screens. The appeal of the second source, *The Literary Work of Art*, is due to its comprehensive phenomenological description of all necessary contents and relations involved when determining fiction as such. For this reason, we are able to explore how Ingarden's particular treatment of literary works may be compared with a phenomenological description of screens in producing intentional objects. Moreover, the relevant methods and ontological background can then be incorporated. The appeal of the third source, *Ontology of the Work of Art,* is that within it Ingarden considers various kinds of art forms, including literature, paintings, film, theater, among others, and draws distinctions between them through his ontology, such that it is possible to recognize how artworks as intentional objects are to be explained by their defining features and unique sets of strata. I use also encyclopedias and dictionaries as supplementary resources.

The dissertation is composed of four chapters. In the first chapter, I will first present the problem of determining screens as a philosophical issue. I will then offer an outline of main kinds of accounts of screens to present an overview of the current discourse: as displays, filters, and tools. While I argue that each account partially explains significant aspects to be recognized for screens, I will defend the claim that as distinct viewpoints in isolation they are insufficient and some conceptual gaps of these three accounts can be detected. So, I will show that it is necessary to investigate screens by applying phenomenological resources to illustrate their representational significance and relation to the viewing subject. As a result, I take the phenomenological approach to screens as a starting point of the second chapter. After providing a brief overview of the history and methods of phenomenology with the tradition's founder, Edmund Husserl, I will consider examples of how the field treats various types of experiences and then focus on how screen viewing is a particular form of experience to be investigated in the field. Afterwards, as a preliminary step for the next section, I shall outline the basic concepts of Martin Heidegger's phenomenology as his works in the field have been reconsidered for their application to screens. In the next section, Lucas Introna and Fernando Ilharco's Heideggerian phenomenology of screens will be examined as they draw two elements

considered necessary for them. These are then evaluated on their benefits and shortcomings, with room for further research questions posed on mediation. In the third chapter I will then address the relevant aspects applicable to screens for understanding their mediation. This procedure involves the analysis of Roman Ingarden's ontological and phenomenological concepts which are applicable for understanding screens: the heteronomy of being, intentional objects, heterogeneous strata, and the distinction between phenomenology and ontology. It is with these concepts that I will locate four essential features (strata) for screens consisting of presented objects, reconstructed aspects, represented objectivities, and visual concretization and immersion. As a final step, in my fourth chapter I shall synthesize the accounts of screens as displays, filters, tools, and representations by locating their correspondence with Ingarden's concepts listed above. This procedure should allow the main concepts of Roman Ingarden and previous accounts to be mapped with the four features of screens rendered essential. The thesis that I will defend claims that screens are to be conceived as specific mediatory devices oscillating in both spheres of mind dependence and independence, thereby being capable of altering the mechanisms of perception. A phenomenology of screens built on the concepts of Roman Ingarden shall then be established to fulfill areas of screen-theorizing that remain open for thorough investigation.

Chapter I
Views on Screens

The goal of this chapter is to locate the organization of discourse on screens. By investigating separate means of qualifying what screens are, we then have at our disposal the methodological prolegomena to a comprehensive framework. The first step to achieve this involves a diachronic approach to screens as far as the meaning and use of the term is concerned overtime. After finding that the term historically denotes various different kinds of artefact, we recognize the problem of a conceptual gap by lack of uniformity. Moreover, independent of the term's etymology, using a synchronic approach we are to identify how screens are generally conceived in modern literature. In this step we locate three main ways to understand screens: as displays, as filters, and as tools. It will be argued that these categories are necessary components in serving to identify what screens are, but taken in isolation each is not sufficient in producing a comprehensive theory.

1. The Philosophical Problem of Screens

1.1. The Etymology of the Term "Screen"

The origins of the English term "screen" contains several distinct denotations outstretching its already ambiguous meanings to the present day. While the term currently is used as both a noun in the artifactual sense, and a verb in the functional sense, it also contains separate connotations in either case depending on the context in which it is used. In fact, Lucas Introna and Fernando Ilharco refer to the term "screen" as falling under "three main themes: projecting/showing (TV screen), hiding/protecting (fireplace screen), and testing/selecting (screening the candidates)."[5] While the first two senses in which the screen either shows or hides something is simultaneously a gerund (being a verbal-noun, referring both to the artefact and to what the artefact does), the latter understanding as "screening the candidates" refers to a filtering or selection process to be performed by individuals. Thus, even prior to the historical

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[5] Lucas Introna and Fernando Ilharco, "The Screen and the World: A Phenomenological Investigation into Screens and Our Engagement in the World," *Organizational and Social Perspectives on Information Technology IFIPAICT,* no. 41 (2000): 304.

analysis of the separate meanings and uses of the term beginning from the fourteenth century,[6] our current treatment of the term is non-uniform.

Dating back to over six centuries, the now modern and ubiquitous word was also tangentially used before:

> [T]he contemporary English word screen evolved from the Middle English word "screne," from the Middle French "escren," and from the Middle Dutch "scherm." It is a word akin to the Old High German (eighth century) words "skirm," which meant shield, and "skrank," which meant a "barrier" of some kind. The word screen still suggests another interesting signification, further away from us in history. It is a word "probably akin" (WB) to the Sanskrit (1000 BC) words "carman," which meant skin, and "kranti," which signifies "he injures." These meanings, possibly, are the ones from which the Middle Age words evolved. The Sanskrit origins suggest that the notions of protection, shield, barrier, separation, arose as metaphors of the concept of skin, possibly of human (or animal) skin. [...] The word screen moved from Sanskrit meaning of skin and injury, along protecting, sheltering and covering, to the modern day projecting, showing, revealing, as well as electing, detecting, and testing.[7]

Due to these separate senses and references to starkly different artefacts, the origins of the term "screen" contains varying traces of unique objects and properties. However, what is consistent with its etymological origins, is the fact that screens were and continues to be a term that obtains its meaning from both simultaneous artifactual and functional denotations. Therefore, the term "screen" is not merely a word used to denote a single object only, nor is it used to refer to a distinct property only, but rather is a term that encapsulates the relation between an object and its property, and hence has been often used analogically.

According to Dominique Chateau and José Moure, however,

> It was only in the 19th century that the term screen began to take on, by analogy – in the language of the physicist, the illusionist, and eventually the cineast – the meaning of a white or opaque reflective surface onto which images are projected, displayed, or attached. Even though some translations of ancient texts use the term retrospectively and anachronistically, the surface that receives the projection, be it a wall, a canvas, or a white paper sheet, could not properly be referenced as screen before the mid-19th century, when the optic sciences became increasingly popular.[8]

A more modern instance of the increased frequency in the analogical treatment of the term is then stated, by Chateau and Moure, to be found

> [i]n the third edition of his *Dictionnaire universel des Sciences et des Lettres*, published in 1857[.] [T]he Frenchman Marie Nicolas Bouillet defines the screen as 'a small piece of furniture intended to protect oneself from the heat of the fireplace.' It, he adds, '[i]s also called screen [...] in optics, every white board onto which the image of an object is made to be projected.[9]

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6 Lucas Introna and Fernando Ilharco, "The Screen and the World: A Phenomenological Investigation into Screens and Our Engagement in the World," 304.

7 Ibid, 304-305.

8 Dominique Chateau and Jose Moure, *Screens: From Materiality to Spectatorship - A Historical and Theoretical Reassessment* (Amsterdam University Press, 2016): 14.

9 Chateau and Moure, *Screens: From Materiality to Spectatorship - A Historical and Theoretical Reassessment*, 14.

Therefore, from the nineteenth century onwards, the term screen began to be more closely understood in terms of the category of vision. However, due to the unlimited range of objects being visual, screens becoming meant as a term connected with vision still nonetheless kept its ambiguous usage.

The etymological roots of the "screen" serves as an example for how meanings of certain items retain a general sense and understanding, but overtime lose strict denotation. The term "screen" does not in and of itself refer to a single artefact, so it is not unequivocal. Rather, at least in terms of historical reference, it is a special type of artefact with a set of various properties and functions, which are only to be specified in concrete examples, such as a shield or smartphone. As a result, it becomes increasingly difficult to qualify the necessary properties of what makes a screen as such in the first place because of how whatever may be said of them is dependent on a real artefact being referenced (which itself contains many accidental properties). Ways screens have been understood were dependent on their place in history. Ian Christie claims that although now,

> [s]creens are everywhere today, and we are conscious of their ubiquity as never before. Yet these screens are predominantly electronic displays, and for much of the 20th century, when screens were recipients of projected light, they were invisible and unmentioned, even when invoked in the titles of trade journals, or as a synonym for 'cinema' (as in 'screen star' and, of course, 'screen test'). From the 1970s onwards, when relationships between spectators and images on screens began to be theorized, the materiality of the screen was even less considered, as it was figured variously as a 'mirror' or the threshold of a psychic space.[10]

In turn, Mauro Carbone posits, "what happens when considering that the screens have a long and diverse cultural history? What happens when considering that such a history has been sedimenting in that of the very term defining them and of others that have gradually matched it in order to specify the function that the screens would provide? What happens when considering that such a history has also been sedimenting in certain metaphors through which we have tried to *find figures* that could give a fundament to our ways to conceive the screens themselves?"[11] By searching for consistent features of screens present throughout their historical traces we are better able to understand what is meant when they are referenced.

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10 Ian Christie, "The Stuff of Screens," in *Screens*, ed. Dominique Chateau and José Moure (Amsterdam University Press, 2016): 70.

11 Mauro Carbone, "Preface: In the Light of Our Screens," in *Philosophy-Screens: From Cinema to the Digital Revolution*, trans. Marta Nijhuis (State University of New York Press, 2020): x.

1.2. Theoretical and Practical Application

The problem of non-uniformity in meanings and objects of reference for the screen has historically been prevalent. As Annette Kuhn states, "screen studies seems increasingly to comprise a concatenation of subdisciplines, in which a focus on the historical, the local and the specific flourishes and any ambitions to create a totalizing theory are eschewed."[12]. Meanwhile, contemporary screens as in cinema, computers, tablets, and smartphones have only expanded this issue. Francesco Casetti describes,

> This screen explosion—which is still affecting us today—has led us to a true turning point. We find ourselves surrounded by unprecedented technological innovations: surfaces made of liquid crystals, of plasma, and of LEDs, as flexible as a piece of paper, interconnected, reacting to my touch and my voice, and so forth. This turning point, however, represents a conceptual transformation as much as it does a technological fact: it is the very idea of a screen that is changing.[13]

We thus have, in recent times, a more pertinent question on the nature of screens, partly because of the status quo of their ubiquity and because of their individual and societal influence. Screens being a commonly inescapable part of modern daily lives created shifts to all other forms with which we interact with the world. Ingrid Richardson states that "[g]iven the increasing prevalence of screens in everyday life, it is critical that we understand the corporeal dynamics of contemporary screen use, the historical legacy of the larger screen, and especially the more recent technosomatic effects of the now ubiquitous mobile device."[14]As far as screens are prevalent both for personal and commercial use, their medium-like nature reconfigures and extends the epistemic and normative conditions of our world. This can be seen with the integration of screen technologies to the state of education, journalism, politics, society, business and economics. While it concerns the screen in a technologically deterministic and artefactual sense that Eugenie Shinkle claims, "technologies are material parameters in the world, embodied praxes,"[15] the screen is not merely a standard technology. As we have determined that in the etymology of the screen, the term itself has denoted various kinds of artefacts, an argument is to be made that a screen is neither a single technology nor a single material. Rather, it is a form of technology and material that functions distinctly as a medium. What this means is that beyond the common phrasing of screens as meaning particular items, such as monitors, televisions, computers, and the like, what we are concerned with is the

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12 Annette Kuhn. "*Screen* and Screen Theorizing Today." *Screen* 50, no. 1 (2009): 5.

13 Francesco Casetti, "Che Cosaè Uno Schermo, Oggi?," in *Rivista di estetica - Schermi.* ed. Mauro Carbone and Anna Caterina Dalmasso (Torino: Rosenberg & Sellier, 2014): 161-162.

14 Ingrid Richardson, "Faces, interfaces, screens: Relational ontologies of framing, attention and distraction," in *Transformations Journal of Media & Culture* 18 (2010): 11.

15 Richardson, "Faces, interfaces, screens: Relational ontologies of framing, attention and distraction," 9.

concept, screen, which brings these altogether, particularly by being a specific medium, or state in between a source and the viewer. Furthermore, it is because of this aspect that the screen inherently possesses a dynamism, which contributes to setting the framework from which individual and societal trajectories are affected. The ubiquity of screens is, while a contemporary issue, a major factor in determining the degree to which the trajectories prevail. Moreover, the influence of screens on individuals and societies is compounded with the various kinds of technologies they belong to – not only in their ubiquity. Understanding this influence requires a detailed account of screen studies. Annette Kuhn aptly demonstrates the issue as she claims,

> What, first of all, is the point of this activity of theorizing? What is theorizing for? Basically, theorizing ought to equip us with tools for thinking about, understanding and explaining the objects with which a body of knowledge concerns itself. Ideally, theorizing should also take on board any shifts or changes in those objects. In screen studies, what we are seeking to explain or understand, very broadly speaking, are the moving image screen or screens, what is displayed on these screens, and the nature of our encounter with them. In thinking about these things, we may focus variously on the screen itself, on our mental processes, on our bodies, or on the heterogeneous 'surround'. This is a wide-ranging remit. Moreover, what we are seeking to understand or explain is not only diverse but also in a process of changing and becoming. [16]

Consequently, we are to investigate the screen in its various capacities in order to delineate their consistent features throughout viewing experiences.

Another issue of contemporary relevance for screens is not about theoretical problems of their definition, classification, non-uniformity, and ubiquity, but it lies in a more practical concern. Screens do not present themselves ubiquitously in a neutral and transitory way but are evermore becoming capable of psychological impact. For example, numerous studies have been made on the detrimental effects of screens distracting users,[17] as well as the causal means by which this distraction leads to further dangers such as roadside accidents.[18] Furthermore, screens have increasingly become more alluring to users in ways that exacerbate personal

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16 Annette Kuhn. "*Screen* and Screen Theorizing Today." *Screen* 50 no.1 (2009): 4-5.

17 Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (Routledge, 2001). See also: Erkki Huhtamo, "The Four Practices? Challenges for an Archaeology of the Screen," in *Screens*, ed. Dominique Chateau and José Moure (Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 116-124.

18 Jonathan Levy and Harold Pashler, "Task Prioritisation in Multitasking during Driving: Opportunity to Abort a Concurrent Task Does Not Insulate Braking Responses from Dual-Task Slowing," *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 22, no. 4 (2008): 507-525. See also: Tuomo Kujala and Dario D. Salvucci, "Modeling Visual Sampling on In-Car Displays: The Challenge of Predicting Safety-Critical Lapses of Control," *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies* 79, (2015), 66–78. And: Peter J. Hills, Catherine Thompson, and J. Michael Pake, "Detrimental effects of carryover of eye movement behaviour on hazard perception accuracy: Effects of driver experience, difficulty of task, and hazardousness of road," *Transportation Research part F: traffic psychology and behaviour* 58 (2018): 906-916.

dependence on them with implicit forms of psychological conditioning.[19] While these issues invoke empirical investigations towards measuring and accounting for such considerations as the influence of screen-viewing on behaviour, a theoretical analysis is to be implemented in this dissertation as a means by which to address and help resolve these practical concerns.

1.3. Disciplinary research on screens

Beyond investigations reducing screens to technological devices producing secondary effects, there exists a need to provide an adequate conception of what constitutes them in the first place. For while screen contents may be a product of recording equipment and software, or screen monitors may refer to the components which cast coloured pixels and projected light in a square frame, or otherwise the screen may be treated as a simple term vaguely associated with a separate object of inquiry altogether – that is, forms of content such as the internet and social media, we may lose sight of knowing the screen by itself. The screen itself is not necessarily something devoid of content, because in that case we may describe it as a simple object like a black mirror.[20] We therefore are interested in considering screens with their showing contents while at the same time questioning the nature of how this is so.

A preliminary step to the investigation of screens begins with figuring which means of analysis serves to qualify them. First, we may admit that while it is important to understand screens in terms of their effect, particularly as indicated in clinical and behavioural psychology, the discipline as such does not provide a comprehensive account of screens independent of context-sensitive interaction and viewership. Another field offering analyses of the object of investigation is film theory. The field addresses the uniqueness of screens in their capacity to present a story and therefore elicit sensory input and feelings on behalf of the viewer, However, there remain limitations to this means of analysis as the film in its artistic capacity is not separable from the screen. Media and communication studies further suggests ways to understand the screen, especially in the field's exploration of how the history of technological and social discourse are shaped by, and emerge through, the medium's input and output. Yet, given its tendency to be broad in scope, it does not account for individual screen experiences

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19 Cfr. Najmeh Khalili-Mahani, Anna Smyrnova, and Lisa Kakinami, "To each stress its own screen: a cross- 15 sectional survey of the patterns of stress and various screen uses in relation to self- admitted screen addiction," *Journal of medical Internet research* 21, no. 4 (2019): e11485.

20 As in a piece written by Sean O))), "What is a Black Mirror?" *Medium* (September 29, 2021) https://medium.com/@linesinwax/what-is-a-black-mirror-89d9542d78f0#:~:text=Charlie%20Brooker%20once%20said%2C%20when%20asked%20about%20the%20titl e%20of,off%2C%20or%20not%20in%20use. Accessed January 27, 2025.

in precise detail. Another option is considering the fields of artificial intelligence, neuroscience, computer science, and data science, as they can offer detailed accounts of the processes involved in casting digital contents on screen by algorithmic and statistical input. However, with these accounts there remains questions open for investigation concerning the nature of human perception in witnessing them. As a result, a comprehensive theory of screens that addresses them as such extends beyond these areas of interest.

The most promising method to analyze the screen is from the philosophical tradition of phenomenology. Beginning in proper discourse from philosopher Edmund Husserl in the early twentieth century, it was first a program set out to locate determinate universals encountered in appearing phenomena belonging to experience. This was achieved by means of an essentialist reductionism and descriptivism. This meant to identify the essence of objects by removing its unnecessary features while also elaborating in detail what remains thereafter. The achievements of this program were made evident not only in the continuation of a thriving discourse (which became in contact with interdisciplinary fields), but in a thorough analysis that created new concepts. Husserl, as founder of the phenomenological school of thought, coined concepts such as the horizon, as well as the method of eidetic reduction – while these in turn, paved way for further phenomenological conceptualizing.[21]

Chosen samples which demonstrate the fruitfulness of Husserl's project include the phenomenological works of Martin Heidegger, Roman Ingarden, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Heidegger, a pupil of Husserl, in his work *Being and Time*, introduced tactful concepts to understand "the human way of being in the world" – principally referred to as *Dasein*, which included another of his concepts known as *zuhandenheit* (readiness-at-hand) which is understood as a unique orientation that we have towards objects – in particular, tools. Ingarden, also a student of Husserl, notably enriched the phenomenological tradition by incorporating his own ontological foundations, as well as a cogent analytic approach towards describing

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21 Husserl further introduced ways to distinguish phenomena internal to the mind, as opposed to directed externally towards objects: "If we follow this methodological principle in the case of the dual topic, cogito — cogitatum (qua cogitatum), there become opened to us, first of all, the general descriptions to be made, always on the basis of particular cogitationes, with regard to each of the two correlative sides. Accordingly, on the one hand, descriptions of the intentional object as such, with regard to the determinations attributed to it in the modes of consciousness concerned, attributed furthermore with corresponding modalities, which stand out when attention is directed to them. (For example: the 'modalities of being', like certainly being, possibly or presumably being, etc.; or the 'subjective' - temporal modes, being present, past, or future.) This line of description is called noematic. Its counterpart is noetic description, which concerns the modes of the cogito / itself, the modes of consciousness (for example: perception, recollection, retention), with the modal differences inherent in them (for example: differences in clarity and distinctness)." In Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (Springer, 2013): 38.

properties in the realm of literary works of authorship and other works of art. Finally, Merleau-Ponty is chiefly recognized in the tradition as setting in place the relation between embodiment and perception to help determine the nature of individual experience.

Meanwhile, there are several authors of screen-theory that owe much to the tradition of phenomenology. Film theorists, Vivian Sobchack and Mauro Carbone, for example, make ample reference to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's writings on cinema and film in connection to his contributions to defining certain aspects of perception, such as marking how subjects are distinct from objects and the experiential qualities of elapsed time. Moreover, screen-theorists, Lucas Introna and Fernando Ilharco, initiated a programme for screen-theorizing by directly linking phenomenological concepts to the understanding of screens. Chiefly in their work the authors incorporate the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger using his concept of "ready-at-hand" and shifting from "being-in-the-world" to understanding the mode of being of "screens-in-the-world." As a result, Introna and Ilharco reach their own conceptual descriptions of screens as containing conditions of coherency or "already-agreement" and attentiveness.

Despite the significant contributions of phenomenological inspirations for screen-theory, there remains gaps within the literature. In particular, the works of Roman Ingarden have not been adequately recognized in terms of their phenomenological significance for understanding screens. While it is the case that literature on theories of screens can be categorized into treating screens as either displays, filters, as tools, or as representations, concepts borrowed from the phenomenology of Roman Ingarden may be used to facilitate a comprehensive analysis of screens in all four categories. In particular, Ingarden's concepts of the heteronomy of being, intentional objects, heterogeneous strata, and a distinction between ontology and phenomenology allow for a comprehensive analysis of screens in all four categories. For this reason, a phenomenology of screens built on the concepts of Roman Ingarden shall be established to fulfil areas of screen-theorizing that remain untreated (see chapter 3).

Based on the literature, I formulate the following four part typology of approaches to qualifying screens: screens as displays, screens as filters, screens as tools, and screens as representations. While philosophical and other disciplinary research on screens mention those terms, I develop each approach as an integrated framework of the object of research. In the approach to screens as displays there is emphasis on the capacity to show content. In this

approach, both the screen and the viewer are active participants.[22] Francesco Casetti remarks how what is on screen may take various pathways reaching the viewer,[23] suggesting an active directional process for what is shown. In treating screens as filters, the claim is to how screens limit what can be shown. Despite screens showing us images, screens also filter out the realm of possible perspectives surrounding the real object displayed. [24] Thus, it is a problem with the viewer being unaware of that which is beyond the screen. Because the screen's contents are explicit, what otherwise could have been shown is made implicit or hidden. In the approach to screens as tools, screens may also filter and display content but further considerations are made to their functions between other artefacts.[25] Laurent Jullier compares screens to lenses, doors, hanging pictures, tablets, and toys.[26] In treating screens as representations, this approach supports the viewer's orientation. This is to better understand them as distinct mediatory devices. For instance, Lucas Introna and Fernando Ilharco carry out this approach in their Heideggerian phenomenology of screens, specifying their relations with the individual.[27] Among others, Vivian Sobchack explains how screens serve as relational beings also for history and societies. It is plausible to investigate then each approach to screens as unique ways of qualifying them.

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22 Dario Cecchi, "The Elusive Body: Abstract for a History of Screens," in *Rivista di estetica - Schermi*. ed. Mauro Carbone and Anna Caterina Dalmasso (Rosenberg & Sellier, 2014): 35.

23 Francesco Casetti. "Che Cosaè Uno Schermo, Oggi?," in *Rivista di estetica – Schermi,* ed. Mauro Carbone and Anna Caterina Dalmasso Dalmasso (Rosenberg & Sellier, 2014): 103.

24 Anna Caterina Dalmasso, "I Bordo Opaco. Pensare ol Schermo, Pensare al Superficie," in *Rivista di estetica – Schermi*, ed. Mauro Carbone and Anna Caterina Dalmasso (Rosenberg & Sellier, 2014).

25 Keith Whitmoyer, "Review of Mauro Carbone, Philosophy-Screens: From Cinema to the Digital Revolution," *Chiasmi International* 22 (2020): 449–457.

26 Laurent Jullier, "The Pentagon of Screens," in *Rivista di estetica – Schermi,* ed. Mauro Carbone and Anna Caterina Dalmasso (Rosenberg & Sellier, 2014): 123-139.

27 Lucas D. Introna, and Fernando M. Ilharco, "The Screen and the World: A Phenomenological Investigation into Screens and Our Engagement in the World," *Organizational and Social Perspectives on Information Technology IFIPAICT* 41 (2000): 295-318. See also: Lucas D. Introna, and Fernando M. Ilharco, "On the Meaning of Screens: Towards a Phenomenological Account of Screenness." *Human Studies* 29, no.1 (2006): 57–76. And: Lucas D. Introna, and Fernando M. Ilharco, "Phenomenology, Screens, and Screenness: Returning to the World Itself," in T*he Oxford Handbook of Management Information Systems: Critical Perspectives and New Directions*. Edited by Robert D. Galliers and Wendy L. Currie. Oxford University Press, 2011.

2. Screens as Displays

2.1. In Search of Inherent Properties

The electronic screen marked the opportunity for mediums to become items of special interest in themselves. Through displaying content, nearly innumerable possible configurations, serving as visual stimuli, transcend the viewer to an immersive experience. This occurs either in an uncanny resemblance with natural objects of daily life or in an imaginary realm surpassing the confines of nature. Moreover, while natural objects may be depicted in two-dimensional shapes on the screen, their form of configuration may be conceived in two ways. Firstly, in relation to the viewer, screens are conceived as serving the viewer mere representations of the individual zero-level referents (natural objects) in question. Secondly, with an alternative reductionist approach, screens (in their strict contents) are understood as simply processual data, pixels determined by strings of digital code or rays of projected light that have been translated in such way that so happen to appear to us as looking indistinct from the natural object in question. As Dominique Chateau and José Moure claim, "we may consider that, on the one hand, this word ['screen,'] in its strictest sense means the material screen as a rectangular plane surface on which a ray of light distributes plastic elements (forms and colours) dynamically; on the other hand, it means the place where these elements come to be perceived and interpreted as more or less anthropomorphic or dynamic, analogical representations."[28] To interpose these two conceptions, in a manner that addresses whether they are either opposed or compatible, it is necessary to consider all qualities of screens, be they necessary or contingent, intrinsic or extrinsic, present hic et nunc, or merely capable of creating representational forms yet to be determinately seen. Through this account, the search for inherent properties belonging to the nature of screens emboldens our ways to definitively explain in what sense natural objects can be recognized on them and why so. This, evidently, is the matter of investigating screens using thorough conceptual analysis, the first step of which considers their displaying capacity.

To examine inherent properties to screens displaying, the relation between points of data (in the reductionist sense) and sense perception (in the holistic sense) is directly involved. It is a matter of questioning how data points configured on the display serve as clear and distinct images of conceivable (or recognizable) objects for the viewer, despite the fact that these belong to the realm of the virtual.

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28 Chateau and Moure, *Screens: From Materiality to Spectatorship – A Historical and Theoretical Reassessment*, 16.

Vivan Sobchack puts forth a typology used to describe the historical and technological contexts within which new perceptions of reality are created by the screen. This typology is identified as the photographic, cinematic, and electronic.[29] Sobchack claims, "the photographic mode of perception and representation is privileged in the period of market capitalism located by Jameson as beginning in the 1840s [as] emergent from and driven by the technological innovations of steam-powered mechanization, which both enabled unprecedented industrial expansion and informed the new cultural logic of realism."[30] In this sense, the photographic introduced a new sense of grasping realism by a new way of making moments visible. As an extension from the photograph, the cinematic arises as transcendent. Sobchack argues how,

> the cinematic qualitatively transforms the photographic through a materiality that not only claims the world and others as objects for vision (whether moving or static) but also signifies its own materialized agency, intentionality, and subjectivity. Neither abstract nor static, the cinematic brings the existential activity of vision into visibility in what is phenomenologically experienced as an intentional stream of moving images—its continuous and autonomous visual production and meaningful organization of these images testifying not only to the objective world but also, and more radically, to an anonymous, mobile, embodied, and ethically invested subject of worldly space.[31]

From here we see that the cinematic is more than the product of moving images or photographs. There is a stream of occurrences within the cinematic that issues a perspectival witnessing of worldly affairs. Meanwhile, she writes that the electronic is distinct from the cinematic and photographic by being more complex, as it functions in other ways than only as a visual emulation of the first person lens. It is through its own complexity, that Sobchack writes how, "the electronic semiotically—and significantly— constitutes a system of simulation, a system that constitutes copies that seem lacking an original ground."[32] Vivian Sobchack's analysis therefore serves as an intriguing source of explaining the screen's technological and historical paradigms.

Inspired by Sobchack's typology, I propose four ways to consider inherent properties to screens displaying. Namely, these considerations consist of: (i) visual content (akin to the photographic); (ii) spatiotemporal content (akin to the cinematic); (iii) propositional content – the informative; and (iv) virtual and augmented content – the immersive. While the former two

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29 Vivian Sobchack, "The Scene of the Screen: Envisioning Photographic, Cinematic, and Electronic 'Presence,'" in *Post-Cinema: Theorizing 21st-Century Film*, ed. Shane Denson and Julia Leyda (Reframe Books, 2016): 88-128.
30 Ibid, 96.
31 Ibid, 102.
32 Ibid, 111.

may more fittingly coincide with the reductionist conception of screens as merely displaying digital code or bits of data, the latter two require further viewer context dependence and thus is more fitting to the representational conception insofar as screens depict objects of nature that we encounter in our personal experience.

Let us however stress that visual content displayed on screens is the first item to be treated, as it is the precondition for all others to function in their own respects. Without visual contents, screens cease to function altogether. As Vivian Sobchack writes, "all screens can be described categorically as a surface that realizes its 'screenness' and salience only when, at minimum, a moving visual display of some sort is projected upon or from it."[33] Moreover, screens display visual content strictly in the sense of being photographic, as their contents are projected in one image only.[34] Otherwise, the projection of more than one image, or rather multiple images in fact, would produce shifts of frames that would alter the depictions of what is conceived of as the represented subject along spatiotemporal dimensions.

Spatiotemporal content displayed on screens is itself within the realm of the cinematic. This is because, through the refreshing of screen contents temporally determined by a set frame rate, items displayed on the screen are reconfigured (even to a miniscule extent) overtime. Thereby, displayed contents on screens are rendered cinematic as the process of changing frames depicts their continuously updated configurations to produce a determinate spatiotemporal experience.

Despite the fact that visual contents and spatiotemporal contents displayed on screens are necessary conditions for their functioning, they are not sufficient in themselves to produce conditions under which the representational conception of screens is illustrated. This is because these two features function independently of viewership. Whereas, the latter two considerations, the informative and the immersive, require the viewer to be realized. For this reason, visual contents, in the simple form of images shall be examined. In what follows the four ways of considering screens as displays will be elaborated in detail.

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33 Vivian Sobchack, "Comprehending Screens: A Meditation in Media Res," in *Rivista di estetica* – Schermi, ed. Mauro Carbone and Anna Caterina Dalmasso (Rosenberg & Sellier, 2014), 11.
34 However, then we must omit the "moving" part of Vivian Sobchack's visual displays.

2.2. Visual Content – The Photographic

The nature of screen displays is best qualified in the sense of being a gerund. We may refer to it either artefactually or functionally – display(s) or display(ing). It is due to this fact that screens understood as displays implies that as such they function by necessity. There are no displays without the process of displaying. Yet, one may ask, what is the nature of functional screens? Are there inherent properties from which we may deduce that the screen does or can display? And if so, what would the screen be showing? Is it a matter of showing particular contents or the very fact of showing something in general? These are all considerations surrounding the visual nature of screens – the manner in which they are photographic.

The photographic nature of screens displaying is, by necessity, a manner of presenting a still image. Yet an image is, of course, not a unique phenomenon to screens only. Printed photos, paintings and drawings depict images, as well as sculptures. However, the image produced on a screen is special in that it not only creates an image out of system hardware and software (e.g., coded data and pixels), but it may reproduce them in a digitally identical copy. Thus, the same photo of the Eiffel Tower in Paris may be displayed innumerably on various screens. Likewise, any captured image of the historic site, no matter its visual form, is able to be re-shown without limit.

The reproducibility of images being displayed is not only a technical specification, but a matter of unprecedented accessibility. Images may be displayed at any given moment and at any given location. As a result, still images can be present at any time and place, merely just on the occasion of the device user's command. Nonetheless, there is a unique ontology pertaining to this phenomenon. Considering the still image in itself, independent of contexts under which it is displayed, the still image is inarguably a product of a determinate place and time. Inversely, the context in which a still image is shown, has no significance in particular – meaning that there is no particular time and place that an image must be shown. Rather, there are innumerable contexts or environments in which an image may be displayed. What this means is that the accessibility to an image, one and the same image – oftentimes, is immense by virtue of being presentable anywhere.

Furthermore, accessibility to an image, at any time and place, results in a unique capacity for a technological artefact to invite the viewer to pause and contemplate. The nature of such contemplation is one of being directed to a particular moment in time captured by the image. Meanwhile, the contents displayed on screen serve the visual purpose of exhibiting

subjects, oftentimes in a photographical aesthetic, approaching permanence owing to the accessibility and reproducibility of such images.

The consequences of visual images being displayed on screens, as photographs, are historically significant and far reaching, as Vivian Sobchack maintains,

> the photographic has been popularly and phenomenologically perceived as existing in a state of testimonial verisimilitude—the photograph's film emulsions analogically marked with (and objectively "capturing") material traces of the world's concrete and "real" existence. Unlike the technologies that preceded it, photography produced images of the world with an exactitude previously rivalled only by the human eye.[35]

Visual contents are thus the primary way in which screens display according to the aesthetical category of the photographic. By means of displaying photographic images, the real, as known to the human eye, is made tangible on the screen, able to be reproduced and accessible anywhere.

However, despite the magnificent capacity of cameras and displays in exhibiting photographs which appear to be not too distinguishable from that which is directly seen from our own eyes, the facts of the matter in image processing suggest an alternative consideration. As said before, the screen functions by displaying content, but this is owed to the technical features of the device which casts the image. In this sense, the screen is once again a neutrally disinterested artefact.[36] The image processing required to translate a real environment onto a display involves three-dimensional objects, as we encounter them, being formed into coded pixels overlayed along two-dimensions, using computer processors and monitors, that can miraculously display something which looks real and three-dimensional. The conversion from three-dimensional objects to two-dimensional images that occurs without immediate noticeable difference is a wonder to the human psyche that is only to be surpassed by the dynamic shifts of images along frame rates – spatiotemporal content to be examined next.

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35 Sobchack, "The Scene of the Screen: Envisioning Photographic, Cinematic, and Electronic 'Presence,'" 96.

36 On this particular issue, there are significant debates as to whether a screen in itself is value-laden or value-neutral. It is however compelling to recognize the value-ladenness of screen devices vis-a-vis their technical features being a new form of the economic system in which we live. See Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (Profile, 2019).

2.3. Spatiotemporal Content: The Cinematic

Although the image itself is singular, cinema and video are the product of multiple images transitioning at a determined rate. From our point of view, this occurrence leads to a new spatiotemporal experience whereby screen vision is no longer idle and contemplative but synchronous and processual. While an image in itself is spatial, the addition of multiple images being sequenced at a set (or even variable) frame rate renders displayed content as also temporal.

According to Jean-Pierre Charcosset, "the perception of an image [itself] depends upon the perception of the sequence in which it is integrated. So far that the same shot is perceived in a different way depending on the shots that precede it and on those that follow it."[37] From this, we may distinguish the spatiotemporal content displayed on screens from its simple visual content on the basis that while imaging is a necessary property to both visual and spatiotemporal content, the sequencing of images is sufficient to produce the cinematic experience in the spatiotemporal sense. Conversely, it is the case that displaying an image is a primordial and necessary condition for the cinematic.

The product of image sequencing into cinema or video is understood as a medium of movement. It is the movement of objects along their versatile background and foreground transitions. Illustrations of motion and activity are clearly visible owing to the cinematic dimension of screens as displays. According to Francesco Casetti, screens became

> transit hubs for the images that circulate in our social space. They serve to capture these images, to make them momentarily available for somebody somewhere— perhaps even in order to rework them—before they embark again on their journey [...] junctions of a complex circuit, characterized both by a continuous flow and by localized processes of configuration or reconfiguration of circulating images.[38]

In light of this consideration, screen-cinema's spatiotemporal nature is transformative to our immediate experience. Within it, a unique intentionality[39] occurs in real time between the

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37 Jean-Pierre Charcosset. *Merleau-Ponty. Approches phénoménologiques, choix de textes, introduction et notes par Jean-Pierre Charcosset, Hachette, 'Collection ' Oeuvres et opuscules philosophiques.* (Hachette, 1981), 22.

38 Francesco Casetti. "Che Cosaè Uno Schermo, Oggi?," in *Rivista di estetica – Schermi,* eds. Mauro Carbone and Anna Caterina Dalmasso, 156.

39 Intentionality is generally regarded as the natural human orientation of the mind's being directed towards objects. There are various forms of intentionality distinguished along such fields as space, time, relational structures, levels of awareness, inwardness and outwardness, instrumental and teleological characterizations, first-order and second-order cognition (*prima intentio* and *secunda intentio*), with several other categorizations. With its popularized origins in the works of Franz Brentano, it has been noted "[h]owever, [that] Brentano does not use the general concept of intentionality in his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* as he does in some manuscripts, but speaks rather of the "intentional inexistence" (Brentano 1995, p. 68) of an object in the corresponding act. The prefix 'in' in the term 'inexistence' should be understood as designating a part- whole relation, according to which '[e]very mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself' (Brentano 1995, 68)." In Summa, M., Klein, M. & Schmidt, P, "Introduction: Double Intentionality," *Topoi* 41 (2022): 94.

subject and the content shown. This intentionality is attentive and reactive, as opposed to the reflective and retroactive nature of simply displaying a still image. In this sense, while in other perceived forms, such as printed photographs, one may use memory to recall the source of the image, in the perceived form of the screen one generally tends to what is shown with a disposition of what occurs at present. Further, although cinematic screens contain this characteristic, it is not by necessity that one cannot be retroactive with it. However, the nature of this retroactive contemplation is distinct from the retroactive contemplative nature of still images. This is due to how still images may entice the viewer to reflect on past epistemic or lived experiences of that which he has retained in memory. Whereas, in the cinematic experience, the viewer would have a closer disposition to recall what has just been shown on screen. This difference between still images and moving ones – between the photographic and the cinematic – arises on the fact of introducing the dimension of temporality.

The sequential transitioning of images corresponds to the way in which the viewing subject experiences objects and settings as dynamically changing while nonetheless remaining familiar. The nature of the video and cinema is effectuated by the rapidly shifting images which maintain both a sense of consistency and motion. However, as the image shifts from frame to frame, in this sequence, the past vanishes as each new image is freshly generated in a continuous fashion.[40] Thus, what is presented to the viewer is a sense of a current state of affairs, a sense that what is being shown is happening now.

Yet the sense of viewing spatiotemporal content occurring in the present itself is illusory insofar as that which is apprehended in the current state of affairs is merely a fleeting moment. This occurrence is well articulated in the thought of Georg W.F. Hegel,

> To the question: 'What is the Now?', we answer, for example, 'The 'now' is the night.' [...] We write down this truth. A truth cannot be lost by being written down any more than it can be lost by our preserving it, and if now, this midday, we look at this truth which has been written down, we will have to say that it has become rather stale. The Now, which is the night, is preserved, i.e., it is treated as what it was passed off as being, namely, as an existent. However, it instead proves itself to be a non-existent. To be sure, the Now itself maintains itself but as what is not the night; likewise, it maintains itself vis-à-vis the day, which it now is, as what is also not the day, or it maintains itself as a negative as such.[41]

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40 However, some video compression image processing techniques involve maintaining a still image background while objects in the foreground are refreshed.

41 Georg W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, ed. Terry Pinkard and Michael Baur (Cambridge University Press, 2019): 62.

Since it is said that the apprehension of the present[42] is, from future prospection, a fleeting moment in the past, the nature of understanding what occurs during this present, now, involves linear and processual thinking – suggesting that both humans and video devices share an underlying process-mechanism. Of greater significance, however, is the fact that in the Hegelian view, the now is a universal category by which humans apprehend the present, irrespective of features used to describe the present moment as they are accidental. Keeping this in mind, it is noteworthy that beyond examining the temporality of screens in video and cinema, then also questions arise of experienced temporality by the viewing subject. In this sense, the temporal dimension is to be conceived as a universal with which both perceiving subjects and processual mechanisms participate in their own way.

There are subtle ways in which the temporality (as chronologically determinate shifting images) displayed on screens become enmeshed with temporal categories of human experience, albeit through the mere mode of vision. These include such techniques as frame rate variation, motion blur, granularity, as well as sudden visual perturbations, which, in turn, affects our senses of reactivity and responsiveness, speed and smoothness, attentively / focus, and coherence and continuity, respectively. Moreover, computer software allows for videos to be paused, resumed, fast-forwarded, and re-winded in congruence with our linear conception of time.

Despite the apparent similarities as regards the two notions of temporality between displays and people, there are non-negligible differences. First among which is the fixed and determinate nature of the screen as a technological functioning artefact as opposed to the innumerably possible (hence indeterminate) contexts under which one can view its contents. The fixed and determinate functioning of the screen is evident on grounds that each video or film being displayed is digitally identified, stored, and accessed by a limited set of coded data and hardware. This allows for videos to be replicated in the same way as the image. Whereas the subject may alter their viewing environment indiscriminately without changing the contents displayed as well as the fact of there being a screen and screen viewer, resulting in a modal indeterminacy of screen-viewing – let alone an indeterminacy of the experienced temporal conditions of the viewing subject.

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42 Apropos the concept of "sense-certainty," treated as the most elementary form of immediate consciousness wherein an appeal to basic sense-perception is the starting point of grasping reality.

2.4. Propositional Content – The Informative

We have now arrived at an ontological demarcation between the screen, that as screen functions by displaying, and the viewer, that as a perceiving subject is – insofar as is left unknown – situationally indeterminate. Since there is no determinate environment in particular concerning screen-viewing that is necessary for screens to function as displays, images and videos can be shown whether or not there is a person watching. However, despite this fact, certain characteristics and patterns of contents shown on screen can point us towards a better understanding of the screen viewing subject. By examining how screens are informative, vis-à- vis their displayed contents, we enter the realm of situational relations of dependence with the viewer.

From the starting point of this chapter, images and videos were examined considering how they are inherent aspects of the displaying screen. While the image is a rudimentary part of screens functioning as displays, the video is the simple product of combined images which garners its nature with the added dimension of time – apropos shifting pictures or frames. These two features, the image and video, are thus two means by which the viewer is oriented towards the screen. Yet there is an additional means by which the viewer is affected by screen-viewing as the synthesis of displayed images and video, from now on referred to as informative.

Screens, which display content, are in their essence informative screens on grounds of their epistemic affectivity towards their subject. While this epistemic affectivity is mainly visual, as the media displayed takes the form of image and video, it need not be solely visual. For example, words and symbols can be identified by the screen viewer and thus have an affect towards the bounds of one's knowledge of a subject matter being displayed.[43] Moreover, sounds taken as clearly given in cinema and video also contain this epistemic capacity. It is the form in which image and video are supplemented with sounds, words,[44] and symbols that the content discloses itself to the viewer as a certain archetypal media source that is informative. These forms consist of such domains as entertainment, social media, news, and online encyclopedic resources, for example

Furthermore, each of these domains belong to an established area of reference. Entertainment, as such, is with reference to leisurely activity. News, as shown on screen, is

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43 Furthermore, communication via digitised text and symbols contain their own hermeneutic expression not only by the meanings behind words, but also by an aesthetical dimension exhibited due to such features as choice of font and layout, for example.

44 Cfr. Ellen Rose, "The phenomenology of on-screen reading: University students' lived experience of digitised text," *British Journal of Educational Technology* 42 (2011): 515-526.

with reference to the current world's state of affairs of political concern. Social media is in reference to communal affairs, as well as the relation of oneself to others via commodification and online identity. Online encyclopedic resources serve as reference to scientific and/or historical knowledge bases. It is in these senses, whereby screens become informative to their subject and are epistemically affective at the individual and social level (owing to the established domains here already listed), that the effects of screens being informative displays are based on areas of knowledge either with respect to the external world itself, or with how one situates with oneself to the world in the form of propositions. Screen contents must be organized to be informative. From their structures, television content for example, is to be analyzed with respect to both what is displayed and how viewers are affected by distinct kinds of imagery.[45] Hence there emerges unique forms of media content in line with each established domain recognized by societies and cultures. Resultantly, these help base the claim that this current era is to be known as the Information Age.

While the World Wide Web is commonly observed as the catalyst for this era, it has also been implicitly suggested that this socio-cultural shift began much earlier, by the introduction of cinematography. French philosopher Henri Bergson, in his work *Creative Evolution*, wrote in 1907, claims:

> Such is the contrivance of the cinematograph. And such is also that of our knowledge. Instead of attaching ourselves to the inner becoming of things, we place ourselves outside them in order to recompose their becoming artificially. We take snapshots, as it were, of the passing reality, and as these are characteristic of reality, we have only to string them on a becoming, abstract, uniform and invisible, situated at the back if the apparatus of knowledge, in order to imitate what there is that is characteristic in this becoming itself. Perception, intellection, language, so proceed in general. Whether we would think becoming, or express it, or even perceive it, we hardly do anything else than set going a kind of cinematograph inside us. We may therefore sum up what we have been saying in the conclusion that the mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographical kind.[46]

In this sense, screens as mediums in themselves serve an epistemic role in the transformation of society. It need not be the case that a particular form of presenting information, as through the Internet for example, must be the cause of this phenomena. Rather, content in the most general sense, as displayed in images or video is already epistemically affective because the media itself already contains its epistemic role. For this reason, Marshall McLuhan in 1964 notably claimed that "the medium is the message."

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45 Tim Dant, "The Phenomenology of Television," In Tim Dant, *Television and the Moral Imaginary: Society through the Small Screen*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012): 99-117.

46 Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution: With a Chapter from Bergson and His Philosophy*, ed. J. Alexander Gunn (Read Books Limited, 2016): 322-323.

How is it so that screens as mediums, irrespective of their contents, already include a certain form of epistemic affectivity? If we consider screens as a disruptive technological artefact directing the course of the Information Age, it is by no means contested that a crucial part of this phenomenon is not merely with the screen as artefact in itself, but with the way its contents impact viewers. In particular, the screen often contains continuously updated information that perpetuates itself via the content shown, its luring attentiveness, viewership, and reaction, and finally its reproduction or reconfiguration. This phenomenon maintains itself by an affective capacity to keep viewers concerned with what is shown at present. Through epistemic inquisitiveness, the viewer attends to what is displayed in one or more of its forms, maintaining itself through repetitive encounters. It thus a matter of how we orient ourselves towards the screen, even prior to the reception of its particular contents, with a visual curiosity that it is possible for screens to already include an epistemic affectivity.

However, this curiosity excludes knowledge by acquaintance or tacit learning. One can come to know something by being practically engaged in first-hand experiences and making indexical propositions. This means to know by pointing to real objects, categorizing them, and making a claim. Screens can be informative but only formally so. It may be argued that one cannot obtain the form of knowledge through natural experience for subject matters within the realm of screen-viewing experiences because it can only be through actual lived experience, rather than passive reception of merely displayed visual contents. Thus, screens serve to inform as a mode of knowledge transfer that is limited by two-dimensional visual parameters which cannot fully substitute actual lived experience. There is an important caveat to consider, however, despite the aforementioned, to challenge this view on the grounds of immersive (hence also indexical and tacit) experiences on screen-viewing

2.5. Virtual and Augmented Content – The Immersive

The term, "diegetic," originally refers to a fictional writing style in which the narrator builds a self-contained story-world. In cinema, the term is used to describe the world in which a film's characters seemingly immerse themselves in both the plot and setting by participating and experiencing that which is determined by the screenwriter or producer. In today's environment, film is not the only form of media to contain a diegetic screen. There are in fact multiple ways to demonstrate diegesis on today's screen whether it be by virtual and augmented reality, or the non-mutually exclusive area of video games. However, diegesis is to be reconsidered in

another sense: new screen media display interactive content whereby the viewer becomes immersed in the created diegetic world – becoming a character themselves.

To capture the sense in which the screen is immersive, Dario Cecchi writes,

> image vision often functioned as an absorption into a screen space, where the spectator was not only able to reorganize his optical experience, but was also empowered, through the relationship established with the figures in the representation, to act and display his/her agency, desires and claims. Considered as screens, images show thus the coincidence between an aesthetic and a political experience, where the spectator is not a passive consumer, but an actor on the stage.[47]

There are three notable terms contained in Cecchi's account of screens that help map out and reconstruct the immersive screen: (i) optical experience; (ii) represented screen space; and (iii) agency. The first, optical experience, reveals that for a screen to be an immersive screen, there must be a viewing subject experiencing the immersion. The second, represented screen space, accounts for the fact that the contents displayed creating this immersive experience relies on forms of representation apropos concrete items of the actual world. Finally, the third, agency, is crucial for allowing an immersive experience due to how the viewer is not a passive observer, but an active participant through extended forms of interactivity.

Optical experience on screens is an experience on account of displaying images or video that assumes some form of worldly reference. Just as vision involves a structuring of worldly reference vis-à-vis fixations and categorizations of objects in a foreground seeming to belong within a background, the optical experience on screens involves these three-dimensional and (at least implicitly) temporal qualia. Further, while screens were previously considered as displays in the sense of the photographic (image) and cinematographic (video), the optical experience of screens includes them, but with the addition of an observer.

Represented screen space is the next stage from which a screen-viewing observer (in optical experience) begins to immerse themselves. At this stage, the optical experience is not taken as merely general vision, but a vision of a specific kind. As such, it is a vision through a medium that displays contents that are not in and of themselves subsistent entities in the actual world, but contents which are representational or symbolic – and thus, in that sense virtual.[48]

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47 Dario Cecchi, "The Elusive Body: Abstract for a History of Screens," in *Rivista di estetica - Schermi*. ed. Mauro Carbone and Anna Caterina Dalmasso (Rosenberg & Sellier, 2014): 35.

48 It is noted however, that imagined worlds may be situated via the screen in modes other than the visual (prima facie) – such as, the hypertextual game Zork. Also, it is said "Critical Code Studies (CCS) is an approach that applies critical hermeneutics to the interpretation of computer code, program architecture, and documentation within a socio-historical context. CCS holds that lines of code are not value-neutral and can be analyzed using the theoretical approaches applied to other semiotic systems in addition to particular interpretive methods developed particularly for the discussions of programs." In Mark C. Marino, "Critical Code Studies," *Electronic Book Review* (2006). URL = https://electronicbookreview.com/essay/critical-code-studies/

This represented screen space is thus the imaginary made visible, insofar as that which is imaginary is a reconfiguration or imitation of actual beings.

Moreover, the idea of represented screen space is not one of binary existence or non-existence, but a matter of degree. The reason represented screen space is present only to a certain extent, depending on its context, is because of two referents that participate in its domain – the actual world and conditions of the observer. Represented screen space is a quality to be measured according to the degree to which it matches objects of a world and, more importantly, the level of familiarity it discloses itself to the observer's lifeworld. The more fitting a represented screen space is to an observer, the greater the degree to which they may be immersed. However, the represented world in question may either be intentionally designed to imitate the real (as a simulation) or may represent an imagined world that adheres to natural patterns and laws of its own. One means by which these laws and patterns are disclosed to the observer is through the range of their own interactivity and sense of agency within it.

Agency is a final condition that constitutes the fundaments of the immersive screen. While agency in the general sense is most accessible via the first person and is entangled with notions of actions, behaviours, and responses, agency that is particular to the immersive screen is solely virtual and extended. While this agency is virtual due to the fact that one's actions are both representational and set by the parameters of what immersive screens allow, this agency is at the same time extended due to the components required to demonstrate it (e.g., keyboard and mouse) which in itself depends on ergonomic qualities. Furthermore, grasping the sense of agency on an immersive screen is a matter of sensing how one's interactions are causal while certain aspects of the represented state of affairs are left indeterminate – because of the apparent stochastic rendering of a world – which itself is a complex domain of objects, subject to perceived variability depending on the conditions of the observer.

Agency of the immersive screen is an interactivity condition whereby one is no longer simply a viewer, but an active user. This transformation is set in place through courses of action and consequence demonstrated on screen that is according to deliberate user engagements. Such form of interactivity may be conceived as taking place prior to visual stimulus, due to the fact of how contents displayed in this form are first subject to change depending on the user. However, these visual stimuli, as consequential to the actions of the user, are only able to allure a sense of agency to a limited extent. This limitation lies in how corresponding and consequential visual stimuli on screen contain two opposing causal ontologies: experienced indeterminacy versus programmed determinacy. While, on the one hand, experienced

indeterminacy is a phenomenon particular to the interactive user, programmed determinacy, on the other hand, is a logically and materially bound set of decision procedures from which the contents to be displayed are finite. These two opposing senses of determinacy or lack thereof raises necessary questions pertaining to the nature of agency as it is demonstrated through the medium of an immersive screen.

For example, the question arises of whose agency is to be accounted for through an immersive screen – is it to be directly credited to the interactive user or programmer and designer? While a playable character, for instance, is given identity traits and features inscribed by the developer, their actions are subject to the choices and behaviours of the user. This merging of programmed determinacy (set in place by a developer) and experienced indeterminacy (apropos the possible actions and choices available to the user) thereby creates a special form of screen medium that is immersive. In this sense, an immersive screen is a medium containing a semiotic reality that brackets the sense of the viewer's natural location.

The user's intuitive sense of situatedness is further investigated in the context of an immersive screen by also considering the relation between agency and embodiment. If a viewer becomes transformed into an interactive user, it is owed to the three features of optical experience, represented screen space, and agency, that this is possible. However, as a means of further enhancing this sense of agency, a bodied self is to be at least implicitly suggested for the purpose of composing a natural mechanism for sense perception. As Vivian Sobchack claims, "the perceiving and sensible body is always also a lived body—immersed in, making, and responding to social as well as somatic meaning. [...] Seeing images mediated and made visible by technological vision thus enables us not only to see technological images but also to see technologically."[49] Yet this claim traces its origins earlier in a phenomenological insight (concerning embodiment) from Maurice Merleau-Ponty, as he claimed,

> The tip of my nose and the contours of my eye sockets are all that I see of my own head. I can, of course, see my eyes in a three-faced mirror, but these are the eyes of someone who is observing, and I can barely catch a glimpse of my living gaze when a mirror on the street unexpectedly reflects my own image back at me. My body, as seen in the mirror, continues to follow my intentions as if they were its shadow, and if observation involves varying the point of view by holding the object fixed, then my body escapes observation and presents itself as a simulacrum of my tactile body, since it mimics the tactile body's initiatives rather than responding to them through a free unfolding of perspectives.[50]

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49 Vivian Sobchack, "Comprehending Screens: A Meditation in Media Res," in *Rivista di estetica* – Schermi, ed. Mauro Carbone and Anna Caterina Dalmasso (Rosenberg & Sellier, 2014): 93.
50 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*. trans. Donald A. Landes, (Routledge, 2012): 94.

Thus, it is claimed that the nature of sense-perception itself belongs to the embodied individual. What is also suggested here is that bodily-sense-organs are correlative to one's perceptual experiences. Yet one may question, how does one's bodily-sense-organs then being extended through ergonomic tools onto an immersive screen, which in turn, represents a character's embodied-self, impact this sense-experience. While there are means to address this question by referring to philosophies of intentionality that more specifically account for the representational dimension of possible actions and consequences in embodied experience, a more clear-cut demarcation between represented screen space and first-hand accounts of sense-experience would also contribute. This demarcation is therefore examined in the proceeding section by considering screens as filters.

3. Screens as Filters

3.1. Framing Environments

The awareness of oneself as distinct from the external world is felt a certain way beyond linguistically formed thoughts and expressions. Nonetheless, individual awareness corresponds with an individual state of affairs[51] and thereby, much can be said about such things as environments, objects, processes, and events, as well as the limits with which we come to know them. In this sense, we are continuously acquainted with a diverse set of environments throughout our lived experience and come to be aware of how they are framed as we learn from them. For screens, the matter of framing environments is demonstrably more challenging and intricate because of the various levels of how they present states of affairs, and further, with the gradations and modes of our cognizing them. Such issue revolves around various ranges of scope pertaining to: (i) the classification of states of affairs (as sets of propositions in natural language); (ii) the mediation of states of affairs into displayed contents on screen (as pixels from coded data of programming languages); and (iii) the viewing subject recognizing that the particular contents displayed takes the form of a doubly framed environment (first, on account of the device's own mediation; second, on account of the viewer's awareness of the subject matter).

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51 Or, as attributed with the hallmarks of Immanuel Kant's philosophy, "consciousness is always consciousness of something." In Charles E. Scott, "Consciousness and the Conditions of Consciousness," *The Review of Metaphysics* 25, no. 4. (1972): 625.

We begin with the problem of classifying natural states of affairs. While Kantian categories of space and time appear universal for classifying experienced states of affairs, trying to bring this to light by any specifics is problematic. It is more challenging to point to individual referents of a domain and extract their essential meaning than to name a universal with which almost anything can belong. This project to make sense of things as individual has been well illustrated, as Gottlob Frege noted how language involves both *sense* and *reference* to particulars,[52] or as how Ferdinand de Saussure's 1916 lectures paradigmatically introduced the concepts of *signifier* and *signified*,[53] and perhaps as best evidenced in Saul Kripke's account of proper names in *Naming and Necessity*.[54] Hence, much has been investigated about the separation between objects and how we come to refer to them. While these issues listed mainly persist in the philosophy of language (taking the form of proper names and propositions), there are related issues as well in the philosophy of perception. Just as there is a difference between things themselves and their linguistic naming, expression, and use, there is a mediated difference between that which is seen and how we come to understand and describe seeing them.

Of great importance for a comparative analysis between an ordinary perception of natural objects and viewing screens are the subtleties in difference between fields of vision. Our natural eyesight chooses the various kinds of parameters of visual stimuli to focus on while there are consistent and (sometimes) variable objects and environments to be aware of.[55] By contrast, the images displayed on screen already filter in a determinate (fixed) perspective to watch. Although the contents shown may still be contemplated in several different ways, the image cast itself remains in the form of a disinterested sequence of pixels and sense data. These differences of fields of vision become most evident when considering one's own viewing of something and watching a film that also captures that same thing. In doing so, one notices how different and skewed visual perspectives are, although still given the same subject matter presenting itself.

Despite this, to the contrary, the mediation of natural states of affairs into displayed contents on screen becomes less and less noticeable as screen imaging and film technologies become more advanced. Tim Dant, for instance, associates photo imagery's appeal to various

52 Gottlob Frege, "Sense and Reference," *The Philosophical Review* 57, no. 3 (1948): 209–230.

53 Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Perry Meisel and Haun Saussy. Trans. Wade Baskin (Columbia University Press, 2011).

54 Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Harvard University Press, 1980): 37.

55 E.J. Green and Susanna Schellenberg, "Spatial Perception: The Perspectival Aspect of Perception," *Philosophy Compass* 13, no. 2 (2017).

sense qualities. It is due to this abundance of stimuli that the nature of screens as devices of mediation is one of immersion. Moreover, it is a consequence of this fact that one may fixate only on the contents being displayed while at the same time diminishing their natural situational awareness. Such is the nature of framed environments and the filtering of our perception. According to Anna Caterina Dalmasso,

> The screen's frame outlines a separation, an ontological and semiotic cut between the real space and the view contained within its aperture. While it inherits such a border from the tradition of pictorial representation, the screen's surface constitutes itself as an overlapping structure that encroaches and puts into question the existence of its own boundaries.[56]

Considering this fact, several questions arise as to the nature of perception and how we come to recognize things through mediation. If screens display images which we ourselves find hard to distinguish from zero-level (natural) reality, this suggests that perhaps everything is mediated to extents which we cannot be aware of, granted there is no stringent mutual exclusivity between contents of real things being imagined and contents of electronically displayed things being imagined. There lies the problem in cognizing (i) the scope of presented states of affairs; (ii) the scope of our awareness of natural states of affairs; and (iii) the implied awareness that there is more than that which is presented based on perception and the contents displayed on screen. While, in this third issue (the idea of there being more than that which is perceived – in contrast to George Berkeley's famous *esse est percipi*), the nature of this unknown may either be taken in the form of truth-valued questions and propositions or in terms of measurement (with respect to how much is being concealed or revealed). In that manner, screens are filters through framing environments which originally were as first-hand accounts of states of affairs.

Furthermore, there arises the problem of realism versus idealism with respect to understanding what constitutes states of affairs in the first place. It appears that contents of perception represent physical environments (including objects, processes, space, and fixed time). However, we are also aware of products of the mind which may set the framework from which we begin to conceive and reconstruct states of affairs. These include phenomena such as, noticing the varied opinions and points of view for the same state of affairs e.g., a football match, reading one's thoughts and feelings, the sense of eagerness or patience of elapsed time, and the realization of bearing witness to truth or being deceived. Moreover, these differences between realism (often treated as the physical) and idealism (treated as belonging to states of

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56 Anna Caterina Dalmasso, "I Bordo Opaco. Pensare ol Schermo, Pensare al Superficie," in *Rivista di estetica – Schermi*, ed. Mauro Carbone and Anna Caterina Dalmasso (Rosenberg & Sellier, 2014): 53.

the mind) become blurred when considering human artefacts and social constructs. Yet the overarching problem regarding conceiving states of affairs is the ability to recognize perceptual signals being factored in by forms of representations and mediums.

3.2. Typology of Mediums

The process of filtering is a phenomenon of mediation. However, there are distinctions to be made between separate senses of mediums and things being mediated. Firstly, there is medium quod, (translated literally into 'the means which'), and, is understood as "the object itself that is to be seen or known."[57] Moreover, it is claimed that the term is to be associated with opacity with respect to sensory cognition.[58] Second, there is medium quo (translated literally as 'the means by which'). According to St. Thomas Aquinas, medium quo is "the medium by which a thing is seen [as] the sensible species itself of the thing existing in the eye, which, as the form of the one seeing in so far as he is seeing, is the principle of the activity of sight."[59] Thus, examples of medium quo may include the retina of the eye as well as the camera.[60] Third, medium a quo (translated literally as the medium from which) is the means "from which one receives knowledge of a thing seen [...] like a mirror, from which the eye at times receives the species of some visible thing, for example, a stone, and not from the stone itself."[61] And finally, fourth, there is medium sub quo (translated literally as the medium under which). Medium sub quo is treated as "bodily seeing [as] it is seen is the light by which something is made actually visible and the sight is perfected for seeing."[62] In this sense, medium sub quo refers to the constitutive bases from which sight and visibility are possible, i.e., light.

And in these four senses of mediums, it is reasonable to cross out the first two (medium quo and medium quod) as inapplicable for the case of screen-filtering. This is because screens are not merely opaque objects or artefacts of perception (as in medium quod), and neither are screens simply the means by which we come to know or sense something (as in medium quo).

57 "Scholastic Terms and Axioms." *New Catholic Encyclopedia. Encyclopedia.com*. Accessed December 20, 2022.https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/scholastic-terms-and-axioms

58 "Zmysły, filoz. środki poznania zewnętrznego i bezpośredniego." *Encyklopedia.pwn.pl.* Accessed January 4, 2023. https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/zmysly;4001920.html

59 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de Veritate*, trans. V. James and S.J. McGlynn. (Henry Regnery Company, 1953): 18.1 ad 1).

60 Before the modern camera, there was the camera obscura (in Latin, meaning "dark chamber") which was a way of projecting an image onto a wall in a darkened room through a hole with light being cast in from the outside. Due to the light's angle of incidence, the image appeared as upside-down on the wall.

61 Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de Veritate*, 18.1 ad 1).

62 Aquinas, 18.1 ad 1).

Rather, we are left with either screens being in medium sub quo or medium a quo with respect to filtering. That is, screens are either mediums under which we perceive, or mediums from which we receive knowledge of a thing seen. We shall next examine the reasons so.

To consider screens as filtering devices for mediation specifically in the sense of medium sub quo, we shall note the relevance and variation of light as its constitutive property. Visible light for us is only a small fraction of the general property of light along the electromagnetic spectrum. Yet somehow, this narrow fraction provides a vast array of possible configurations of perceptual sense data for our field of vision. Moreover, the nature of this field of vision involves not only the sense of light in terms of colour, but also in terms of geometric properties and refraction which determine our sense of localization and globalization, as well as focus and periphery while observing phenomena. Furthermore, there is the added dimension of light cast by the screen itself which is subject to extended forms of perceptual signaling due to the configurations of pixel resolution, brightness, colouration, and framed dimensions / size and shape, et cetera. For these considerations, it becomes evident just how complex and intricate light and human perception vis-a-vis light can be. Consequently, screens are in medium sub quo as a constitutive mode of perception, yet such basis is already heavily convoluted.

Screens also are filters, in the sense of medium a quo, due to how they represent concrete things (e.g., stones) but are not the things to which they represent themselves. And thus, they are rather mediatory artefacts, like mirrors. Screens are mediums from which things are represented. Moreover, that means the extension of properties featured on them are displayed only insofar as they are capable of representing. Just as the angle, exposure, size and clarity of a mirror determines the scope of the image which one then faces and recognizes, the functional (software) and material (hardware) properties of the screen determine how vast and intricate its displayed contents are. And further, it is the case both for the mirror and screen that much of its exhibited contents belong to natural states of affairs to which they either reflect or display (while it is arguable that both processes of reflecting and displaying are equally representational).

It therefore appears that medium sub quo is the primary basis from which screens are filters. Screens begin to filter in sense data vis-a-vis the various forms of light that is casted out and catches the human retina, which itself makes no natural and immediate distinction between seeing through natural light and seeing artificial light from screened devices. Meanwhile, medium a quo is the secondary basis from which we perceive them as filters. The screen is the

medium through which we come to know natural objects through representations without necessarily having to encounter their originally sourced context directly.

3.3. Modal Relations

Taking the investigation of medium a quo for screens as filters, there arises the problem of understanding interrelations and possibilities among various forms in cognizing natural objects and screened data. Ingrid Richardson's article, *Faces, Interfaces, Screens: Relational Ontologies of Framing Attention and Distraction*,[63] analyses how separate modes of screen viewing not only decides the nature of human interaction but also the ontological framework from which we begin to make sense of the world.

According to Richardson, face recognition and senses of corporeality are not exclusive to natural human interaction, but carry their own ontological salience (qualitative measure) on screen viewing as well. Moreover, these two functions, while realized through screens, depend on the form of device casting the displayed contents. It appears that devices such as the smartphone, television, and cinema screens imbue contents, forms of viewership, and corresponding behaviours that determine the extents of – and manners in which we see – the face of the other. As Richardson states, "the particular technosomatic configurations of screen experience across televisual, computer and mobile interfaces, when critically examined in terms of their medium specific effects, can offer some insight into how such effects work to confound and reshape historically sedimented face-to-interface conventions."[64] In this light, screen-filtering through medium a quo appears to consist in transversing forms of representations most prominently in the image of the face. Meanwhile, such process reconfigures the manner in which one sees the face of another in natural human interaction.

A consequence following the ontological blur between psychological dispositions of recognizing another's face on screen, as opposed to in natural encounter, paves way to patterns of behaviour which pose as detrimental to the awareness of representational significance – the realization of things being presented in the form of medium a quo. In this sense, a more heavily socially constructed semiotic reality supersedes the viewer's potential awareness of the semantic nature of screens presenting and reconfiguring (in a particularistic and contingent way) the object(s) signified.

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63 Ingrid Richardson, "Faces, interfaces, screens: Relational ontologies of framing, attention and distraction," *Transformations Journal of Media & Culture* 18 (2010): 1-15.

64 Richardson, "Faces, interfaces, screens: Relational ontologies of framing, attention and distraction," 11-12.

In addition, modal relations are significant for the filtering of contents displayed on screen with respect to logical possibility, necessity, and axioms from which desired outcomes are sought. This is the paradigm of belief-desire-intention software models (BDI) as put forward by Anand Rao and Michael Georgeff.[65] It operates both at the level of programming languages, such as Java, as well as the level of semantics in natural language and human output. Thus, there are conceptual overlaps between intentionality as the product of human intellection and expression, and the ability to code strings into explicitly produced contents displayed on screen.

Therefore, in sum, it is apparent that there are various ways to conceive of senses of modality with the case of screens. Either they may be conceived with respect to how they operate themselves, or as how we participate in our own perceptual cognition of them, or in terms of an ontological overlapping wherein both the screen and the viewer are to be located within a dynamic interacting system of modalities.

3.4. Digital Filtering

Turning to an ontological distinction among the ways in which screens serve as filters, a strict difference between digital and analogue operations is relevant. Amotz Zahavi claims,

> An analog speedometer's needle lets us estimate speed pretty precisely, even if there are only two or three numbers on the face of the speedometer. A digital speedometer, which displays numbers, is limited to the precision of these numbers. If the digits change with only every 5 additional miles per hour, the digital speedometer will not show the difference between, say, 11 mph and 14 mph – while an analog speedometer will.[66]

Given that digital and analogue devices display content in characteristically distinct ways, the former through electronics and the latter through mechanistic operations, it is important to note that these differences are also significant for our perceptual and epistemic experience. Despite the formal coherence with which pixels on digital displays produce images, this functioning serves a filtering role that is unique, namely because all sense data captured with them are subject to the conditions of digitization, which includes, but is not limited to, pixel resolution, colour accuracy and image refresh rate, and can be seen and understood only through the experiential categories we impose on them – the phenomenal world in Kantian terms. Conversely, analogue devices serve the user in a manner that, despite lacking numerical and

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65 Asanda S. Rao and Michael. P. Georgeff, "Formal models and decision procedures for multi-agent systems," *Technical Note, AAII. CiteSeerX* 10.1.1.52.7924 (AAII, 1995).

66 Amotz Zahavi and Avishag Zahavi, *The handicap principle: A missing piece of Darwin's puzzle* (Oxford University Press, 1999): 12-21.

formal faultlessness (as found in digital displays), convey information in real time and is only subject to mechanistic processes which participate in the world of physical laws – the noumenon in Kantian terms. It is interesting then to consider how screens filter our perceptions through this digitization wherein we are subject to the limits of its formal processes and capacities, whereas with ordinary analogue devices we are more so subject to physical laws in general. As a result, the distinction between analogue and digital filtering is a distinction to be made strictly to the device itself and is maintained as entirely separate from the viewer's perspective, although one can note such differences.

4. Screen as Tools

4.1. The Function of Analogies

Reasoning by the use of analogy is a method that can serve to understand what an object is and how it is conceived. In contrast to descriptive and stipulative definitions, analogies signify concepts and terms through extrapolating features of one item to another. That means, by starting from an original term or proposition, we can capture a specific sense by which we understand it and then impose and compare this understanding to another term or proposition which carries resemblance, correspondence, or conceptual fittingness in a similar respect. For example, we may say that reflection is possible with both mirrors and paintings, although they may reach this uniquely. We hence move from the internal meaning of the term as known through its definition (intension) to the potential ideas and things it designates (extension).

Metaphor is a particular form of analogy that does not require logical necessity, but rather symbolic or representational congruence. According to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another."[67] The nature of metaphor belongs to a myriad of different kinds of entities in any state of affairs, whether they be particular things, qualities, events, ideas and so on.

It is noteworthy that metaphors as such function conceptually without any strong restrictions. That is, they do not require a coherence through entangling entities and ideas with each other. Rather, there is a looseness with which we may abstract from particular definitions of a term (be they physically oriented or ideational) and apply them to our system of language. Moreover, Lakoff and Johnson go further into the nature of metaphors through classifying them

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67 George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (University of Chicago Press, 2008): 5.

in terms of systematicity (in their examples, of argumentation, time, highlighting and hiding), orientation, ontology, personification, metonymy, causation and coherence, etc. It thus appears that metaphors are both fundamental and flexible in constructing the frameworks from which we develop ideas and conceive their interrelations.

4.2.   Metaphors on Screens

Now having in mind the function of analogies, we shall turn to metaphors for screens themselves. As it has been described earlier that screens function as displays, but also, function as filters, there is space to consider how these two, though opposed, functions work analogously to other things. Keith Whitmoyer claims that "each event of unconcealment is coupled with concealment, every surface both a screen and curtain: the skin both outwardly manifests, and simultaneously conceals; the printed page both outwardly manifests its signification and yet always produces an unthought element."[68] Screens may bear two functions, which may even be opposed. Although screens clearly depict image and video, the nature of the origins of these two are not adequately nor comprehensively illustrated. Screens display content but the state of affairs from which the content is sourced is filtered. In that manner, screens are like curtains, skins, and printed pages, as Whitmoyer suggests, and moreover, are conceived of as a kind of surface from which our perceptions serve to inform our thoughts of things both shown and hidden, in different ways, and even sometimes simultaneously.

Acknowledging this double-aspect for screens put forth by Whitmoyer, let us now examine further metaphors which entice us to consider what other artefacts are like them. Laurent Jullier, in his paper, "The Pentagon of Screens" (2014),[69] offers five different metaphors to conceive of screens as tools. These include first, as lenses; second as doors; third as hanging pictures; fourth as tablets; and fifth as toys.

The first, screens as lenses, is to be conceived in terms of perception. Jullier makes a distinction between allocentric and egocentric perception psychology wherein the latter is in recognition of the relativity between the viewing subject and object, and the former about only attending to the objects themselves.[70] This distinction is important for his conception of screens as lenses because the two terms relate with our understanding of subjectivity and objectivity.

68 Keith Whitmoyer, "Review of Mauro Carbone, Philosophy-Screens: From Cinema to the Digital Revolution," *Chiasmi International* 22 (2020): 453.
69 Laurent Jullier, "The Pentagon of Screens," in *Rivista di estetica – Schermi,* ed. Mauro Carbone and Anna Caterina Dalmasso (Rosenberg & Sellier, 2014): 123-139.
70 Laurent Jullier, "The Pentagon of Screens," 124.

On the one hand, a lens may be seen as skewing the natural / objective (and hence implied appropriate) perspective of a thing in particular, as with the case of a magnifying glass rendering the object larger than normal. On the other hand, a lens may be seen as offering a proper means to view the real world, as with the case of the telescope. Interestingly, for Jullier, such forms of far distant observation as in the sky is what led to a sense of trustworthiness in lenses from the seventeenth century onwards.[71] Thus, lenses, depending on the forms they take, are either conducive to picturing a more accurate and reliable epistemic reality or detrimental to it.

Likewise, Jullier draws similarities between lenses and screens in terms of this sense of gaining access to some natural objectivity by the two artefacts serving as mediums of perceptual enhancement. He in fact claims, "the attentive eye of the scientist sees more of the 'real world' than it could without his microscope or telescope, just as Bazinian aesthetes [...] see more of the 'real world' through the eye of the camera than they would with their own eyes only."[72] For this reason, screens are to be compared with lenses metaphorically because of the two trajectories with which both can depict objects – either allocentrically or egocentrically, either subjectively or (apparently) objectively.

Second, doors, according to Jullier, are also a way of interpreting screens in the sense that both give access to a "second world."[73] He explains, "the idea of doors – since we commonly enter a house through its door and not through a window – suits the diegetic/narrative aim of fictional (or fictionalised) images: making the audience enter the depicted world."[74] Metaphorically speaking, questions about further points of comparison between them may be considered in terms of functioning. A door is to be opened or closed and is considered working as it should, in either case. A screen, likewise, may be switched on or off. However, whether in fact the screen counts as still functioning or working while switched off is called into question. It is then only feasible to draw points of comparison between doors and screens only in terms of when their functioning is enabled and switched on.

Third, a comparison of screens with hanging pictures for Jullier is drawn by how "in this category, we sit in front of screens to contemplate what they display, occasionally passing disinterested judgments on the beauty of what we see. Here we no longer deal with substitutes or replicas of the world, but with autonomous pictures standing for nothing else than

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71 Jullier, 125.
72 Jullier, 126.
73 Jullier, 129.
74 Jullier, 129.

themselves."[75] Given that screens display images also in the form of a picture, and the fact that this feature is to be understood as contemplative, hanging pictures are no different than those screens which display a still image, as outlined in the visual content.[76]

Fourth, tablets are explained by Jullier as like screens in terms of how they find "useful data," and he goes as far as to claim, "[o]ne can even say that the simple experiences of watching a movie on TV or a subtitled film in a movie theatre would turn the screens into tablets."[77] However, there is an apparent confusion with his linking of these terms given how both screens and tablets are both technological devices already, with dispersed etymological histories which do not rely on any association with electronics, nor special use in particular. Tablets of the conventional sort are built with screens, otherwise they would not be tablets. Moreover, the informational or propositional contents displayed on screen, as accounted earlier,[78] suffices to explain the mere capacity for screens to exhibit "useful data." Rather than using tablets as a metaphor for comparisons with information and data on screen, metaphors used to understand artificial intelligence offers analyses in more detail.[79] There being "useful data" does not have to hold true on the condition of any form of comparison to tablets. In fact, tablets are colloquially understood in modern times as a device with a screen, just as with a personal computer and smartphone.

Finally, for Jullier screens may be understood as toys given that they can elicit "countless emotional markers"[80] (especially in film). He then states how this is from "a quasi-physiologic pleasure epistemologically disconnected from visual knowledge of the world [...], diegetical absorption [...], aesthetic contemplation [...], and data consulting"[81] thus marking the screens as toys metaphor as distinct from others. However, it is also comparable how screens function as toys particularly through interaction. Otherwise, mere passive reception of screen contents without means of interaction would limit such emotive-psychological states associated with them.

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75 Laurent Jullier, "The Pentagon of Screens," 132.
76 Cfr. the photographic account of screens in section 2.2. of this chapter.
77 Jullier, 133.
78 Cfr. The propositional and informative account of screens in section 2.3. of this chapter.
79 Cfr. Mirosław Sopek, „Metafory sztucznej inteligencji" in *Metafory ucieleśnione*, ed. Marek Hetmański and Andrzej Zykubek (Wydawnictwo Academicon, 2021): 73-98.
80 Jullier, 135.
81 Jullier, 134.

4.3. Images on Paintings and on Screens

The nature of a still image on screen, as experienced by its viewer, is visually indistinct from a painting. However, this indistinctness holds only insofar as the particular forms of impressions in light and colour (e.g., vibrance, contrast, brightness, definition, reflectivity, etc.) do not impose themselves to the point of being noticed. What this means is that the state of affairs depicted in the screened image (i.e., its contents) as well as the state of affairs depicted in the painting (e.g., object, foreground, and background) are characteristically indistinguishable for the purposes of one's viewing. Although the painting is material while the screened image is virtual, one does not usually fixate on their form, but rather, on their content. This is because contents (such as, people, places, things, and ideas) are the object of interest for the viewer. And further, the formation of such contents are produced in terms of the intentions of the artists (for both painter and graphic designer), which they themselves construct using the conceptual frameworks of the contents of an idea(s), without focus on the form / medium itself, since in doing so would obstruct the individuality of expression.

Given this visual and experiential in-distinction between paintings and screened images,

> it is noteworthy to consider how the cause for this is due to an overlap wherein, (1) It is possible, in our time, to figure out a convergence between the novel, painting, and cinema; (2) such a convergence can be extended also the Gestalt psychology and to contemporary philosophy, particularly phenomenology; (3) the core of such convergence is the focus on the visible, which is explicit, on the one hand, in the topic concerning our relation to the world, and, on the other hand, in that regarding our relation to the others.[82]

Thus, as Mauro Carbone claims, visibility is the predominant means by which various forms of media converge. The phenomenological (experiential) dimension to it further explains why media contents are made the way they are. Furthermore, a curious question arises as to the nature of this converging. Is the converging to be understood in terms of the disparate mediums (screens, paintings, books, etc.) pointing to the same issue (such as, personal relations, according to Carbone)? Or are these mediums merely serving as a convoluted and dispersed "in between" for the authors' expression, finding various ways to be disseminated, though ultimately converging to reach the audience?

To investigate how this converging may occur, let us consider a unique case of making art. Starting from the 1970s, a particular form of synthesized film and painting originated in Poland, known as, the Workshop of the Film Form or video art (originally, *Warsztat Formy*

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82 Carbone, *Philosophy-Screens: From Cinema to the Digital Revolution*, 11.

Filmowej).[83] Artist Zdzisław Beksiński is renowned for this style through his works which involve the method of manually painting while filming the painting, and thus using the video recording of the process to further enhance the art itself. The result of his method is captivating precisely because of the converging of these two mediums, serving to visually perplex the audience. On the one hand, from a broad perspective, his works (which are untitled) immerse the viewer to a gloomy atmosphere in a style comparable to magical realism. And this can be partially explained by the nature of his painting by hand. While, on the other hand, the same works viewed from up close, contain elements (e.g., religious symbols, faces, and random items) of an immense attention to detail - likely to be explained by the aid of a zoomed camera. As stated by Łukasz Ronduda,[84]

> In Market Squre (1970), Robakowski's first film made within Workshop of the Film Form, the artist tries to expose the proper film medium and the potential of the illusion of reality used by professional cinematography. It shows that the film's "impression of reality" is only a product of technology, or more precisely in general — the result of the appropriate speed of moving film frames projector or camera (24 frames per second). A slight modification of this speed or recording with a camera with a different tape speed (e.g. five frames every two seconds, as is the case in the Market Square) gives a completely different picture of the recorded reality. In this video, Robakowski reveals how you can get completely a surprising picture of the world thanks to the manipulation of technology (a film camera) — an image beyond human perception and imagination. One artist on the one hand, unmasks the framework in which reality is "formed" by the film camera, on the other hand — treats the camera as a tool that allows him to perform special operations (subordinating her work to aleatoric, a priori procedures) [to] see the world anew, constantly refreshing one's own view and feeling of reality, still discovering it.[85]

Thus, video art is a means of further providing various ways to produce works. This is done especially in terms of widening what we see and how we see it, allowing artists to expand their creativity on one side, and the audience to have a larger scope of interpretation on the other. For this reason, to the question of converging forms of media, we see that by combining video

83 Lukasz Ronduda and Marika Kuzmicz. *Workshop of the Film Form.* (Sternberg Press, 2016).

84 Łukasz Ronduda. "Józef Robakowski i Warsztat Formy Filmowej w latach siedemdziesiątych." *Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej Zamek Ujazdowski.*
https://archiwum.u-jazdowski.pl/upload/file/1206robakowski_press_ronduda.pdf

85 In the original Polish: W Rynku (1970), pierwszym filmie Robakowskiego zrealizowanym w ramach Warsztatu Formy Filmowej, artysta stara się obnażyć właściwy dla medium filmowego i wykorzystywany przez profesjonalną kinematografię potencjał iluzji rzeczywistości. Pokazuje, że filmowe „wrażenie realności" jest jedynie wytworem techniki, a ściślej rzecz biorąc — wynikiem odpowiedniej prędkości przesuwu klatek filmowych w projektorze lub kamerze (24 klatki na sekundę). Drobna modyfikacja tej prędkości lub rejestracja kamerą o innej prędkości przesuwu taśmy (np. pięć klatek co dwie sekundy, jak to ma miejsce w Rynku) daje zupełnie inny obraz rejestrowanej rzeczywistości. W tym filmie Robakowski ujawnia, w jaki sposób można uzyskać całkowicie zaskakujący obraz świata dzięki manipulacji techniką (kamerą filmową) — obraz wykraczający poza ludzkie możliwości percepcyjne i wyobrażeniowe. Artysta z jednej strony demaskuje ramy, w jakich „formuje" rzeczywistość kamera filmowa, z drugiej — traktuje kamerę jako narzędzie pozwalające mu w toku specjalnych operacji (podporządkowanie jej pracy procedurom aleatorycznym, aprialycznym) zobaczyć świat na nowo, nieustannie odświeżać własny ogląd i odczuwanie rzeczywistości, wciąż ją odkrywać. Łukasz Ronduda, "Józef Robakowski i Warsztat Formy Filmowej w latach siedemdziesiątych," *Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej Zamek Ujazdowski*, 5-6. Translated by Kaz Kukiela.

production with the art of painting by hand there is not only an expansion of visual contents, but greater forms of creativity which are the result of a multimodal interaction. In this case, there is less of a strict dichotomy between natural reality and created art, but more so of an overlap wherein the screen as a transformative medium can capture and exhibit both dimensions.

4.4. Parallax Effect

Visual perception is not merely the passive reception of sense data (like, colours, shapes, and sizes), but also a constructive act wherein the mind builds coherent structures for the given qualia. A concrete evidence of this is known as the Parallax effect or Parallax view, in which there is "apparent displacement, or difference in the apparent position, of an object, caused by an actual change (or difference) of the position of the point of observation."[86]

Fig. 1.[87]

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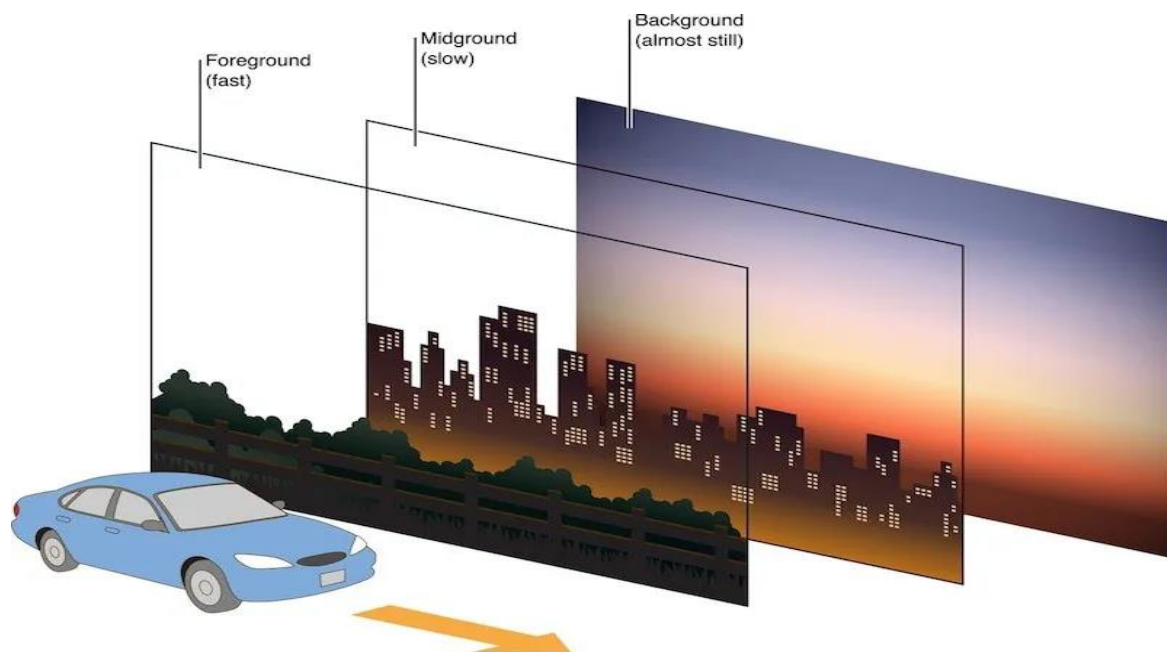
86 "Parallax," in *Oxford English Dictionary - Second Edition*, ed. John Simpson and Edmund Weiner (Clarendon Press, 1989).

87 "Parallax Web Design - The Earth May Not Move for Us But the Web Can," *Interaction Design Foundation*, Accessed July 14, 2023. https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/parallax-web-design-the-earth-may-not-move-for-us-but-the-web-can

While the Parallax effect is a natural feature of human perception, it can also be exhibited through contents on screen, and is an innovative feature of UX design. It tends to work best in situations when objects in the foreground are closely present and those of the background are left behind. Movement only makes the effect stronger – either in the human subject's mobility (e.g., as when onboard a train, noticing trees and landscapes) or in seeing moving objects themselves (e.g., seeing vehicles approaching closer and seemingly faster beginning from afar). What this means for the pluralistic approach to screen theory is that although we may find various points of comparisons for screens to other artefacts and tools through metaphors and analogies, the general understanding of screens themselves also requires an understanding of the intricate layers of cognition for our perceiving them.

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In this chapter we have intended to locate the conceptual background of discourse on screens. While it was found that screens have been generally conceived as displays, as filters, and as tools, particular ways of explaining them do not set the full picture. For screens taken as displays, the qualities they produce being: visual content, spatiotemporal content, propositional content, and virtual and augmented content altogether account for that which the screen can show us. However, missing in this view are questions of that which lies outside their contents. For this reason, the inverse approach of understanding screens as filters served to account for how screens may frame environments, function as mediums, become relationally embedded in different modal domains, and substitute parts of natural life through digitization. As a result, screens were found to function as both displays and filters. Yet there emerged another problem pertaining to screens which is that similar qualities are found in other artefacts. Consequently, we then looked into the ways screens may be compared with other items or tools such as, lenses, doors, hanging pictures, tablets and toys to figure how the qualities identified in these accounts so far investigated are not solely unique to screens. In view of screens conceived as displays, filters, and tools, we may here tentatively foresee problems with ways of qualifying screens as separate objects altogether. As we already noticed, with technical specifications and screen contents aside, there is more to be discovered through a comprehensive understanding of how we experience screens. In light of this, we are then to consider the screen's relation to our witnessing. To do so involves the conceptual framework of phenomenology. Therefore, the proceeding chapter surrounds the phenomenological (experiential) approach to screens – a project put forward by Lucas Introna and Fernando Ilharco.

Chapter II

The Phenomenological Approach to Screens

The goal of this chapter is to introduce the study of phenomenology as a promising way of exploring how screens exist in relation to our witnessing. As phenomenology is concerned with questions of how we may adequately explain and describe the universality of human experiences in their variety, the tradition offers close analyses of such themes as time, embodiment, perception, and interaction. After providing a short overview of the history, tradition, and methods of phenomenology as linked with its founder, Edmund Husserl, we are to consider how discoveries from this school of thought may serve our investigation of screens. From here, Martin Heidegger's phenomenology is to be considered as his concepts have been applied to screens by authors Lucas Introna and Fernando Ilharco. While noting the benefits of the authors' approach, we do recognize areas from which conceptual gaps may arise particularly with mediation. Consequently, it shall be noted how there is room for further research in applying phenomenology to screen theory.

1. Screen Experience

1.1. Phenomenology – A brief overview

In 1736, with relevance to religion and spirituality, Christoph Friedrich Oetinger coined the term "phenomenologia," used to reference appearances coming from sense- perception.[88] It was not until 1899 that Franz Brentano, a pivotal German philosopher and psychologist, transformed the meaning of the term "phenomenology" to then encapsulate the relation between the thinking and perceiving subject as being directed towards objects. Then later, Edmund Husserl, a pupil of Brentano, founded the tradition of phenomenology properly as a school of thought, with the aim to identify contents of experiences and perceptions as they appear in themselves. In his work from 1900, *Logical Investigations*,[89] Husserl developed the study of phenomenology with its particular provisions of offering means to analyze the field of logic with criticisms of psychologistic tendencies in fields of science. Although the phenomenological tradition is reliant on a descriptivism which includes first-hand accounts, it further requires a rigorous method of identifying the structures and universal features inherent

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88 Frank Scalambrino, "Phenomenological Psychology," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* ISSN 2161-0002. https://iep.utm.edu/phen-psy/

89 Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, trans. JN Finlay (Routledge, 2001).

to various kinds of phenomena, thereby proving not to be incorrectly connoted or delegitimized as merely subjective. As David Woofruff Smith states,

> For Husserl, [...] phenomenology integrates a kind of psychology with a kind of logic. It develops a descriptive or analytic psychology in that it describes and analyzes types of subjective mental activity or experience, in short, acts of consciousness. Yet it develops a kind of logic—a theory of meaning (today we say logical semantics)—in that it describes and analyzes objective contents of consciousness: ideas, concepts, images, propositions, in short, ideal meaning of various types that serve as intentional contents, or noematic meanings, of various types of experience. These contents are shareable by different acts of consciousness, and in that sense they are objective, ideal meanings.[90]

In thereby setting the parameters of that which is and may be included in the study of phenomenology, we may in fact claim that the field's scope is determined insofar as that which can be felt, sensed, recollected, and experienced can be described. Thus, Husserl in 1913 claimed that phenomenology is "the science of the essence of consciousness."[91]

Among the innumerable topics to be investigated in the study of phenomenology, a particularly cogent example pertains to the understanding of time. This shall later help us to clarify issues raised on screens offering unique processual experiences. Time as given universal consensus is a regular process with standard intervals marking the hours, minutes, and seconds of any given day. Moreover, such standardization of time is roughly demarcated according to longitudinal regions of the globe. In that manner, time is something which functions independently of personal experience. By contrast, time which has elapsed in one's experience consists of features of consciousness (such as eagerness or patience), subject to phenomena that has disclosed itself to the observer (such as aiming to arrive on time to catch the train). For this reason, there appears two distinct senses of time – one which is independently processual and measurable, and another which is within the realm of one's experience. Yet there is a further caveat in this distinction given how, in one's personal experience, he may refer to standardized time (e.g., on a wristwatch) while grasping the passing of time in an entirely subjective sense. That is, the passing of time in one's experience may simultaneously be subjective as well as attentive to that which occurs independently of thought (the passing of night and day, for example)

This distinction between the two kinds of time had been well elaborated in the work of Henri Bergson in 1922,[92] where he referred to the standardized time as "objective," and the

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90 David Woodruff Smith, "Phenomenology," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018 Edition) ed. Edward N. Zalta. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/phenomenology/

91 Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* ed. Dermot Moran, trans. W.R. Boyce Gibson (Routledge, 2012).

92 Henri Bergson, *Duration and Simultaneity*, trans. Leon Jacobson (Clinamen Press, 1999).

subjectively experienced time as "durational."[93] Thus, the aim is not to separate the subject and object, but in fact to understand the web of relations that obtains between them. These relations surround the givenness of the world as it discloses itself to the observer, as well as the categorical frameworks from which the observer imposes a grasping of it.

Another example of a certain kind of phenomenon which has been closely analyzed in the tradition is the problem of intersubjectivity. We are aware of how those around us have a conscious mind, despite not having direct access to it (such as with others' intrinsic thoughts and inner monologue). Yet in recognition of the face of the other, as well as through a dynamic set of various means of expression, we can empathize with others and comparatively interpret their lives with ours. In doing so, this recognition becomes the grounding for an intersubjective ethics of responsibility. Such formulation had been made by Emmanuel Levinas, in 1974, in his work *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*.[94] With the modern age of social media, the ways of how one senses what it means to recognize and interact with others has been redefined. It is thus possible to consider how Levinas' philosophy applies in this context.

Given these two examples of time and the ethics of recognizing another's face, it becomes enticing to suspect that many philosophical issues are phenomenological in nature. Moreover, within the umbrella of the phenomenological tradition, it appears that most (if not all) areas to be covered begin with sense-perception. Then alluding to sense-perception itself, it is obvious that each individual has a unique experience of perceived phenomena. However, the question then becomes one of how do we refer to different phenomena in the same respect? How can we build a universal and coherent account of all kinds of phenomena? How do we ensure that such an account does not depend solely on contingent instantiations of just one person's experience, but is both independently verifiable and comprehensive? These are such tasks of phenomenology.

The perplexities that arise in conceiving of how we may refer to the same things or subject matter, despite evident comparative variations of each individual's experience, in fact becomes a non-problem. This is so as long as we discount a reductionist notion that there really must be something purely objective that exists fully independently of any ontological categories to be imposed. The realization that we can refer to various subject matter, objects, and phenomena coherently is in fact owed to the awareness of how we make use of categories

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93 With Henri Bergson included, there were other authors not strictly part of the phenomenological tradition, but contributed to the field's related topics through such distinctions.

94 Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being Or Beyond Essence,* trans. Alphonso Lingis (Nijhoff, 1981): 77

through a perspectival framework. Discrediting this would also return to the problem of conceiving how we may refer to things at all in the first place. According to Dan Zahavi,

> For something to count as real, it must in principle be something we can encounter, though the mode of encounter can vary: Perceptual acquaintance, practical engagement, and scientific investigation are merely some of the possible forms. To reject this idea, and to claim that the moon, a neuron, a deck of cards, or a communal ritual have a unfathomable and hidden true being, that what they really are is something completely divorced from any context of use, network of meaning, or theoretical framework, and that whatever experiential and theoretical perspective we might adopt on them is consequently bound to miss its target, is not only a deeply obfuscating claim, but also one that is epistemologically naive. On what basis and from what perspective could such a claim ever be justified? We cannot look sideways at our experiences in order to see to what extent they match with reality. This is so, not because such a view is extremely hard to reach, but because the very idea of such a view is nonsensical. Any understanding of reality is by definition perspectival. Effacing our perspective does not bring us any closer to the world. It merely prevents us from understanding anything about the world at all.[95]

Here Zahavi offers us an account of different lenses to view phenomena which helps one to realize that the suggestion – some people contrive of – that independently existing things are connoted with being "more real" insofar as they are less apparent or less encounter-able is without sense. As the phenomenologist, Martin Heidegger, put it, "'Behind' the phenomena of phenomenology there is essentially nothing else; on the other hand, what is to become a phenomenon can be hidden. And just because the phenomena are proximally and for the most part not given, there is need for phenomenology. Covered-up-ness is the counter concept to 'phenomenon.'"[96] We are therefore justified in admitting realism while investigating the structures of phenomena. The question of understanding phenomena is not merely of what there is to be or not be encountered, but more so of how its mode of being is disclosed, and how it exists within our conceptual framework. Thanks to this we are granted further explanations as to how and why we can refer to, compare, and describe our unique encounters with different kinds of phenomena with each other.

Despite the seeming universality suggested in the study of phenomenology, it is of great importance to recognize that the field itself has its own categories and language to serve its purposes. Zahavi notes this with the following example, "[w]hereas geometrically, I am closer to the ground on which I am standing, or the spectacles I am wearing, than to the painting I am looking at, a phenomenological description will claim that I am closer to the painting than to the ground or my own spectacles."[97] What is significant here is that the main themes of phenomenology pertain to common experiences of the ordinary concerns of people. It is not

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95 Dan Zahavi, *Phenomenology: The Basics*, (Routledge, 2018): 28.

96 Martin Heidegger*, Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Blackwell, 1962): 60.

97 Zahavi, *Phenomenology: The Basics*, 77.

the research task of phenomenology to describe details within the micro-scale (such as in the attempts of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Bertrand Russell in building their separate accounts of logical atomism)[98] nor mega-scale (such as in cosmic models of the physical universe). Rather, phenomenology deals with the macro-scale, the lived experience of people, albeit with great detail and commonality. Its aim is to help make one aware of certain thought structures and presuppositions which have been taken for granted. Zahavi states, "it is precisely this domain of ignored obviousness that phenomenology seeks to investigate, and its ability to do so is premised on its adoption of a specific philosophical attitude."[99] Phenomenology is thus a specific means by which we can identify inherent aspects belonging to forms of experience and features of consciousness, through omitting presuppositions which would otherwise obfuscate the required preliminaries for an in-depth investigation of how we essentially think and experience different events. With this background in mind, the original methods of phenomenology shall be treated in the following to clarify how the field analyzes its research object of experience.

1.2. Edmund Husserl's Methods of Phenomenological Description and Eidetic Reduction

Edmund Husserl, as founder of the phenomenological tradition, introduced methods to be aware of the nature of our conscious experience. To achieve this, one must realize the phenomenological *epoché* – a way of putting in brackets. Husserl wrote that "[t]he epoché can also be said to be the radical and universal method by which I apprehend myself purely: as Ego, and with my own pure conscious life, in and by which the entire Objective world exists for me and is precisely as it is for me."[100] Performing an epoché (also known as a phenomenological reduction) thus means to put aside any pre-given assumptions as to the truth/facticity or existence of contents of thoughts and perceptions which would otherwise serve to inform how we naturally cognize the world. Meaning to take things as they are and not to envelope them in the form of extraneous propositions. Doing this also involves a complete restriction to one's own perspective, used to then describe how one precisely experiences a phenomenon herself through the intentional act. As a consequence, elements belonging to an object or phenomenon encountered in conscious experience are eidetically

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98 See James Griffin, *Wittgenstein's Logical Atomism* (Thoemmes Press, 1997). and Bertrand Russell, *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* (Taylor & Francis, 2009).
99 Dan Zahavi. *Phenomenology: The Basics*, 103.
100 Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (Springer Netherlands, 2013): 21.

reduced (with necessary components preserved, and contingent features removed) and clarified through a phenomenological description.

Despite the apparent sense in which a restriction to the first-person view would be non-reliable (and, at its extreme, solipsist), it is through the admission of such view that we may draw a comparative assessment to others' experience. By noting similar experiences, as well as certain nuanced differences of the same phenomenon, it is possible to figure the necessary and contingent features in a certain kind of experience. Moreover, the phenomenological method helps to realize the pre-given orientation individual subjects have towards experiences, vis-à-vis common features. As a consequence, there emerges a clearer realization of how certain things, places, and events present themselves, which in turn, allows one to understand that which contributes to lines of thought and categories of perception.

One substantial contribution which the tradition of phenomenology made for the history of philosophy is Edmund Husserl's development of understanding subjectivity, as well as its social constitution. In his work, *Ideas*, originally published in 1913, Husserl wrote on issues ranging from facticity[101] and essence to the nature of pure consciousness. Here, the phenomenological eidetic reduction was adopted as a way of making precise the structures behind the content of these issues. In his 1931 work, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*,[102] the fifth meditation begins by responding to the critique that it is difficult in phenomenology to escape solipsism. The treatment of such issue is suggested by Husserl's later elaboration that consciousness is intersubjective, meaning that one transcends one's own conscious ego or self through shared experience with others. However, the strongest argument to be made, in defending the tradition from solipsism, is his further point that intersubjectivity not only concerns shared features of consciousness at the level of mere thought but also at the referential dimension to which people's individual thoughts and general forms of cognition share in creating a world of objects and ideas. Thus, for example, the ability for one to form concepts in a language is necessarily linked to the environmental conditions under which others can participate in sharing a lifeworld with communicative means available. Husserl termed this general idea "transcendental being," and phrased the constitutive framework around it as, "monadological intersubjectivity."

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101 Husserl had also treated the sense of facticity in terms of scientism with its respective philosophical attitude of critique.
102 Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (Springer 2013).

The significance of the Husserlian phenomenological method to subsequent approaches in philosophy are thus not merely at the level of paradigmatic issues of his time, nor at the level of external states of affairs, but at the nuanced and constitutive range of relations between that which is intrinsic to the human psyche and that which is extrinsic. Moreover, the effectiveness of applying this approach is demonstrated through the ability to deduce that which is strictly necessary in belonging to the contents of an idea, thereby grounding its identity. So long as the nature of something is measured according to not merely its self-identity, but also persistence and consistency across time, then it is especially important to consider for comparisons of different encountered moments in people's minds as a base for common grounding – a base for qualifying the essential features of a certain kind of experience. Husserl's student, Roman Ingarden, applied these general methods to his considerations of works of art, resulting in a clear delineation of structures behind real and ideal objects. In a similar vein concerning the identity of objects, Ingarden wrote,

> the aim of these considerations is to ascribe some properties to the object which we cognize on the basis of perception. Two cases may occur here: either some qualities are given in perception as the properties of an object and these qualities should be ascribed to the object, but only if they appear in the whole cognitive process as independent of irrelevant circumstances, i.e., circumstances of perception or cognition lying beyond the object perceived; or these qualities are not at all given in any of the perceptions of the object which is being cognized. On the basis of a number of checked perceptions we may, however, infer that these qualities, which are independent of any foreign circumstances of perception, are an indispensable condition supplementing the appearance, among the data of perception, of a particular quality as an (apparent) property of the cognized object. In this case also they should be ascribed to the object as its own properties. Thus, the whole process of cognition, composed of many different cognitive acts, is directed - if it proceeds regularly - by the idea of an exact adjustment of the cognitive results to the object to be cognized and of an exclusion of all those elements, which admit the slightest suspicion of having issued from factors foreign to the cognized object.[103]

Comparing the object from its ideas elicited may be thought of as contributing to our linguistic and conceptual repertoire, and thus in this sense becomes intersubjective and transcendent. Consequently, the adoption of the general Husserlian phenomenological method to screens as our object of investigation shall facilitate a comprehensive understanding of what universal encounter is featured when being oriented to them.

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103 Roman Ingarden, "Aesthetic Experience and Aesthetic Object," trans. Janina Makota, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 21, no. 3. (1961): 292.

1.3. Kinds of Experience

As a preliminary step before investigating screens, it is helpful to mark distinctions in how we qualify experiences. Within the framework of addressing issues of differing phenomena, there are also distinctions to be made between different modes of experience within the same phenomenon. That is, in a particular experience, different dimensions are present simultaneously along such modes as sense-perception, embodiment, social interaction, and temporality (among others).

The appeal to the senses has been heavily treated in the history of philosophy as a means to reach certainty over epistemological lines of questioning. In more modern times, debates have occurred over: questioning the ontological and subject-reliant status of stimuli (e.g., in A.J. Ayer, George Edward Moore and Bertrand Russell's arguments concerning sense-data), questioning how to make a proper typography of these stimuli, and how these bear in relation to the forming of thought processes through the influence of empirical qualia. The tradition of phenomenology, initiated by Edmund Husserl, set the task of making precise what it means when we qualify different kinds of experiences. The breadth and depth of topics investigated were remarkably ambitious especially when considering their interconnectedness. As Dan Zahavi explains Husserl's investigation of self-awareness for example,

> It is true that one rarely finds analyses dedicated exclusively to the problem of self-awareness. But this is by no means because the topic is absent, but rather because Husserl's reflections on this problem are usually integrated into his analysis of a number of related issues, such as the nature of intentionality, spatiality, embodiment, temporality, attention, intersubjectivity, etc. This fact makes any attempt at a systematic account both challenging and rewarding.[104]

Sense perception is not merely a phenomenon of being acquainted with shapes, sizes, and colours, but also one which involves forming patterns over the consistency of relations between certain sense data. That is, a cup of coffee[105] is not merely a cup of coffee on the basis that it necessarily contains a particular size, shape, and colour, but it retains its identity through the materials and ingredients needed to compose it. Moreover, this means that it is not simply a

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104 Dan Zahavi, "Inner Time-Consciousness and Pre-reflective Self-awareness," in *Edmund Husserl Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers* vol. III. ed. Rudolf Bernet, Don Welton, and Gina Zavota (Routledge, 2005): 300.

105 To this issue, a significant debate concerning the nature of "artefact kinds" has been discussed in *Artefact Kinds: Ontology and the Human-Made World*, ed. Maarten Franssen, Peter Kroes, Thomas A. C. Reydon, and Pieter E. Vermaas (Springer, 2013). Here, Amie L. Thomasson argues for and elucidates the public, normative, and intentional dimensions to which artefacts are constituted and understood. Meanwhile, Maarten Franssen and Peter Kroes specify the material parameters to which an artefact's form is constituted, in ontological terms. Whereby, insofar as an artefact may be seen as constituted by its functionality, it is thereby subject to indeterminacies between physical capacities and human intentions.

matter of having certain measurable qualities, but having qualities which form a composite unity (bearing a unique but partially variable taste, smell, colour, etc). Consequently, there remain special familiarities with certain things that retain their identity through recognition, apropos a consistent set of salient features which are the by-product of a composite web of relations, repeating themselves in each encounter. To discern how it is possible that an object forms a recognizable identity, features of direct sense-perception are not enough. What is also necessary for this to be achieved is the dimension of time into forming the process of categorization. Past memory, present awareness, and future expectation are active cognitive faculties which inform one's own mind of how to recognize an object or phenomenon and configure its integral identity through comparative means.

Embodiment is another form of experience which is correlated with consciousness. Thus, while persons may be aware of their own cognitive faculties as well as the contents of their thoughts, there is also a physiological dimension to which embodiment influences the categories of the mind. Moreover, certain instruments are designed in such a way to be in sync with human corporeality, thereby further extending the range within set parameters of how we interact with the world.

In the formation of one's consciousness, there are socio-cultural influences as well, which define the contours of experience. These are along the domains of axiology (values, both implicit and explicit), attentiveness, emotional and behavioural response, linguistic expression, among others. In succinct terms, the socio-cultural influence on the shaping of consciousness partially defines how phenomena are experienced in what may be simply thought of as the construction of one's personal identity.

Lastly, temporality, in particular sensed time, is the universal feature of experience, inseparable from phenomena. While phenomena, in their instances, are thought of as belonging to particular states of affairs, that is, in a particular time and place, this is true in ontological terms. In experiential terms however, further caveats are to be considered. The common divisions of one's past, present, and future are temporal categories which hold their referential basis correlative to consciousness – either to oneself (in their own experience), or to a shared agreement among people demarcating time in some way. One may argue, for instance, that the ways we standardize time for calendars and time zones is merely conventional. Moreover, the elements recollected in experiences are determined by the categories understood within a language that is maintained by a participating group of people.

From this we may observe that such factors as sense-perception and recognition, embodiment, as well as certain sociocultural and temporal influences, all inform the qualities of one's experiences concurrently. However, although these are modes of experience which are universal, at least in terms of being natural dispositional faculties, they are at the same time general. For this reason, it is important to consider how these modes of experience are accounted for specifically when acquainted with screens.

1.4. The Screened Experience

For stipulating the application of categories previously considered – sense-perception, embodiment, social interaction, temporality – to screens, it is first necessary to acknowledge that these as general faculties of consciousness which so happen to be realized in a specific way when dealt with screens. That is, the categories considered are either generally featured throughout and shared between all viewers, or otherwise unique to individual moments of witnessing.

The sense-perception of screens is rudimentarily visual, although video, for example, is often supplemented with audio, this is only due to there also being added some external sound device. To focus on how screens are experienced through sense-perception reduced to natural vision, the basic understanding of vision being natural is already put to question for screened images. This is because, while vision in a broad sense encompasses any witnessing of visual stimuli, seeing through screens involves a reduction or reconfiguration of this natural vision. This occurs either through the filtering and enframing process or a perspectival extension of contents to be perceived. For example, on the one hand. the colour of images captured by a camera are most commonly represented by digitized values of red, green, and blue. On the other hand, our natural eyesight does not numerically calculate these colour values, but simply cognizes them through natural process mechanisms. Moreover, the noticeable variations of an object in natural reality as opposed to on screen are the basic measure for accounting for these differences (not only with colour but with frame or size and perspective or orientation, as well). However, it is not necessarily the case that screens merely limit or filter natural objects. It is also possible that, through their digitized parameters, extended properties of objects can be perceived which would otherwise not be possible by natural eyesight, such as with fMRI and CT scans. As a result of these comparisons between sense-perception as a general cognitive faculty and the process of sense-perception when encountering screens, it becomes evident that there are non- negligible differences in modes of vision, which raises the

question of how a device's showcasing of stimuli transcends itself from mere artefact into a new cognitive medium.

Moreover, the screen serves as a medium not only for abstract cognition, but for embodied awareness as well. While embodiment is most notably conceived as a physical trait, there is a relation between the experience of being embodied and the simulation of embodiment through interacting with screens. However, a distinction is to be made between the contents displayed on the one hand, and the control over the contents displayed through ergonomic tools on the other. Moreover, the limitation with this simulated embodiment is that it is only a way of manipulating the viewed contents on screen through tools as though one is performing actions within natural laws, while not actually manipulating that which is physical. For this reason, the extent to which embodiment appears salient is determined by the screen's capacity for simulation, which in turn, is subject to software programming as well. Despite this, there is an argument to be made of another quality of embodiment which is not the product of a user interacting with a computer screen, but rather of the user being oriented in such way to the screen which causes certain physiological and behavioural reactions. A field of psychology known as, perceptual control theory (PCT), for example, states that much of human behaviour is dependent on reactions to what is perceived – or more particularly, it understands human behaviour as the process of controlling perceptual inputs. PCT experiments have demonstrated that when given the task of keeping a cursor on a target shown on screen, and controlling for specified perceptual signals, "an examination of cursor position could be used to determine the nature of the internally held target goal."[106] Thus, granted that embodiment can be understood both from the side of the internal self-consciously performing external actions, and from the side of external conditions (to some degree) determining how it feels to be embodied, screens can create such influences – though to limited extent.

Social interaction is another part of the screen experience which is an interesting case for psychology as object of study.[107] Although much of the shown contents are products of social media web design, the simple forms of text, image, and video which are used to represent one's profile, there holds significance in how one conceives of others' identity. Taking these

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106 Jeffrey B. Vancouver and Dan J. Putka, "Analyzing Goal-Striving Processes and a Test of the Generalizability of Perceptual Control Theory," *Organizational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes* 82, no. 2 (2000): 338.
107 Cfr. J. Pedersen, M.G.B. Rasmussen, S.O. Sørensen, et al., "Effects of limiting digital screen use on well-being, mood, and biomarkers of stress in adults," *NPJ Mental Health Res* 1, no. 14 (2022). And: A. Orben and A. Przybylski, "The association between adolescent well-being and digital technology use," *Nature Human Behaviour* 3 (2019).

forms, identity loses its natural and living substance due to the lack of ordinary, in-person communication.

Temporality may in fact be the root cause of the disruptive nature of screens, especially in the social sphere. Communication via screens limit and reconfigure how we socially interact not merely in terms of taking the form of text, image, and video, but also in the sense that dialogue from both ends need not be synchronous. Both parties may communicate or share and receive information in a manner that does not include a form of presence in the same time and place. As a consequence, the modal indeterminacy of this form of communication allows for greater accessibility, but less sense of participating in the same state of affairs.

With these considerations, it becomes evident how different modes of experience belong to a web of relational qualities to the individual. Within these qualities and relations, some are more apparent while others less so. Moreover, the modes of sense-perception, embodiment, social interaction, and temporality are reconfigured in ways dependent on situational contexts which have been particularly identified in the screen experience. As a consequence, further empirical research into the distinctions to be made between experience on screen as opposed to in natural encounter is quite helpful for the development of understanding the fundamentals of being conscious. To reach this, an overview of the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger is applicable as his philosophy is then incorporated to research on screen experiences.

2. Martin Heidegger's Phenomenology in *Being and Time*

2.1. The Understanding of Being Itself

Martin Heidegger was known for his phenomenological, existential, and hermeneutic philosophy which, at its most basic, treats the question of the natural human orientation towards conceiving of being in and of itself. The base for his project originated from a fundamental critique of the history of Western philosophy in forgetting about the significance of the concept of being itself as a fundamental category. He critiqued how instead the tradition only approached ideas in terms of conflating things which exist with their modes of existence, and too narrowly conceived of what and how something exists without an understanding of what it means to exist in the first place. Moreover, he was against the Cartesian mind-body dualism of *res cogitans* and *res extensa* because of its assumptions of an overdetermined subjectivism

and representationalism.[108] He thereby critiqued this dualism as losing sight of what makes subjectivity possible first and foremost. A consequence of his rejections of previous philosophies, including that of his predecessor, Edmund Husserl, was a phenomenological project in which human nature can be explained not merely in terms of representationalist accounts of being oriented towards objects (for example, with Cartesian dualism), nor through intentionality, but rather in terms of an elaborate account of being itself which served to explain particular subject-object intentional directness only secondarily. As Mark Wrathall and Hubert Dreyfus maintain,

> For Heidegger, the purpose of phenomenological description was not to discover the structures of consciousness, but to make manifest the structure of our everyday being-in-the-world. Because Heidegger's interest was worldly relations rather than mental contents, he rejected both the usefulness of the phenomenological method as practiced by Husserl and the need for mental meanings to account for many if not most forms of intentional directedness. Indeed, Heidegger argued that the intentionality on which Husserl focused – the intentionality of discrete mental judgments and acts – is grounded in more basic intentionality of a general background grasp of the world.[109]

The grounding of this "basic intentionality" is to be understood through "being" as a concept taking necessary structural priority over any given phenomenon or thought. As Heidegger wrote in his seminal work, *Being and Time*,

> An understanding of Being is already included in conceiving anything which one apprehends as an entity. But the 'universality' of 'Being' is not that of a class or genus. The term 'Being' does not define that realm of entities which is uppermost when these are articulated conceptually according to genus and species [...] The 'universality' of Being 'transcends' any universality of genus.[110]

Thus, Heidegger's main focus is to return to a more fundamental understanding of being. Being is not the same as other qualities, forms, or wholes comprised of parts. At the same time, being is also not simply empty. Being, for Heidegger, is a transcendental a priori condition under which things can become enveloped into genus and species. Considering this, he further intended to discover being as a particular form of existence for humans which he names *Dasein*.

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108 Abraham Mansbach, "Heidegger's Critique of Cartesianism," *παιδεία – Contemporary Philosophy*. https://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Cont/ContMans.htm.

109 Mark A. Wrathall and Hubert L. Dreyfus, "A Brief Introduction to Phenomenology and Existentialism," In *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism*, ed. H.L. Dreyfus and M.A. Wrathall, (Wiley-Blackwell, 2006): 3.

110 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Blackwell, 1962): 22.

2.2. Dasein as the Elementary State of Human Being

To understand the concept of *Dasein*, put forward by Heidegger, it is necessary to consider his ontological foundations which center around the orientation of the human being. That is, in a similar fashion as how the ancient Greek philosopher, Protagoras of Abdera, claimed, "[o]f all things the measure is Man, of the things that are, that they are, and of the things that are not, that they are not (DK 80B1),"[111] a similar mark of the human being's "mode of existence" (*Dasein*)[112] taking priority over subject matter which may be referred to by them is illustrated by Heidegger.

In *Being and Time*, he states,

> *Dasein* accordingly takes priority over all other entities in several ways. The first priority is an ontical one: *Dasein* is an entity whose Being has the determinate character of existence. The second priority is an ontological one: *Dasein* is in itself 'ontological', because existence is thus determinative for it. But with equal primordiality *Dasein* also possesses—as constitutive for its understanding of existence—an understanding of the Being of all entities of a character other than its own. *Dasein* has therefore a third priority as providing the ontico-ontological condition for the possibility of any ontologies.[113]

Thus, the anthropocentric and existential preliminaries of Heidegger's philosophy, some may argue, serves as a solution to the forgotten treatment of being itself – critiqued by Heidegger beforehand. The concept of the *Dasein* has been commonly interpreted as an account of the sort of entity human beings are in the world – entities concerned with existence.[114] And thus, part of Heidegger's contribution to the discourse consists in reorienting the problematics of philosophy from those which fixate on specific subject matter (both theoretical and practical) to the reminder of the natural human orientation within the world as ontologically unique beings.

Certain fields have mistakenly put aside how the lens through which an object of study is investigated is as significant as the object itself. Heidegger, by contrast, argues for how "[s]ciences are ways of Being in which *Dasein* comports itself towards entities which it need not be itself."[115] For this reason, there is a suggestion here of the natural human disposition to be concerned with other things which exist in a unique way. Humans are understood as beings in the world, that is, beings who are immersed in a world through an orientation of grasping a

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111 Joshua J. Mark, "Protagoras of Abdera: Of All Things Man Is The Measure," *World History Encyclopedia* Article 61 (2012). https://www.worldhistory.org/article/61/protagoras-of-abdera-of-all-things-man-is-the-meas/
112 Robert Brandom, "Heidegger's Categories in Being and Time," *The Monist* 66, no. 3. (1983): 387–409.
113 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 34.
114 Ibid, 33.
115 Ibid, 33.

unique ontology and thereby being also concerned with particulars. Mixed with these orientations are such questions explored by Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, over world-hood, temporality and everydayness, disclosed truth, possibilities, totality (or being as whole), being towards death, authenticity, and transcendence. From these it can be seen how his investigations take the form of an existential hermeneutics, much of which deals with what all human beings are concerned with. The question over the nature of this concern itself is elaborated by Heidegger through his next concept treated, known as *sorge,* i.e. concern.

2.3.   Being as Concern and Ready-to-hand Being

According to Martin Heidegger, there are three natural dispositions of human beings as *Dasein*, which are enveloped under his main concept of concern, or sorge. This is where his philosophy, after taking its ontological preliminaries, begins to describe the human way of being in the world. According to Michael Wheeler, these three dispositions consist of "thrownness, projection, and fallenness."[116] These are all qualities realized throughout one's life due to pre-existing conditions such as temporality and world-hood, and more generally, owing to the fact of existing as *Dasein*.

Heidegger claims that "'thrown-ness' is meant to suggest the facticity of [*Dasein*'s] being delivered over."[117] On one reading, thrown-ness may be interpreted in more literal terms (of this facticity), as human subjects are brought into a world consistent with natural laws (in terms of biology, physics, and chemistry, among others). While another reading may suggest the sense in which one's "being-in-the-world" is governed by a determinacy which was decided beforehand from causal sources independent of the subject's agency and free will. This is because of how "being thrown-into-the-world," in its passive voice, implies action performed on a subject exerted by another force. It thus appears that in either of these two readings, the sense of thrown-ness – a quality imminent in the human being as *Dasein* – acknowledges external limitations to human beings for the question of what is feasibly possible within their own forms of agency. Related to "thrown-ness" is the need for *Dasein* to "find itself"[118] and discover its own form of existing in the world through the process of "projection." That is,

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116 Michael Wheeler, "Martin Heidegger," *in The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2020 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/heidegger/.
117 Heidegger. *Being and Time*, 174.
118 Heidegger, 174.

upon being aware of one's origin, one's identity can be constituted out of a mix of predetermined and undetermined factors and possibilities. The range of actions and possibilities one can realize is a precursor to identity, which itself is to be performed through projecting oneself in the world. As Wheeler states, "*Dasein* emerges as a delicate balance of determination (thrownness) and freedom (projection). The projective possibilities available to *Dasein* are delineated by totalities of involvements, structures that, as we have seen, embody the culturally conditioned ways in which *Dasein* may inhabit the world."[119] Given this way of figuring one's own identity[120] through participating in forms of life already conditioned to him/her, a further question arises as to how this occurs practically. It is a particular mode of existence in the world, known as *Zuhandenheit,* being-ready-to-hand, which Heidegger puts forward to explore this.

Although much of Heidegger's writings, which treat the question of being, appear highly theoretical due to its ontological rigour, his basic arguments for understanding human existence is heavily reliant on practical matters. The most evident case of this is his concept of ready-to-hand being, which itself refers to how we engage in the world through several forms of interaction, including with tools. It is thus illustrative of Heidegger's works that his philosophy attempts to return to a world of rudimentary and everyday encounter, which, as mentioned previously, is a common theme of phenomenology.

To understand our modes of existence in the world, a consideration for accomplishing tasks through interaction using tools is helpful. This is because while previous philosophers have treated issues on the relation between subjects and objects through theories of intentionality, tools give us insight to relations we often neglect. Tools are a unique case of mediation with which the tool itself becomes concealed, while the task at hand becomes the main item of concern. As a result, in referring to practical tasks such as hammering a nail, a noted point by Heidegger is that it is neither the hammer nor the nail which is fixated on, but rather the task or teleological goal (such as, positioning a picture frame on a wall) which we are attentive to. Heidegger writes,

> The ready-to-hand is not grasped theoretically at all, nor is it itself the sort of thing that circumspection takes proximally as a circumspective theme. The peculiarity of what is proximally ready-to-hand is that, in its readiness-to-hand, it must, as it were, withdraw [zuriickzuziehen] in order to be ready-to-hand quite authentically. That with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves [die Werkzeuge selbst] . On the contrary,

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119 Wheeler. "Martin Heidegger", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2020 Edition).
120 In *Being and Time*, to the issue of establishing personal identity, Heidegger also addresses questions over authentic and inauthentic ways of being.

> that with which we concern ourselves primarily is the work-that which is to be produced at the time; and this is accordingly ready-to-hand too. The work bears with it that referential totality within which the equipment is encountered.[121]

Being ready-to-hand thus involves more than a simple use of a tool, but rather a tripartite form with which the human being as *Dasein* engages with the world through a practical orientation of interaction whereby a tool merely serves as an in-between. Such a form of being an in-between or mediatory artefact is the basis for attempts to understand screens in this respect, developed by authors treated in the proceeding section.

3. Lucas Introna and Fernando Ilharco's Phenomenology of Screens

3.1. The Quality of Screen-ness

In a recent approach, Lucas Introna and Fernando Ilharco have put forward a method of linking the philosophical tradition of phenomenology with screen theory. As we shall see later, they apply Heideggerian concepts to explain what screens are in themselves. In their paper, titled *Phenomenology, Screens, and Screenness: Returning to the World Itself*,[122] the authors begin with an account of phenomenology and demonstrate its significance for screen theory. Reiterating the words of the tradition's founder, Edmund Husserl, they note how phenomenology is a "return to the things themselves." With this idea, the authors set the field's boundaries. That is, phenomenology is a method of analysing a phenomenon proper to "the totality of references implied in its being."[123] This means to identify what a screen is independent of presuppositions and unnecessary features (those which do not belong to its essence), thus uncovering what it is. Going forward, adopting phenomenology as the field of research, the subject matter concerns the screen's universal modes of appearance or essence and not what is encountered in a single contextual experience.

In this light, their project concerns what sort of phenomenon screens "already are in-the world."[124] We are interested not in context-sensitive particulars concerning the screen, such as certain contents displayed. Instead, the matter is how screens exist for us as we are familiar with and conditioned to them in general. This consideration is also to be met with the awareness

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121 Heidegger. *Being and Time*, 99.

122 Lucas D. Introna, and Fernando M. Ilharco, "Phenomenology, Screens, and Screenness: Returning to the World Itself," *Oxford Handbooks Online*. (Oxford University Press, 2011): 1- 47.

123 Introna and Ilharco, "Phenomenology, Screens, and Screenness: Returning to the World Itself," 3.

124 Ibid, 3.

that screens are an already given artefact to be seamlessly recognized by us. However, their point is to go beyond acknowledging this and to investigate how and why such recognition can occur. For Introna and Ilharco, there may be a pre-emptive answer to these questions owing to how in acts of consciousness, the act is never consciousness simpliciter, but is always consciousness of something.[125] Being conscious means to have a sort of mental disposition towards an object. This directedness is known as the relation of intentionality. Thus, applied to screens, the phenomenon of experiencing them can be explained through intentionality. It includes both the conscious act and the object of recognition held in relation.

Within the relation of intentionality, there is, according to Introna and Ilharco, a "structural unity"[126] between our conscious way of grasping screens in particular and our conscious understanding of the world in general. This is because, the screen is already given meaning through intentionality by simply fitting into one's conceptual framework – a "referential whole."[127] As a result, there are separate levels of analysis from which the authors tackle the problem of screens. On the one hand, there are distinct object levels of analysis – in classifying the scope and range of the subject matter. While, on the other hand, there are distinct methodological levels of analysis as well. Considering the screen itself, for example, there are varying ranges by which they refer to them. There are screens encountered at present and are referred to along their various forms (computer, television, smartphone, etc.). Meanwhile, there is the general type, 'screen' which is referred to and may designate more artefacts than electronic devices as there had long been an archaic use of the term. Furthermore, the separate levels of analysis pertain not only to screens, but to Introna and Ilharco's method of phenomenology as well. While there is a sense in which phenomenology concerns our human disposition towards the world in general, as well as objects in particular, the intentional relation is entangled with various ranges to categorize phenomena.

While experiential encounters with various kinds of phenomena have been treated by Husserl with rigorous phenomenological insights, the authors note that these were closely related with matters of epistemology. It was one of Husserl's pupils, Martin Heidegger, who realized that "our relationship with the world is not epistemic [...] but rather practical and ontological."[128] Thus, from here Introna and Ilharco investigate the screen's essence admitting

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125 Ibid, 7.
126 Introna and Ilharco, "Phenomenology, Screens, and Screenness: Returning to the World Itself," 9.
127 Ibid, 13.
128 Ibid, 12.

both its mode of existence and practical orientation, while adopting the conceptual framework of Heidegger's phenomenology.

3.2. Heideggerian Phenomenology for Screen Theory

Introna and Ilharco's treatment consists in applying two Heideggerian notions to explicate the screen experience: *Dasein* and *being ready-to-hand*. As a reminder, *Dasein*, is a term about the human "way of being" in the world.[129] *Dasein*s are subsistent beings for whom being is concerned. Put simply, it means that we are human beings precisely because of how we think about such abstract things like "being" and "existence." Moreover, this means that our form of existence is of such a kind that we are thrown into the world with unique orientations, including existing in a definitive time and having concern. It is through orientations like these that Heidegger considers us as uniquely human. Our nature is discernible thanks to having a special lens of viewing the world and interacting with it. An example of one such interactive orientation is the feature of being "ready-to-hand" (*zuhandenheit*). Heidegger's notion of being ready-to-hand refers to a disposition humans have from using artefacts like tools and equipment which render an extended manipulability from our actions. This leads to a sort of forgetfulness of the object being used and a fixation on the task or goal to be achieved in using it. For Introna and Ilharco, being ready to hand includes not only a predisposition towards tools such as hammers and pens (as originally served examples), but for screens as well. Screens are present and "ready-to-hand" because they are not objects for which we have no interest but are artefacts – tools in fact, which entice us and are to be interacted with. And it is because of their being ready-to-hand that by engaging with screens we lose sight of what they simply are in the first place. By including "readiness to hand" and "the human way of being in the world" to their analysis of screens, Introna and Ilharco pursue a phenomenological methodology that consists in description, etymology, reduction, and an investigation to the screen's essence.[130] While these steps aim to show what a screen is by itself, the authors recognize how the nature of our perceptual experience contains a rather convoluted predisposition towards them. The relation of intentionality is one in which screens are ready-at-hand for their users given how we are oriented towards them in our way of being in the world.

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129 Introna and Ilharco, "Phenomenology, Screens, and Screenness: Returning to the World Itself," 34.
130 Ibid, 15.

Introna and Ilharco rightly point out a distinction between the contents shown on screen as opposed to the screen as a pure medium per se. Moreover, the authors also rightly note how such distinction is difficult to reckon with in practical terms because

> [w]hen trying to describe a screen, a computer screen or a television screen, we immediately note that we never seem to look at a screen as a 'screen'. We rather tend to look at screens by attending to that which appears on them. What seems evident when looking at a screen is the content presented on that screen—the text, images, colours, graphics, and so on—not the screening of the screen. To try and look at a screen, and see it as a screen, not taking into account the particular content it presents, and all the references with which that same content already appears to us, is apparently not an easy task.[131]

Hence, there is a certain Heideggerian "forgetfulness" present in the case of our orientation towards screens. We tend to forget (or at least cease to think about) the screen right in front of us and instead immerse ourselves to its contents. With this in mind, Introna and Ilharco seem to suggest that in order to be reminded of the screen in itself, one should not fixate on particular contents being displayed.

Despite foreseen challenges facing the idea of capturing the screen devoid of its contents, through an etymological analysis the authors set these doubts aside by explaining how the term "screen" itself contains historically ambiguous meanings, dating back to the fourteenth century. As it was already indicated (1.1), the term's fourteenth century roots trace from Middle English, Middle French, and Middle Dutch but goes further back to the eighth century Old High German words "skirm" and "skrank" (meaning shield and barrier). It has also been suggested that the term may have emerged from the ancient Sanskrit words "carman" (meaning to injure) and "kranti" (meaning skin).[132] Consequently, given the various meanings ascribed to the term, it is less doubtful as to whether there could be such a thing as a screen without its displayed contents. This is because the word has been attached with plenty of other meanings much earlier than its now wide-spread connotation of displaying content electronically. In particular, the authors note, "'Screen' looks like a rather simple word. It is both a noun and a verb and its contemporary plurality of meanings can be brought together along three main themes: projecting/showing (e.g. TV screen), hiding/protecting (e.g. fireplace screen), and testing/ selecting (e.g. screening the candidates)."[133]

Therefore, by reconciling the differences between screen contents and screens themselves, through noting how the term "screen" is a gerund – as noun (artefact) and verb

131 Introna and Ilharco, "Phenomenology, Screens, and Screenness: Returning to the World Itself, 16-17.
132 Ibid, 19.
133 Ibid, 19.

(process) which falls under three main properties (projecting, hiding, and selecting), Introna and Ilharco bring us closer to understanding general properties under which we may qualify a screen as a screen. This is done by noting what remains consistent throughout screen experiences, as well as examining the analogies behind the various meanings and etymological roots of the term. In doing so, we are to find what is necessary for the screen's essential meaning.

3.3. The qualities of agreement and attention from Heidegger's phenomenology to the concept of screening.

The next step in Introna and Ilharco's analysis is performing a reduction to isolate the necessary elements belonging to screens (as artefact) and screening (as a phenomenon) to bring about their essential quality, i.e. screenness. In particular, the authors narrowly determine that what is inherent to contemporary screens proper (and not the term's etymologically dispersed lineages which also include notions of shielding and projecting) is the feature of displaying. As they assert, "[t]here is no fundamental phenomenological difference between a screen and what we refer to as a display —they both have their meaning in-the-world in ongoing screening."[134] Furthermore, it is through this displaying that screens are conceived as producing two sorts of phenomena when encountered: an intuitional background of coherence in practical living terms and a stimulative impetus. They call the former "already there agreement,"[135] and the latter – "calling for attention."[136]

"Already there agreement," as a phenomenon encountered with screens, appears to implicate two separate notions that work together, namely the apparentness of an object and the coherence with which such object fits our patterns of life. While this apparentness is only to be realized through visual acts of perception, the sense of coherence in "already there agreement" belongs to the intuitional background that we seem to have in place prior to perception in order to recognize objects as falling into certain types and to place them within our own conceptual mapping of the world. Introna and Ilharco seem to suggest this with reference to Edmund Husserl's "horizon of meaning,"[137] and elaborate on this further with their following thought experiment:

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134 Introna and Ilharco, "Phenomenology, Screens, and Screenness: Returning to the World Itself," 18.
135 Ibid, 21.
136 Ibid, 20.
137 Ibid, 36.

> [W]e can imagine what a man from the fifteenth century might think when confronted with a screen of an Automatic Teller Machine (ATM). That surface which we refer to as a 'screen' would merely be a potentially curious object for him. It would not be a 'screen' because he does not already dwell in a world— referential whole—that would render it meaningful as such. The screen would not be a 'screen' for him as it would not call for his attention, it and the content displayed 'on' it would not seem relevant as it is not already a screen for him; he would simply not recognize it in its essential meaning.[138]

Thus, screens, understood as displays, possess an "already there agreement" when encountered insofar as individuals have been familiarized with them with a prima facie comprehension of what sort of technological artefact they already are. This explanation is conceivable due to how our orientation with the world is subject to the relations of apparentness and coherence fitting to our "horizon" or pattern of life.

"Calling for attention" is another notion introduced by Introna and Ilharco that goes hand-in-hand with the idea of "already there agreement." The reasoning so may be construed in how the aspect of coherence from the latter notion is also a matter of relevance. While relevance in turn, is what acutely intrigues one to view what is being shown on screen. Thereby, the authors explain how one is disposed to screen viewing because of the nature in which screens present items of relevance (which are coherent with our way of life) and in that manner appear to call for our attention.

In sum, Introna and Ilharco's investigation to properly conceive of screens as screens represents a phenomenological aim to unveil certain modes of presentation and reception that are distinct for the screening-experience. The authors note firstly, how screens are to be recognized as not merely artefactual objects, but also as items that play an active role in our lives. Hence, we may conceive of them as experientially phenomenal by virtue of screens being referents and screening as their emanating quality. Secondly, we may note how screens are encountered by us through a relation of intentionality whereby they are "ready-to-hand," and in being so, lead us into a forgetfulness of what screens truly are, since it is hard to distinguish screen contents from screens themselves. And thirdly, by possessing an already agreed upon (coherent) mode of existence to our conceptual mapping which renders our orientation with the world, screens are presented to us in a manner which calls for our attention. Therefore, through these insights, the authors show "the power of screened information in creating 'facts' through screening as such."[139]

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138 Ibid, 22.

139 Introna and Ilharco, "Phenomenology, Screens, and Screenness: Returning to the World Itself," 28.

4. Advantages and Limitations of Introna and Iharco's Phenomenology of Screens

4.1. Applications of Being Ready-to-Hand

Insofar as the problem of screens is a matter of practical concern, it is to the same extent a matter of experiential consideration. So, it follows that the problem at hand is a matter for phenomenology. While Lucas Introna and Fernando Ilharco pursue an investigation, adopting a Heideggerian framework, the authors recognize that such undertaking may be carried out using various other sources from the tradition of phenomenology.[140] Nonetheless, their framework for tackling the problem by applying Heidegger's concepts appear coherent analogically however, there contains some gaps in terms of an ontological grounding. This is because, while Heidegger's phenomenology concerns a general orientation of the human being in interacting with the world – and through this supported developments in theorizing technology mediation,[141] a comprehensive phenomenology of screens requires also surpassing the confines of interaction. Beyond the interactive component to screens in mediating one's experiences, there remains questions open for investigating precisely which layer of representation screens belong. Moreover, it is notable that Heidegger's phenomenology relies on an introspection of experiential encounter, and less so on third-person preliminaries. Thus, for grasping the sense in which his concepts retain analogical salience, one must resort to the first-person perspective on such issues as interaction and temporality.[142] With this caveat, we shall examine how their notions of already-agreement and calling for attention emanate in the same fashion through the underlying relation of intentionality between screens and screen-viewers.

We may assess Introna and Ilharco's work in terms of a methodological step from Heidegger's notion of being ready-to-hand, originally taken in the context of using hammers, to the extension of this concept to the matter of screens. At first glance, we notice that ready-at-hand is a form of presence which entails senses of immediacy, action, and demonstrability from the user on one side, a purposeful goal to be achieved on the other, and a means to reach such goal through the tool mediating in between. Whereas hammers are a clear example of this particularly because of their use in accomplishing a physical task that involves one's physical exertion being carefully administered in either building, assembling, or mounting something,

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140 Ibid, 35.

141 Cfr. Don Ihde, *Technology and the Lifeworld: From Garden to Earth*, Indiana University Press, 1990.

142 See Steven Crowell, "Subjectivity: Locating the First-Person in Being and Time," In *Inquiry* 44 (2001): 433-454.

screens carry less analogical resemblance due to their complexities in terms of being objects of perception and intellection. It is the human agent performing the hammering, whereas it is the screen alone that is displaying. Moreover, screens may be present at hand by simply being situated right in front of us. However, their form of presence considered as Heideggerian tools ready-to-hand poses questions such as: are screens meant for accomplishing the goal of viewing items of interest in general? Or, perhaps, would viewing be the simple means through which one tries to attain a definitive goal of gaining access to knowledge of something in particular? Regardless, it seems that in either case we are dealing with an intangible task to be completed since there is no physical exertion on the part of the person to achieve a material goal through a material means. In the case of screens, we are merely dealing with perceiving contents displayed and thereby do not engage in forms of interaction with them in the way Heidegger's hammers are dealt with in being ready-to-hand.

Despite this lack of conceptual fittingness between screens and hammers, viewed in terms of being ready-to-hand, the shared feature of forgetfulness, briefly mentioned earlier, suggests a point of appropriate comparison. Forgetfulness is attributed to the act of using tools and is common to both artefacts. Just as hammers, while being used, do not necessarily involve a fixation on the hammer itself in virtue of the greater attention one pays to the thing being hammered (thereby being the object of teleology), the screen also contains this idea of forgetfulness, as rightly noted by Introna and Ilharco. The forgetfulness also present with the screen is to be explained by the common experiential feature of us only readily attending to their displayed contents. Therefore, in this sense the authors' phenomenological application holds a point of comparison in this regard.

4.2. Applications of Being In-the-World

We may consider Introna and Ilharco's Heideggerian inspirations in terms of the application of the concept *Dasein* to the disposition in which we orient ourselves to screens through "already-there-agreement" and the way of screens "being-in-the-world." Human beings, understood as *Dasein*s are, for Heidegger, situated in the world with a sort of pre-inscribed orientation or way of viewing it. If we are to take screen viewers as natural persons or *Dasein*s, then it is consequential that as such there is a predetermined set of dispositions with which we encounter artefacts. In other words, there is no entirely neutral way of viewing screens, or the world for that matter. Instead, our orientation with the world and with screens contains a preconditioned orientation through which we view them.

While there is conceivable overlap between the two objects of reference – screens and the world – through the recognition of the human way of perceiving things, it is less apparent how to construct a sound argument for there being already-there-agreement in contemporary life. Although there are certain ways of viewing the world with corresponding patterns of behaviour (which simply can be understood as natural conditionings), the proof for such agreement appears for us to lack the condition of falsifiability. We are unable to confront a screen without already placing categorical structures on its form of existence. It is not quite possible to prove practically that to the contrary, this sort of agreement does not exist.

However, this challenge may be resolved by recalling Introna and Ilharco's thought experiment of imagining what a person from several hundred years ago would think when faced with a screen. It is easy to intuit that such a person would not recognize it as a screen or at least would not think of it in the ways we already do. For this reason, already-there- agreement appears as a contingent quality among people, insofar as it only holds true for those well-acquainted with it and those living in the modern screen's historical period. Thus, the salience of Introna and Ilharco's crucial notion of "already-there-agreement" appears to be a matter of temporal contingency. Such consideration also entails that already-there-agreement differs from *Dasein* insofar as the former is more context-sensitive than the latter. Therefore, the analogy of Heidegger's *Dasein* to the notion of "already-there-agreement" for screens does not hold, because of the contingency with which screens may already agree with our beliefs and the necessity implied in how humans are understood as *Dasein*s.

The next item for our consideration on Introna and Ilharco's applied phenomenology, concerns their notion of "calling-for-attention" and how this notion is entangled with the feature of relevance. Screens display content in a way that capture our attention through various

technical means which maximize reaction / response and capitalize on appearing as relevant. However, the problem with this has less to do with screens in themselves but more so with orchestrating the forms of content being presented. For example, such practices of capitalizing on relevant content for user engagement is a systematic technique of consumer neuroscience and the neuroscience of marketing. Moreover, raising one's attention to that which is designed as relevant can also be found in other artefacts such as posters. One may find a poster for a sports event for instance, and immediately also experience this feature of calling for attention. A poster may also already be in agreement with one's intuitions. As a result, returning to screen-phenomenology, such matter is a point of departure from the original aim to capture "screens in themselves" and becomes enmeshed with considerations of screen contents, software, as well as questions on what makes this quality unique to screens only. For this reason, it becomes difficult to separate screen contents from screens themselves when considering the issue of relevance and the way these items call for our attention.

Placed altogether, we see that the Heideggerian approach for screen-phenomenology does not set the full picture. While the notions of "being ready-to-hand" and "already-there-agreement" convey helpful insights for understanding tools and artefacts, screens themselves are not just tools nor artefacts, and thus cannot be fully captured using only these notions. There inheres the distinctive feature of screens more so in being a device of mediation. In such way, screens as mediums disperse image and video which are also products of the mind. However, despite these limitations, Introna and Ilharco do recognize the many directions with which screen-phenomenology may be pursued. The authors state how their "analysis only provides a preliminary outline of a full phenomenology of screens[,] [i]t still requires further critical consideration to expose suppositions yet to be scrutinized […] [including] the ontological phenomenology of Ingarden."[143] In that manner, the authors are correct in advocating for a thoroughgoing phenomenology of screens in general.

For both practical and theoretical reasons, Introna and Ilharco's method of applying phenomenological tools as a resource to treat screens is of great value and importance. Without an understanding of what screens are beyond just artefacts or as a certain kind of technology, we become vulnerable in taking them for granted as items of no particular interest beyond what they can show us. This is troublesome because screens are never merely screens but are forms of phenomena that discretely change human behaviour through frequent and prolonged

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143 Lucas Introna and Fernando Ilharco. "Phenomenology, Screens, and Screenness: Returning to the World Itself." Oxford Handbooks Online (Oxford University Press, 2011):74.

encounters. It is precisely the domain of phenomenology, which unveils an item's mode of existence and explains our predisposed orientation with it, that offers many rich concepts and insights to better understand what is going on when we encounter them.

The phenomenological project of Lucas Introna and Fernando Ilharco to uncover screenness demonstrates an alluring method for laying solid foundations in screen theory. While, on the one hand, their approach is narrowed by incorporating a Heideggerian phenomenology to tackle the object of investigation, which sets some limitations, on the other hand, their analysis bolsters further questions that are worthy of note to better clarify the screen in itself. For this reason, the general method of the authors, which consists in applying phenomenological frameworks to the problem of screens is both compelling and well thought out. It appears then of there being potential in using the general method of phenomenology to address the question of identifying exactly what screens are in themselves by investigating relations obtaining between the screen and the viewer.

4.3. The Problem of Mediation

The particularly challenging issue over screens is the boundless forms they take in mediation. Although Introna and Ilharco have created an intriguing approach to screen theory, there lies a number of conceptual gaps concerning how screens mediate content through various routes. In adopting a Heideggerian phenomenology to issues of technology, there are limits of taking the social dimension into consideration. This is insofar as the only concepts borrowed belong to a strict individual relation of intentionality to concrete objects. Moreover, while the general further question for Introna and Ilharco's phenomenological approach to screen theory concerns mediation, mediation itself may be categorized in several ways including society and culture, praxeology, as well as ontology.

Post-phenomenologist, Don Ihde has written extensively on how screens serve as mediatory devices affecting both our individual and socio-cultural perceptions of reality.[144]

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144 This illustrates "technological determinism" technology is conceived as shaping and governing the social fabric we participate in. Pieter Vermaas explains its three variants: normative, nomological, and unintended consequences. Normative technological determinism treats values such as efficiency as proof that technology decides how we view productivity for example. The nomological variant refers to the linear and consistent progress of technological development as evidence for its determinism, such as with Moore's law. Technological determinism as argued from unintended consequences claims that technology autonomously governs society as it can operate beyond society's control. See Pieter E. Vermaas, *A Philosophy of Technology: From Technical Artefacts to Sociotechnical Systems*, (Morgan & Claypool, 2011).

In his book *Bodies in Technology* (2002), Ihde discusses the concept of "perceptual reasoning." Scientific knowledge is the result of a bodily sensory—motor—praxis—perception. This means that our subjective embodied perceptual skills—together with the individually acquired scientific know—how—are extended through technological instrumentation, thereby resulting in scientific knowledge. Ihde writes: "It is through instruments that transformed perceptions occur and new 'worlds' emerge, but any new world is itself a modification of life- world processes" [...]. One important perspective which Expanding Hermeneutics emphasizes is the cultural situatedness of human perception. It comes as no surprise that scientists are struggling with observer variation.[145]

Considering firstly, how vision is often contended as the presiding mode over how we grasp reality, and secondly, that screens are the most effective form of disseminating identical visual content to a virtually unlimited set of potential viewers, Ihde's claim that screens have formed a highly influential role in the domain of science becomes more compelling.

The simple fact of there being virtually identical forms of content being shared to an indiscriminate number of screen viewers is a unique phenomenon in the sense that anything seen otherwise naturally is far more sensitive to one's individual perspective. Thus, by comparison, screens have extended cultural participation through sharing in experiences of viewership, particularly in the modes of being immersive and informative. The extent to which screens have served as a mediatory technology bolstering scientific progress may be seen in how its own methodology relies on an object-centred and independently verifiable (and thus in those senses accordingly impartial and referential) way of knowledge. In other words, the capacity for screens to display objects identically to all users serves an enhanced purpose for scientific inquiry.

Despite the aforementioned view, there remain some limitations. The state of affairs from which created contents are disseminated lose original qualities due to mediation. For example, the features of a live event in person is not only memorable because of certain qualities, but also simply because of how they are more naturally salient with an appeal to the human senses. Contents on screen, by contrast, are displayed representations of items belonging to a natural state of affairs. Although, again, despite this, with the priority of vision – along with the virtually limitless content provided through screens and its capacity for identically copied and repeatable dissemination – one is more allured to the screen than to where one is situated. Consequently, there emerges a communal and participatory phenomenon among screen users, most prominently on the web.

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145 Jan Friis, Olsen Kyrre Berg, Larry A. Hickman, Robert Rosenberger, Robert C. Scharff, and Don Ihde, *Book Symposium on Don Ihde's Expanding Hermeneutics: Visualism in Science* (Northwestern University Press, 2012): 251.

Considering this communal aspect, there are proponents who claim how technology is a social construct,[146] through empirical analysis of different technologies and their development. To support their argument, they adopt an Empirical Programme of Relativism (EPOR)[147] to build the framework for their Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) thesis[148] which proposes examining the social contexts[149] from which technologies evolve and hence are claimed to be socially constructed. Related to this position on technology, there remain proponents originally from a school of thought known as Science and Technology Studies (STS) who propose a study known as Actor-Network-Theory, in an attempt to "rebuild social theory out of networks" where "it is as much an ontology or metaphysics as a sociology."[150] Actor-Network-Theory is a relatively open framework for empirically investigating the relations between technological and societal developments. This is because of how its proponents aim to include all forms of influence on socio-technical changes, not limited to humans as agents. Rather, the theory also includes institutions, artefacts, natural entities and other animals, as well as other inanimate beings. Manufacturing technological devices and their use are the most evident examples in which the theory attempts to holistically describe the entire network of processes involved in how such items as smartphones, cars, as well as airplanes and restaurants come to exist and continue to shape reality. Therefore, a particular consequence of the theory is the insight that various forms of entities emerge out of complex a network of actors, understood as different agents involved in a multifaceted process. However, with the framework being open and holistic, such proponents of Actor- Network-Theory as Bruno Latour claim that the phenomena of actor-networks is neither rigid nor strict.[151] This intuitional looseness assumed in Latour's parlance is to be taken in

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146 Wiebe E. Bijker and Trevor Pinch. "The Social Construction of Facts and Artefacts: or How the Sociology of Science and the Sociology of Technology Might Benefit Each Other," *Social Studies of Science* 14 (1984): 399-441.

147 In explaining EPOR, Wiebe Bijker points to the history of plastics. As rubber and shellac were scarce, nitrocellulose was crafted as an alternative. Bijker states how this created several originally unintended, but useful and diversified applications. Bijker concludes that socially selective processes, such as patenting and the market determines the trajectory of such examples of technological inventions. See Wiebe E. Bijker, "The Social Construction of Bakelite: Toward a Theory of Invention," in *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology Anniversary Edition.* eds. Wiebe E. Bijker, Thomas P. Hughes, and Trevor Pinch (MIT Press, 2012): 155-182.

148 According to Wiebe Bijker and Trevor Pinch, technology is to be first studied in its social context of intended purpose and design. The second stage of locating the social construction of technology is by its personal reception overtime, in terms of controversy, consensus, or termination. The third stage is to describe the technology's significance according to relevant stakeholders.

149 Especially of cases where people decided over the specification of a technology, such as the bicycle.

150 Bruno Latour, "On Actor-Network Theory: A Few Clarifications," *Soziale Welt* 47, no. 4 (1996): 369. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40878163.

151 Latour, "On Actor-Network Theory: A Few Clarifications," 370.

contradistinction to such organizational structures as "a technical network in the engineer's sense."[152] Rather, the structure of actor-networks as espoused by Latour, appears to take conceptual inspirations from the works of Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, in their concepts of the rhizome and the fold (from Leibniz and the Baroque),[153] and the power-knowledge-nexus,[154] respectively. Accordingly, this means that the theory holds how a non-linear and non-hierarchical web of relations is entangled with all kinds of entities, contributing to their own formation.

To apply the concept of actor-networks to screen-theory, it is most apparent to take the Internet as a prime example. Insofar as the Internet heightens the level of accessibility to information[155] and introduces new forms of communication and expression, it can be seen as a case of how technology has an impact on society with multiple trajectories, thereby serving as an actor-network. However, this impact need not be deterministic nor rigidly structured. Instead, the impact of the Internet to society may be in heightening epistemic resources and thus enhancing various means of acquiring knowledge and more creative communication through different access points or nodes. Thus, it is conceivable that the history and development of content on the Internet does not indicate a determined path but is instead unstructured and unpredictable marking the symbolic appearance, for some, of being rhizomatic.[156] Moreover, considering screens as mediatory devices, it is primarily in the context of communication that illustrates their significance. This is to be chiefly recognized over how media serve an epistemic and cultural role, which is only to be bolstered through greater accessibility and convenience. As Harold Innis wrote,

> A medium of communication has an important influence on the dissemination of knowledge over space and over time and it becomes necessary to study its characteristics in order to appraise its influence in its cultural setting. According to its characteristics it may be better suited to the dissemination of knowledge over time than over space, particularly if the medium is heavy and durable and not suited to transportation; or to the dissemination of knowledge over

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152 Ibid.

153 Cfr. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus - Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. 2nd ed. (University of Minnesota Press, 2023).

154 Cfr. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, (Routledge, 2002): 131

155 It is noted by Science and Technology scholars, however, that certain technologies (such as smartphone devices) contain a "black-box" where the user does not know of the machine's entire operations for functioning. Cfr. Mikkel Flyverbom, "Beyond The Black Box, " *Social Epistemology* 19 no. 2-3. (2005): 225- 229. However, authors such as, Langdon Winner have critiqued the empirical methodology assumed in the social construction of technology thesis, also rejecting the black-box analogy. Cfr. Langdon Winner, "Upon Opening the Black Box and Finding It Empty: Social Constructivism and the Philosophy of Technology," *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 18, no. 3 (1993): 362-378. http://www.jstor.org/stable/689726.

156 A. Hess, "Reconsidering the Rhizome: A Textual Analysis of Web Search Engines as Gatekeepers of the Internet," in *Web Search: Multidisciplinary Perspectives,* ed. Amanda Spink and Michael Zimmer (Springer, 2008): 35.

> space than over time, particularly if the medium is light and easily transported. The relative emphasis on time or space will imply a bias of significance to the culture in which it is imbedded.[157]

Bearing in mind now how accessible it is to communicate through the Internet, with extremely low latency relative to potentially enormous distances, Innis' point, originally made in 1949, that modes of communication are often spatiotemporally dependent on its physical attributes for its disseminative effect is now immeasurable for its sociocultural and epistemic consequences.

To the question of how to conceive of emerging cultural phenomena coming from online activity, more rudimentary questions need to be tackled first. This is because, prior to the emergence of such a widespread social phenomenon in screen use, there must exist some unique relation of intentionality towards the screen that marks how it is possible for producing such immense consequences. In acknowledging this, it is evident how phenomenological methods serve as a natural resource for investigating the various means by which we are oriented towards screens. However, as was found in the consideration of Introna and Ilharco's approach, there remain a vast number of issues to be further treated for the identification of screens as such. A particular set of questions consist of:

(1) What are the essential and universal features of being oriented towards screen mediums which firstly from an individual level, then allow for such significant consequences at a global level?

(2) And from this unique orientation, how are we to differentiate between screen contents from screens themselves?

(3) How are we to distinguish between our natural vision from viewing items shown on screen?

(4) And, what can be investigated about the experience of screens as opposed to their contents?

In the following sections, related explanations to these questions shall be investigated through the incorporation of Roman Ingarden's phenomenological and ontological conceptual apparatus.

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157 Harold. A. Innis, "The Bias of Communication," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science/Revue Canadienne De Economiques Et Science Politique* 15, no. 4 (1949): 457.

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Let us summarize the findings of chapter II. In this chapter we have considered how the field of phenomenology may serve to benefit our understanding of screens. As the methods of phenomenology primarily consist in elaborate descriptions of general kinds of experiences, how we are oriented to screens may be explored in this way. The phenomenology of Martin Heidegger has been demonstrated to explain an understanding of human experiences with screens by Lucas Introna and Fernando Ilharco. There are merits to this approach as their works emphasize the previously unaddressed Heideggerian features of forgetfulness, attention, and coherence being characteristic of screens. Further, there are benefits to the authors' approach in seeking to elucidate the screen's consistent qualities featured throughout. These features are identified as the screening qualities of calling to attention and displaying that which is already in agreement to the viewer's thoughts and expectations. Although it was found that these two features may be plausible in being found on screens, they, while necessary, are insufficient in providing a complete set of qualities that make screens distinct as such. For instance, their application of Heidegger's concept of being ready-to-hand departed from its original material reference of tools to the arguably intangible quality of viewing screens, which as a result posed limitations on the extent of its applicability. Moreover, questions arise on the distinctness of their qualifying screens by the two qualities of being already in agreement and calling to attention, as they may be found on other artefacts such as posters. This is because the content of a poster may call one's attention by design and may already agree with one's expectations of what there may be presented on it. In this sense, the two qualities they draw, while perhaps necessary, are insufficient in describing screens in themselves. Finally, there remain areas open for further research on the nature of mediation of screens by their capacity to represent or illustrate another world. As these areas concern how screens reconfigure one's means of perception and ability to discern the real from the virtual, Roman Ingarden's ontological phenomenology thereby appears capable of providing their explanation. This will be developed in chapter IV. Before, however, the Ingardenian conceptual framework, which is necessary to provide the answers to the questions listed above, shall be presented.

Chapter III

The Ingardenian Conceptual Framework

To see how we may address the questions posed in the previous chapter, we must first account for the general conceptual framework offered by the most representative ontological-phenomenologist, Roman Ingarden. While his writings contribute to our understanding of literary works, there are vast non-literary points that serve our understanding of screens as such. They result from a number of his crucial concepts: the heteronomy of being, intentional objects, and heterogeneous strata. These concepts explain differences between that which exists independently from any human subject from that which relies on instances of its human cognition; or further, that which is natural from that which is artificial, that which is fictional from that which is non-fictional as well as that which belongs in the domain of the real from that which is in the domain of the virtual. We are then able to identify different modes of existence inherent to artefacts and phenomena, especially among them being screens. The aim of this chapter is to consider the above listed concepts from Roman Ingarden's philosophy to prepare tools for analyzing screens as such. To achieve this, I intend to show that Ingarden's concept of the heteronomy of being accounts for how things are made from various sources by relations of dependence. Ingarden explains heteronomy in most detail with the example of the literary work, existing in various relations to other entities, such as the author and reader. Explaining this aspect of the literary work shall serve as a point of comparison to screens in our later investigations, as screens also depend on various sources. After examining heteronomy, Ingarden's treatment of intentional objects shall be analyzed to show how there are objects dependent on the mind in some way, as with the case of stories, fictional characters, and images. Intentional objects as being dependent on the mind reveal how we come to recognize persons, artefacts, symbols, events, and much more. We may then better understand the distinction between the real and virtual since this, as I seek to demonstrate, is a matter of mind-dependence. Finally, after investigating both heteronomy and intentional objects, we shall turn to heterogeneous strata, which is a concept used by Ingarden to explain how some artefacts such as literary works, paintings, and film have uniform features which can be found in their structure. While we shall later elaborate on the heterogeneous strata for screens proposed in this dissertation in more detail, we may tentatively mention how they include presented objects, reconstructed aspects, represented objectivities, and visual concretization and immersion. Let us now turn to these concepts from Roman Ingarden's philosophy.

1. The Heteronomy of Being

1.1. The Relativity of Objects

Screens are often understood simply as a technology or artefact. Yet screens are more complex by being mediatory. What it means for something to be mediatory is explained by Roman Ingarden's specific understanding of dependence, which is explored in his concept of the heteronomy of being. While we shall turn to this quality in application to screens later, we shall first examine its original application to the literary work. For our purposes, heteronomy involves mediation functioning as a process between inputs and outputs, serving to create representations – which is mediation's product. What we intend to show in this section is how the heteronomy of being explains the process of mediation in forming perspectives which can be illustrated as separate from one's own.

The main example of an heteronomous artefact present in Ingarden's writings is the literary work, such as a fictional novel. Here, the author presents not only a story or narrative but a constructed state of affairs. This results in representations.[158] These representations are then concretized (interpreted), marking a unique ontology of an encounter between an author and her readers. Ingarden states, "[t]he literary work is constituted as an aesthetic object within the process of a dialectical encounter between the objective structures of the work of art and the subjective structures of an aesthetic (aesthetically modalized) consciousness."[159] Structures of works of art are worth analyzing, as Barry Smith states,

> Yet however complex nay be the structure of works of art of each of the various different species, it is crucial to the whole of aesthetics that the appropriate ontological analyses of this structure be carried through. For only when we know what kind of thing the work of art is can we determine the various axes along which it may acquire aesthetic value, be compared with other works, etc.[160]

Thus, by examining the structures behind works of art we are given insight to both their creative value and existential characteristics. Małgorzata Szyszkowska describes how "perception of the artwork happens through the creation of an aesthetic object – an individual and subjective representation of the work of art. Yet, for each and every aesthetic object there is an idea of the

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158 In the foreword to Roman Ingarden's *The Literary Work of Art*, David Michael Levin writes that "[…] Ingarden is interested in making explicit the particular modes of givenness or the particular and altogether unique structures of consciousness in virtue of which this mode of being of the literary work is possible." Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art: An investigation on the borderlines of ontology, logic, and theory of literature: with an appendix on the functions of language in the theater*, trans. George G. Grabowicz. (Northwestern University Press: 1973): xvii.

159 Ingarden. *The Literary Work of Art,* xxxiv.

160 Barry Smith, "Roman Ingarden: Ontological Foundations for Literary Theory," in *Language, Literature, and Meaning I: Problems of Literary Theory*, edited by John Odmark (John Benjamins Publishing Company: 1979): 376.

work of art, the actual source – it is believed – of this manifestation, which is equally important for the recipient."[161] Although we may count a book as a regular object, it carries a special structure, transcending itself to a literary work of art. The work of art is an object with an existence determined by the ideas and expressions of an author. The particular features of each work of art are inscribed by the author's expressions, and this becomes recognized by proper modes of witnessing. This entire process involves the recognition of an object to a higher form of art along various relations to the mind. As Ingarden states from his 1961 article, *Aesthetic Experience and Aesthetic Object*, "the cognition of a real object by sense perception (or with the aid of it) as well as the so-called aesthetic experience are processes extended in time, having their various phases, often composed of many acts of consciousness differing from one another."[162] Relations of intentionality obtain here, as they are within the orientation of the mind's being directed towards objects.

To know the relations between different forms of expression, an ordering of how objects are heteronomous in their modes of existence is necessary. Ingarden's concept of the heteronomy of being is to be understood in opposition to that of autonomy of being. That is, certain objects exist in terms of their relation and dependence with other things. For example, a cake is the heteronomous construction of ingredients which may, in a sense, exist independently on their own, such as sugar, eggs, and milk. This means that some objects such as the literary work are heteronomous because of the special place in which they exist relationally. For literary works, time has a special structure indicating a heteronomous and relative mode of existence:

> More particularly, the literary work is constituted by a consciousness which is situated, and which correspondingly situated the literary work, within the coordinates of (at least) three different fields of temporality. These fields are, first, the conventional orders of our clocks and watches; second, the subjectively lived time vectors of a primordial, temporalizing consciousness; and third, the time orders which compose the unfolding fictional world itself. Thus, for example, it is possible for the timing of the narrative reading, a result of the unique spacing which consciousness of word sounds and syntax has composed, to amplify and heighten, in a dramatic mimesis, the temporalization of the narrated (fictionally represented) world.[163]

So, one way to distinguish separate modes of existence between different objects in their heteronomy is through time. By marking how time is constructed through our consciousness

161 Małgorzata Szyszkowska, "Roman Ingarden's Theory of Aesthetic Experience From Idea to Experience and Back, " in *Roman Ingarden and His Times* ed. Dominika Czakon, Natalia Anna Michna, and Leszek Sosnowski (Księgarnia Akademicka Publishing, 2020): 236.

162 Roman Ingarden, "Aesthetic Experience and Aesthetic Object," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 21, no. 3. (1961): 291.

163 Ibid.

and in that manner either conventionally standardized, lived and experienced, or presented in a fictional world – as in a literary novel – each distinct understanding of time corresponds with each separate state of affairs being referred to (i.e., the objectively standardized, the individually experienced, and the creatively presented through acts of intentionality such as authorship).[164]

While there are different ways to qualify time, there are also material differences in how intentional objects express meaning. Ingarden notes this for literary works of art. In noting how literary works are based on groups of words, he distinguishes the unique sounds of words as opposed to their simple "concrete phonic material."[165] Words are said to be given a special structure of sounds as "the meaning of a word requires an external frame in which it can be 'expressed."[166] We therefore have two sides of words: the word sounds (as structured and recognizable), and the phonetic material which are the specific instances in which they are pronounced. Moreover, while there are many ways of phrasing (or placing words together), there are also limitless instances "in which one and the same meaning can appear in different connections."[167] This is to say that words have more than one meaning depending on context. Further, this "makes it impossible for anything which functions as the external expression of one and the same meaning to be any kind of individual real object or real occurrence."[168] Words then carry a unique way of being or mode of existence. Words are not simply real in the same ways in which we can qualify other things like cars as real. The special mode of existence of words may be characterized as heteronomous. Heteronomous beings are entities for which their mode of existence depends on a range of variables. Words – as well as literary works being a large grouping of them – are heteronomous because what they consist in relies on various sources beyond themselves.

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164 Creative presentation is not only evident in a literary work of art with respect to time, but also to space. As Ingarden writes: "Represented space does not allow itself to be incorporated either into real space or into the various kinds of perceptible orientational space, even when the represented objects are expressly represented as 'finding' themselves in a specific location in real space, e.g., 'in Munich.' This *represented* Munich, and in particular the space within which this city—as one that is represented—'lies,' cannot be identified with the corresponding segment of space in which the real city of Munich actually lies. […] nothing can change the fact that the segment of space in which the real city of Munich is *constantly* and invariably situated has a pronounced existential relativity with respect to cognitive subjects (even though it does not yet coincide with the orientational space that is existentially relative to a particular cognitive subject)." Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 224-225.
165 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 38.
166 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 38.
167 Ingarden, 38.
168 Ibid.

It seems that what is heteronomous relies on the mind. However, that is not to claim that what is heteronomous is purely made out of ideas. Nor is it to claim that such beings exist in a Platonic idealist sense. Ingarden states,

> the stratum of the literary work which is constructed out of word meanings, sentences, and complexes of sentences has not autonomous ideal existence but is relative, in both its origin and its existence, to entirely determinate conscious operations. On the other hand, however, it should not be identified with any experienced 'psychic content' or with any real existence."[169]

Thus, heteronomous beings are special kinds of objects. They do not have a real existence in either the purely ideal nor simply material form. Rather, their mode of existence is created through relations of dependence to the particularities of an author's expression which, in turn, is subject to her own consciousness. Since heteronomous beings are neither simply idealistic nor materialistic, and are not autonomous entities, then their structural composition must be determined by relations to other things. In consequence, there arises a special kind of mediation from the web of relations obtaining from heteronomy. The special function of heteronomy in being mediatory is that there not only exists relations among things, but a way to disclose a situation by virtue of a complex web of relations. This occurs by there being a set of strata (to be investigated in section 1.2 and section 3) that function as the structural components to a heteronomous being. This is evident in literary works as they include not only a plot but also a setting in which the narrated events and states of affairs occur.

Ingarden points to how "the difference in the structure of the states of affairs and in the nature of their connection carries with it a difference in the mode of representation of the corresponding objects and their vicissitudes."[170] For this reason, heteronomous beings, whether taking the form of literary works or paintings, for instance, unveil states of affairs in their own unique way, not only through the author but also by the nature of their mode of representation to begin with. This is why a film adaptation of a novel is often critically compared through the standards of whether it is possible of being faithful to the original.

As Roman Ingarden illustrates the three part distinction of time (i.e., to be conceived as objectively standardized, individually experienced, and creatively presented), this distinction brings to light the differences between the objective and the subjective through modes of the representation produced – and the processes of mediation involved. Ingarden's conceptualizing here also helps to explain the differences in ontology between our imagination, within a literary work of art, from our awareness of the natural state of the world. As he writes,

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169 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 105-106.
170 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 206.

> Now objects represented in a literary work are derived purely intentional objectivities, which are essentially characterized by ontic heteronomy even though, according to their content, they are usually of the nature of real objectivities. Their ontic heteronomy, which allows them only to pretend real existence in their content, necessarily also brings about the fact that the time belonging to the represented quasi-real world is only an analogue of real time.[171]

Literary works, while composed of "word meanings," "sentences," and "complexes of sentences," are therefore not merely the sum of these parts. By virtue of heteronomy, literary works are relative. They present a constructed state of affairs based on the intentional acts of expression by the author. This feature is what Ingarden refers to as represented objectivities. And so, one way in which represented objectivities differ from one another is through this three-part distinction of time. A literary work of art may be distinguished among others according to differences in characteristics arising from the period of its original composition, the personal experiences of the author, as well as the historical setting in which the narrated events take place.

Another way to grasp the notion of represented objectivities is by seeing how mediums, such as books and films, are not necessarily a natural state of affairs in themselves but are depictions of such. Moreover, how the states of affairs are presented depends on the medium. To account for this, we must identify a uniform structure. There is not merely one represented objectivity, but different kinds of represented objectivities. Given how each represented objectivity is unique, they capture one's attention. It is not merely a way of attending towards an object but a way of having a unique lens to view an entire phenomenon. As this is also a unique experience, what is presented through represented objectivities is creative. We may then set the background for deriving medium-specific qualities. In describing how literary works contain represented objectivities, Ingarden writes,

> Both the individual strata and the whole which arises from them show themselves—given, of course, an appropriate attitude on the part of the reader—in manifold aesthetic value qualities which, in unison, of themselves produce a polyphonic harmony. The fact, however, that the literary work of art shows itself in these value qualities does not cause any of its strata to disappear from the reader's field of view. Quite the opposite: what is given to the reader thematically, what first catches his attention, is—as we have already established—the stratum of represented objects, while the other strata are cogiven in a rather more peripheral manner. In contrast, the aesthetic value qualities which are like a bright gleam that irridates the represented objectivities, and, at the same time, when experienced by us in aesthetic enjoyment, encompasses us in a special atmosphere and, depending on the mood, either lulls us or grips and transports us. The point of departure for this subjective resonance, which is the subjective correlate of the experienced polyphony of value qualities, is always the presence of another

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171 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art,* 236. Ingarden's use of the terms purely intentional objectivities and real objectivities are meant to be in contrast. The former primarily concerns entities figured through acts of consciousness while the latter concerns the actual structures of existence. Thus, for example, the meaning, comprehension, and idea of a written sentence printed on a page may be in the domain of purely intentional objectivities, while materially determining the ink or toner printed for the sentence written may be in the domain of real objectivities.

stratum, but chiefly the object stratum, of the literary work. Finally, the aesthetic value qualities cannot be detached either ontically or purely phenomenally from their constitutive basis—from the corresponding elements of the individual strata. It is part of their essence that they are ontically dependent characters of something which carries them.[172]

Here we can see how literary works are not simple artefacts. This is because they serve the function of mediation. The nature of this mediation constitutes them as heteronomous beings — entities whose existence depends on a manifold of various sources. These sources may range from the nature of words as signifying more than their acoustic or formal structure, the uniqueness arising from the limitless possible sentence compositions created through an author's cognitive operations, and the manner of representing an objectivity which "grips and transports us" to another world, creating an imaginable place and time.

1.2. Components of heteronomous objects

While in general heteronomous objects are conceived as relative objects, by virtue of their existence depending on other sources, what these sources may comprise of depends on which heteronomous object we are referring to. For example, the literary work of art as a heteronomous object, writes Ingarden, is composed of :

(1) the stratum of word sounds and the phonetic formations of higher order built on them;

(2) the stratum of meaning units of various orders;

(3) the stratum of manifold schematized aspects and aspect continua and series, and, finally,

(4) the stratum of represented objectivities and their vicissitudes.[173]

Each literary work contains such structure, where word sounds, meaning units, schematized aspects, and represented objectivities all function as relative external sources to compose this heteronomous object. While we have investigated certain aspects of literary works, as well as word sounds and represented objectivities, Ingarden's concept of meaning units shall be covered next, with the aim to identify how meaning units have a special kind of existence. At a certain level, they may be thought of as simply phonetic, but on various other levels, they are unique products of consciousness, and the question then arises of how so.

Roman Ingarden's illustration of literary works of art as heteronomous objects deals with the givenness of what he calls "meaning units." These are the elements which produce meaning, while also depending on different strata. The question begins with, how is it so that

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172 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 370.
173 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 30-31.

words and names have meaning? In the history of the philosophy of language, John Stuart Mill understood names as having a strict denotation by referring directly to something individually.[174] Bertrand Russell claimed names have a definite description, thus requiring knowledge of the object being named to be able to talk about the same subject matter.[175] Whereas Gottlob Frege offered an explanation through his concepts of sense and reference, marking how while factually to each name there corresponds a real object, the sense of this object affiliated with the name is something separate.[176] Later, John Searle developed a more elaborate account of the abstract discrepancies taking place between the nominal aspect of a name from its denotation.[177] By accounting for how names do not necessarily have a definite description, but rather a loose set of descriptions, Searle's theory of proper names accounts for how and why names are used to refer to anything at all.

Although the tradition of the philosophy of language developed these distinctions, there remained gaps in the treatment of the ontological structures behind the things being named. Here, Roman Ingarden's account of meaning units offers solutions. These solutions help explain how things produced by the mind can have different yet simultaneous modes of existence. According to Ingarden,

> If, for the present, we call everything which is bound to a word sound, and which in conjunction with it forms a 'word,' a 'meaning,' then provided it is isolated itself and not taken as part of a sentence, the following different elements can be distinguished in the meaning of a name:
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> 1. The intentional directional factor
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> 2. The material content
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> 3. The formal content
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> 4. The moment of existential characterization, and sometimes
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> Also
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> 5. The moment of existential position.[178]

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174 Thomas C. Ryckman, "The Millian Theory Of Names And The Problems Of Negative Existentials And Non-Referring Names," in *Philosophical Analysis A Defense by Example* ed. David F. Austin Philosophical Studies Series 39 (Kluwer, 1989): 241.

175 Bertrand Russell, "On Denoting," *Mind* 14, no. 56 (1905): 479-493.

176 Gottlob Frege, "Sense and Reference," *The Philosophical Review* 57, no. 3 (1948): 209-230.

177 John R. Searle, "Proper Names," *Mind* 67, no. 266 (1958): 166-173.

178 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 63-64.

With these five main sources, the meaning of a name arises. The intentional directional factor is the feature of a word or name as being expressed by the individual author or speaker. Thus, for example by calling one's parent as 'father,' one is not merely generally referring to him as one father among many but in the specific relationship of such person to his child. The material content may refer to the physical traits of word sounds as simply being phonetic. While also sometimes, the phonetic shape of a word is in fact identical to its meaning – as with onomatopoeias. The formal content is the symbolic nature of the phrasing of sentences, for example. The moments of existential characterization and existential position indicate the ontological situatedness of the name's referent. The reason Ingarden distinguishes existential characterization from existential position is because, while characterization does not denote actual existence to a name or noun,[179] position does.[180]

In consequence of this analysis, these components which simultaneously exist in units of meaning reveal that words, including proper names, have meaning through material, formal, intentional, and existential means. While this has shown to be the case for literary works of art as containing "the stratum of meaning units of various orders," the notion that material, formal, intentional, and existential traits belong to heteronomous objects in general may apply as well. A particular reason for ascribing these categories not only to meaning units but also to heteronomous objects of mediation in general is partially to be explained by Ingarden's claim that

> The intentionally projected states of affairs play an essential role in the constituting of represented objects, and, after all, in doing so they themselves require for their own constitution the first nominal projection of the same objectivities as they were 'at the beginning.' Thus, it depends upon them—and, in the final analysis, upon the meaning contents of sentences—which objects, how created, and subject to what vicissitudes attain constitution in the given work.[181]

Entities which exist based on others may vary depending on these strata. Moreover, what characterizes a particular heteronomous object as unique from other heteronomous objects is ascribable to its meaning, and this is particularly through the difference in composition according to their material, formal, intentional, and existential parameters. We may take this to be true, since generally, "objects represented in a literary work are derived purely intentional objects projected by units of meaning,"[182] while units of meaning are made from these four parameters.

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179 Ingarden here illustrates with an "equilateral triangle" or "Hamlet."
180 Ingarden provides the example "the capital of Poland."
181 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 190-191.
182 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 218.

Take for example: *Harry Potter*. While it was first formed as a series of books, it was then adapted to a series of films. Meanwhile, upon its enormous reception became commodified as fan-led merchandise. As a series of books, its mode of existence counts as literary works. As a series of movies, its mode is of course film. However, by also becoming a commodity, *Harry Potter* then took a blurred mode of existence between existential characterization and existential position. *Harry Potter*, while first being a fictional character, also exists through impersonations, costumes, and products. Yet for the formation of such character, in being able to take these different modes, there must be a sense of consistency along the intentional-direction people maintain throughout its composition. Without this factor, Harry Potter ceases to exist. Therefore, the character remains existentially dependent on other sources and counts as a heteronomous being.

To allocate the main elements of heteronomous beings for the purpose of later incorporating them to our investigation of screens, we shall note the following. First, heteronomous beings, by their nature, depend their existence and constitution on other sources. Second, what these sources may comprise of include features along: intentional direction (the human subject's conscious deliberations), material contents, formal contents, existential characterization (which includes the imaginary and possible), and existential position (which includes the real/actual). Third, due to these components, heteronomous beings may help construct new states of affairs through a represented objectivity. And finally, this represented objectivity forms an entirely new ontological reality due to the fact that within it, another spatiotemporal world is created, as demonstrated with fictional time being an analogue of real time – which is otherwise experienced personally or measured and standardized.

1.3. Heteronomous beings as frames of reference

Frames of reference may be compared with points of view. The orientation from which narrators describe the unfolding of events may also be conceived as a frame of reference. In this sense, heteronomy also applies. According to Ingarden,

> if the representation is such that the poet himself 'tells' us a 'story' and thus as narrator belongs to the world represented in the given work, the center of orientation lies, so to speak, in the I of the poet himself—not the real one, but the represented narrator. All the represented objects (touched, heard, etc.) by the narrator, and in this perception they are related to his center of orientation. If the narrator does not expressly belong to the represented world the orientational space may be chosen in such a way that it is indeed found in the represented world but at the same time is not localized in any of the represented objects, so that all represented objects are again exhibited as if they were seen from a determinate point (which sometimes changes in the course of the representation). It is as if an invisible and never determinately represented person were wandering through the represented world and showing us the objects as they appear from his point of view.[183]

It is this focal point, set by the narrator, which sets the contours of how things are to be sensed and known over the course of a story. Given the heteronomous intricacies of meaning units contained in these stories, one may consider whether it is a feature only of narration itself, or of the capacity to represent states of affairs – the general ability to present a frame of reference. And if it is in general, then how so?

Encompassing all material, formal, intentional, and existential characteristics to heteronomous beings is an underlying theme of how they function as frames of reference. This means that, in addition to being existentially dependent, they offer points of observation from which reactions and judgements to their witnessing are made. Although heteronomous beings as in literary works were found to contain represented objectivities, these forms of representation – when especially immersive – give also an intersubjective exchange of what is perspectival. The point of departure of heteronomous beings from autonomous ones, is not only their capacity to illustrate an original state of affairs, but to set a concrete framework from which individual perspectives participate in the same way – not only in content but also in form. Changing the mode of presentation from the literary work to film changes the witnessing of a represented state of affairs, but this occurs equally so no matter the audience. This is possible because perspectives may still be shared through frames of reference. While one may find that the nature of mediation is such that representations only offer facsimiles of originals, and so may be thought of as opposed, this becomes less apparent given how these representations are viewed in the same way among different subjects. Ingarden convincingly claims that

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183 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 230-231.

the same object can be revealed in various differently constructed states of affairs - since the states of affairs are like many windows through which we can look into one and the same house, each time from a different standpoint and from a different side, into another part, or, finally, for a second time through the same window - a certain cleavage occurs in the 'stratum of objects' of the literary work. In their representation function the states of affairs are that which represents, while the objects constituted within them are the represented. But since the state of affairs is at the same time something which belongs to the proper ontic range of the object (constituted within it), this representation is in the final analysis a self-representation of the object in what belongs to it.[184]

Representations have two sides. On the one hand, the stratum of objects concerns the content depicted. While, on the other hand, the state of affairs is the conditions under which these objects appear from a representation. Ingarden argues here that these two components go hand-in-hand, because to each apprehension of an object there belongs a fitting state of affairs (or, perhaps, environment). It is this fittingness that determines the range (or set of modal possibilities) of each object in being brought to light. A spruce-wood tree, for example, would be found in a forest. A sedan is more likely to be imagined as on a road, in a parking lot, or inside a garage. An astronaut is more immediately thought of as being in space. Unless one is James Bond, a tuxedo is usually thought of as being worn at ceremonies like weddings. And so, it is through such examples that it is evident how objects (but also, of course, characters and human subjects) fit a given environment. The state of affairs where we may find these objects is complementary to them, serving as an accurate depiction.

By virtue of heteronomous beings existing through wide-ranging sources, the amalgamation of these sources is what may serve in creating a definitive frame of reference for the persons witnessing them. The individual variations between literary works in terms of their strata (i.e., word sounds, meaning units, schematized aspects, and represented objectivity), differ because of their subtleties. It is through these subtleties that a concrete frame of reference is possible. Such is the case with word choice in poetry, where the literary style often illustrates an imagined world that may be conceived through the careful use of adjectives.

The concreteness of a given frame of reference draws particular attention to the objects represented, rather than the general background or state of affairs behind what is taking place. Ingarden accounts for this issue stating,

in the performance of its representation function the state-of-affairs aspect of the stratum of objects is noticed by the reader only to the extent that it is necessary for reaching what is represented. It is like a medium through which we must cross in order to arrive at the represented objects and have them as a given. This medium, however, is usually not thematically apprehended in itself, especially when we are dealing with meaning contents. Instead, the states of occurrence enter more into the thematically apprehensible foreground; but in the final analysis they too represent the 'facts' that are realized in this occurrence or the transformations

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184 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 190-191.

in the objects that are produced by this occurrence. And it is no accident that our gaze is usually directed straight at the represented objects, scarcely touching the corresponding states of affairs. For it is in the nature of that which represents as such, that in the performance of the representation function it disappears to a certain degree from our field of vision in order to facilitate, above all, the illumination of that which it represents.[185]

The phenomenon of naturally attending more towards the objects being represented and less to the general background where this representation takes place is, while a point made on the reader's disposition towards narrative, also applies to film as well, given that both are mediums with a representation function. A significant element of these mediums is their ability to also bring to light certain qualities of aesthetic value.

In Roman Ingarden's works, a significant portion is dedicated to investigating aesthetic qualities and values. On the one hand, Ingarden notes the formal conditions under which an author or artist creates these qualities. While, on the other hand, he also makes a notable point of the ability to recognize such objects as works of art by the observer through what is called concretization. Acts of concretization, to be explained in detail in section 2.4., are to be taken as comparable to interpretations and comprehensions of the work of art. Concretization also serves as a means to fill in a work's missing gaps. This ability is further necessary for an artefact to be an aesthetic object, given the appreciation of such subtleties and variations in the uniqueness of works of art. For this reason, works of art, while brought into being through creative acts of expression, also are determined through their concretization and witnessing. Thus, the encounter between an author and audience results in the formation of a work of art or aesthetic object. And moreover, this relation is mediatory and existentially dependent (heteronomous) between the two subjects. The base of this relation as mediatory is twofold: (i) heteronomous beings on the one hand, where there is a sense of givenness for an original state of affairs through representation (i.e., represented objectivity), and (ii) the sense of individual variations, on the other, provided by a unique frame of reference put forward by the artist.

Heteronomous beings may offer specific frames of reference to the mind. Also, what is presented as a recognizable frame of reference to a reader is first produced by an author's original perspective of a natural state of affairs. In speaking of this phenomenon, Ingarden claims how this already occurs in the composition of sentences for literary works.

Every sentence [...] is the result of a subjective sentence-forming operation. Usually this operation is at the service of other operations, which modify both themselves and their product [...]. If this operation appears, for example, at the service of the cognition of something real it is usually effected on the basis of an intuitive apprehension of an objectively existing state of affairs and is adapted in its phases, with greater or lesser precision, to the content of the latter. As a result, it is bound up with various elements that are not essential to it. Thus, it is interwoven

185 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 190-191.

with a particular intentional moment, thanks to which the effecting subject not only 'directs' himself at a state of affairs existing in reality but also believes that he has found his mark and that in his connecting intentional glance he has become anchored in realty. The purely intentional correlate of the sentence is thereby intentionally transported into reality in a characteristic manner and is not only identified with a really existing state of affairs but is also recognized as really existing along with it. In contrast, the sentence itself—as the location, so to speak, where this recognition has its source (though only a secondary one)—is enriched by yet another element it claims to be 'true.'[186]

Although here Ingarden shows how an author's work is not merely some creative act of expression but is on many occasions also presenting an "intuitive apprehension" of the real and natural state of the world, he also does recognize that this is not always necessarily the case. As he writes, "[i]f, on the other hand, a predicative sentence belongs to the text which develops the representation of the represented world, if it forms a part of the 'story' relating the vicissitudes of the represented characters and things and thereby performs the function of the intentional formation of the represented as such, then it is only a quasi-judgement, which the author uses precisely for the purpose of simulating this world."[187] The occurrence of quasi-judgements on the side of the reader's understanding is first made possible by the author's creativity. This relies on both the personally experienced and externally presented features of the author's cognitive operations.

Summing up our inquiry of heteronomous beings in their first application to literary works we may note the following. Heteronomous beings are non-autonomous entities which rely on several external sources for their composition. The parameters of these external sources range from the material, formal, intentional, and existential. On the material and formal plane, we may distinguish between such things as word sounds and meaning units. While on the intentional and existential plane, we may discover such items as:

• (i) time being demarcated into three fields being: first, conventional (e.g., clocks and watches) second, subjectively lived, and third, within a fictional world elapsing or unfolding by itself.

• (ii) dialectical encounters between objective aesthetic structures and either the author's composition or the audience's concretization of these structures.

• (iii) aesthetic structures taking different possible modes of representation, bearing a relation of dependence with a sense of consistency maintained through intentional direction.

• (iv) the ontic (imaginary or possible) range of existential characterization as opposed to the metaphysical (actual) range of existential position.

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186 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 110.
187 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*. 173.

- (v) objects being represented in a manner characteristic of their corresponding states of affairs.

As a result of this analysis, one may find that there are specific ways to differentiate between fiction from non-fiction. The nature of the literary work as heteronomous indicates that the division from the imaginary/fictional to the real/non-fictional is not so sharply defined. And part of the reason for this is because of how works of fiction offer the reader unique frames of reference which allow one to be immersed in the represented objectivity. Being immersed also means that one may lose sight of marking what is merely created through an author's imagination from what is originally sourced in independent truth and fact. Given this phenomenon, which so often is the case for literary works, the question arises of whether other modes of representation such as films or images can do the same.

2. Intentional Objects

2.1. Creations of the Mind

Now that we have uncovered what makes an object heteronomous, we shall next examine what makes an object intentional, and in some instances, purely intentional. The idea to be outlined here is required because the concept of heteronomous beings yet does not explain how objects maintain their own identity and consistency. It is a problem of how the identity of an object is kept despite taking different modes of representation, including novels and films. Additionally, while heteronomy is contrasted with autonomy, these are categories generally about the ontology of objects. Far more is to be specified concerning heteronomous objects in terms of the relation of intentionality which prefigures them as unique. In other words, our question here is not of how some objects depend on various sources for their existence as opposed to some others, but of how dependence specifically relies on cognition.

There are objects which depend on the mind, only to be later recognized as a certain kind of artefact. Roman Ingarden demonstrates this with his understanding of literary works, and by showing how within them, several elements are clear examples of purely intentional objects. He introduces and defines this notion under the following treatment:

> BY A PURELY intentional objectivity we understand an objectivity that is in a figurative sense "created" by an act of consciousness or by a manifold of acts or, finally, by a formation (e.g., a word meaning, a sentence) exclusively on the basis of an immanent, original, or only conferred

intentionality and has, in the given objectivities, the source of its existence and its total essence.[188]

In this treatment, intentional objects are existentially dependent on acts of cognition. Insofar as they are dependent externally on another source they are also heteronomous. In a more specific sense, intentional objects are only heteronomous relative to the mind.

Another important point is that word meanings and sentences only serve as examples of acts of consciousness, while there are several other ways to demonstrate acts of consciousness in general. So while purely intentional objects are found to exist in literary works of art, where Ingarden claims, "[o]bjects represented in a literary work are derived purely intentional objects projected by units of meaning[,]"[189] and more specifically with how there exist "[t]he purely intentional correlates of the higher meaning units that are constituted in sentence complexes[,]"[190] this just serves as one example, with the mode of existence being the literary work. Other cases may be demonstrated in a whole range of ways to represent an objectivity (or state of affairs), and for our purposes, to be later revealed, the screen is an excellent example.

It may be obvious to recognize that what we may take as intangible (e.g., language) is created by the mind. However, there are several tangible items which also may be understood in this way. To do this, first we must distinguish between two sorts of objects. There are things which are entirely natural and independent of human creativity. Then there are those which are dependent and constructed through our creativity. Małgorzata Szyszkowska describes how Ingarden's theory of works of art compiles both their objective and experiential aspects with neither in isolation: "[a] work of art was not a physical object, but it was not a psychological entity either. Yet, to analyze the type of being a work of art was, one needed to include both the subjective experiential data and the objective foundations of the work of art."[191] To see this relation we may observe how a stone for example, is made up of solid minerals formed as the byproduct of natural processes. A sculpture, by contrast, may be composed of these materials, but is shaped in particular by acts of human cognitive operations. We can only imagine how many objects existing in the world are in fact products of our mind, although the sheer scale of such examples is innumerable. Items which are objects (and potential products) of our mind

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188 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 117.
189 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 218.
190 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 155.
191 Małgorzata Szyszkowska, "Roman Ingarden's Theory of Aesthetic Experience From Idea to Experience and Back, " in *Roman Ingarden and His Times* ed. Dominika Czakon, Natalia Anna Michna, and Leszek Sosnowski (Księgarnia Akademicka Publishing, 2020): 227.

are to be generally called "intentional objects." Roman Ingarden illustrates this with the example of a table.

> For the sake of simplicity, let us take the purely intentional object of a simple intentional act in which we 'merely imagine' a determinate 'table.' To the content of this object belong: (1) the formal structure of the thing, (2) the total range of material determinations which, while partaking in this structure, qualify the whole as a 'table.' Here, the main element in the formal structure of the thing is the independent carrier of the qualitatively determined properties or features, which itself is determined by a qualitative moment (the 'tableness'), which is its 'immediate *morphe*" and which becomes the nature of the given object.[192]

The notion of certain artefacts being equipped with material and formal properties has a long history, with its most famous treatment by Aristotle through his hylomorphism. However, the novelty shown with Ingarden's notion of intentional objects, while containing matter and form, is that there also exists a temporal and extensional set of carried properties attributed to acts of cognition. This sets the object as purely intentional. Going beyond matter and form, Ingarden analyses how some objects, while imagined, are still concrete regarding their carried properties.

> But this carrier of properties of the intended 'table' constitutes only a distinct point, as it were, of the content of the given purely intentional object and is different from the carrier of *this object itself*. The given purely intentional object as such has its own character, i.e., a carrier of *its* properties or features, which are different from the properties that appear in its content and pertain to the intended 'table.' To the carrier belongs, for example, the fact that the purely intentional object is only 'something intended' which necessarily belongs to the given act of consciousness, that it contains a 'content' (i.e., it does not belong to their content), a distinctiveness which, in individual objects that are ontically independent with respect to the act of consciousness, is not only absent but by its very essence is excluded.[193]

In this excerpt, Ingarden appears to indicate that while there are properties and property carriers to real items, these items when imagined (or intended) through the cognitive act also bears both intentional properties and carriers which need not be matched with the actual state of the object. Instead, the imagining of the object occurs distinctively in the mind of the individual with only its intentionally recognized properties and carriers. A purely intentional object exists insofar as it is figuratively determined by the mind in a lived experience. To further consider this, Genki Uemura illustrates,

> Suppose that you are consciously looking for a chair to sit on. Then you have a experience (or lived-experience [Erlebniss]) of looking for something. As is suggested by the term something, this experience of yours is intentional and according to Ingarden's theory, it has a purely intentional object. Now, there must be a sense in which the purely intentional object of your experience is determined as a chair. It is only by virtue of such a determination that a chair rather than a table, for instance, is figuring in your experience. In this way, the purely intentional object, which (partially) grounds the phenomenal feature of your experience (as looking for a chair on which you could sit), is involved in the very structure of that experience as a lived-

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192 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 119.
193 Ibid.

experience. To put it differently, describing how the purely intentional object is determined is part of describing what your experience is like.[194]

In the case of chairs and tables, these are of course objects that exist in the real world. Yet, at the same time, these objects, understood in a formal sense, can also be intentional ones, in that they are imagined or attended to by acts of cognition. These acts have a formal structure in that there exist properties and property-bearers (or carriers) within them. Specific properties of chairs and tables may differ (e.g., size, shape, colour, materials), although general properties (e.g., being built for the purpose of sitting and laying on) do not. Thus, the specific properties are what we may find in the instantiated tables, and the general purposes and structures behind these artefacts are conceived as property-bearers. Although chairs and tables existing in the real world have a close resemblance to those imagined ones, the latter exists merely through the intentional act. So as Uemura demonstrates, the sense in which a table is either independently real or purely intentional depends on whether we are speaking of facticity or lived experiences.

There are some convincing reasons to posit that objects such as tables have properties and property-carriers existing factually and independent of thought, but also have them in a separate way as contained within thought. How we think about properties through language involves different forms. Ingarden distinguishes three separate states of affairs merely on the level of propositions:

(1) states of essence [Soseinverhalte],

(2) states of thus-appearance [Soaussehensverhalte],

(3) states of occurrence [Geschehensverhalte]

(Examples: 'Gold is heavy,'

'In winter my room it is dreary,'

'My dog is running away quickly')[195]

Statements of essence belong to the object itself, in the sense that these are the necessary and sufficient conditions under which an object is determined as this certain kind of object. By contrast, statements of thus-appearance and statements of occurrence are claims that are always with respect to the speaker. The object, a racecar for instance, appears to be capable of high-

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194 Genki Uemura, "Demystifying Roman Ingarden's Purely Intentional Objects of Perception," in *New Phenomenological Studies in Japan*, ed. Nicolas de Warren and Shigeru Taguchi (Springer, 2019): 142.
195 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 192.

performance, and in my witnessing, is shown to accelerate very quickly. While these are statements about the racecar, they are still statements in relation to my perspective. The car of course exists in its own right and is built with engineering properties which would indicate its mobility and performance independent of my thought or witnessing it. Yet, the abstraction by which I come to imagine the car by relation to my lived experience, and thereby say to others of how fast it appears, remains purely intentional. These ways to qualify the object are thus taken in the sense of either the necessary and sufficient properties independent of cognitive witnessing, or instead how they are products of the mind.

Although this difference may be shown by the forms of propositions in language, investigating further into the referents of them (i.e., the things being mentioned) leads us into a spiral of intentionality. Artefacts are often treated in terms of the intricate layers of creativity needed to compose them. Taking creativity as a matter of degree only blurs the line between that which is fictional and non-fictional.[196] Purely intentional objects such as places, stories and characters are in many cases fictional, but because of their various modes of representation they appear non-fictional. *Jurassic Park* and *Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory* do not actually exist, but as an idea, they are illustrated in books, films, and even theme parks. The story of the *Phantom of the Opera* never actually occurred historically speaking in the Paris Opera House as foretold but has been performed on several occasions on Broadway. And, conversely, although Robin Hood may as well have been a real yet unknown historical figure (according to documents from the 13th century), he is more readily understood as a character from myth, and for the reason of passing down generations of medieval folklore, is considered anyway more so existentially significant.[197]

With these examples, it is important to note that Ingarden's use of intentional objects is not a reduction to mere cognitive phenomena. This is demonstrated with the aim to avoid psychologism. Amie L. Thomasson explains why this is so, claiming, "[i]n every case, the purely intentional object must be distinguished from the act intending it, since many different acts may be of or about the same purely intentional object."[198] At the object-level of analysis, we are interested in the intentional objects themselves, which despite being reliant on the mind

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196 On a similar note, layers of representations have been treated in Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, (University of Michigan Press, 1994).

197 R.H. Hilton, *The Origins of Robinhood*, (Oxford University Press, 1958).

198 Amie L. Thomasson, "Ingarden and the Ontology of Cultural Objects," in *Existence, Culture, and Persons: The Ontology of Roman Ingarden*, ed. Arkadiusz Chrudzimski (Ontos, 2005): 120.

as well as external sources of composition (being heteronomous), still maintain a clear and coherent nominal signification among various subjects.

To further mark this point of how an object may exist in two senses (either as sreal or intentional) simultaneously, Ingarden offers us the example of the city of Munich. It goes without saying that the city has existed in the state of Bavaria for many centuries. However, what are we to make of Munich as a city represented in a literary work? The naming of the city and its point of reference may lead us to ascribe the same properties belonging to the place both as how it may be imagined in a book as well as in real life. So, for example, we may imagine how in both cases, the city's population speaks the German language, where both the automotive and football industries thrive, et cetera. However, in ontological terms, Ingarden would claim that they are not the same. This is because of the differences ascribed to an object according to its natural place in the world – in contrast with its represented space. As Ingarden writes,

> Represented space does not allow itself to be incorporated either into real space or into the various kinds of perceptible orientational space, even when the represented objects are expressly represented as 'finding' themselves in a specific location in real space, e.g., "in Munich.' This *represented* Munich, and in particular the space within which this city—as one that is represented—'lies,' cannot be identified with the corresponding segment of space in which the real city of Munich actually lies. If it could be, then it would have to be possible to walk out, as it were, from represented into real space and vice versa, which is patently absurd. Moreover, nothing can change the fact that the segment of space in which the real city of Munich is *constantly* and invariably situated has a pronounced existential relativity with respect to cognitive subjects (even though it does not yet coincide with the orientational space that is existentially relative to a particular cognitive subject), since this real city quite evidently constantly changes its position into the one, objective, homogenous cosmic space.[199]

With this passage, Ingarden points to how the cognizing of an object, in relation to its place of being represented, determines it as intentional. The particular features ascribed to this intentional determination are subject to change or in flux. Whereas, for an object which exists independently of its recognition, it can belong to a segment of space that is constant and invariable. Although a real object may be relativized to the cognizing subject, this is not the same form of relativization that occurs for an intentional object. Elsewhere, Ingarden does claim that "[t]he space presented in the picture is an 'oriented space' (as Husserl uses the term) and not the space of physics or pure geometry. That is, there is in it a center of orientation (usually in front of the picture at a point determined by it), from which the presented space is 'seen' or should be seen, and around which the things presented in the picture are 'oriented.'"[200]

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199 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 224-225
200 Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 182.

Although the distinction here between the two types of objects is of opposition, the referential nature of it can be similarly expressed without contradiction. It is rather an opposition over two senses of treating an object.

The general point of understanding intentional objects is that they are products of consciousness. While these acts are recognized as coming from thoughts, it is not the internalist viewpoint we are here interested in. Rather it is the fact that these acts of consciousness may construct objects to a point of extrinsic recognition. The intentional objects, while being present in literary works, can also be found in various other modes of existence, including the more tangible ones. Intentional objects are taken materially in terms of being artefacts first coming into fruition through the mind, to be then actually designed and built, and finally to be recognized not merely as some uncategorized thing but as a work of art, for example. They may be said to exist closer to pure intentionality insofar as they serve a symbolic or highly representative function. So, in this case, a sign of an object's intentionality is its symbolic value and meaning. The list of such entities is seemingly limitless, as Thomasson claims, "Ingarden uses the term 'purely intentional object' to cover a wide range of entities, from imaginary objects to works of literature, music, and architecture, to cultural objects such as flags and churches."[201]

2.2. The Problem of Realism and Imagination in the Range of Intentional Objects

We have seen above how intentional objects are products of the mind. While the cases of tables, chairs, and also cities may be considered intentional, we have also seen how the problem becomes more perplexing since these are also considered real. The ability for entities to be both real and intentional (or even imaginary) may seem contradictory. And the clearest way to illustrate this is with intentional objects that are considered social and cultural. Amie L. Thomasson presents the problem in the following,

> Social and cultural objects such as money, churches, and flags present a puzzle since they seem, on the one hand, to be entities that clearly – in some sense – depend on minds, and yet, on the other hand, seem to be objective parts of our world, things of which we may acquire knowledge (both in daily life and in the social sciences), and which we cannot merely modify at will.[202]

Thomasson notes how the raising of this problem depends on certain metaphysical presuppositions which is of a too narrow understanding of the categorization of entities into

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201 Thomasson. "Ingarden and the Ontology of Cultural Objects," 121.
202 Thomasson, "Ingarden and the Ontology of Cultural Objects,"115.

the real versus non-real.[203] There is too narrow of an account of objects being boxed into either the "real" – and hence "physical" and "non-real" – and hence imagined. Instead, she recognizes how Ingarden seeks to resolve this problem by developing a broadened ontology of social and cultural objects.

To do this, Ingarden argued how we must avoid physical reductionism. Such reductionism would claim that we are to arrive closer at a "purer" reality by pointing to physical and natural constituents. Ingarden's works suggest that not only is this interpretation too narrow, but that it would lead to problems of being unable to reconcile this dual aspect of objects being both real and intentional. The flag, for instance, while composed of material aspects such as cloth and paint, is of course far more than them. If it had been otherwise, no values or significance would be attributed to them. Nor would it be possible to figure out its purpose or to know what it represents. Moreover, speaking of churches as another type of cultural artefact, Thomasson writes,

> For a church to come into existence, for example, it is not enough that some building materials (or, ultimately, particles) be arranged in certain ways – instead, there must also be a consecration ceremony that in a sense 'transforms' a mere physical thing into a church, a mere copse into a sacred grove, and the like.[204]

Hence, while we may speak of certain artefacts in terms of what they mean or represent, these same artefacts may possess their own material basis. The two senses of what makes these artefacts as such need not be contradictory. Rather, the means by which we ascribe meaning to an object is what complements its physicality. In other words, the intentional dimension to social and cultural artefacts is what elevates their ontological status to something greater than materiality. So Thomasson is right in claiming that flags and churches "have as essential features the performance of certain functions (what it is for something to be a church is for it to be a site for undertaking various religious ceremonies; what it is for something to be a flag is for it to serve as a symbol of a nation or cause) that cannot be thought to be essential functions of the mere physical stuff."[205] A better way to conceive of many sorts of objects in the sense that they are intentional is that they existentially depend on different parameters (including the physical), but have their identity construed through cognizing subjects. Taken this way, this does not mean that objects must follow the law of the excluded middle whereby they are only

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203 Thomasson, 116.
204 Ibid, 117.
205 Ibid, 118.

either real nor imaginary. Instead, one and the same object may bear its identity through the two domains.

Although the cases of churches and flags may help us to recognize how objects can be both real and imaginary, the nature of intentional objects is still too general of a qualifier. Particular intentional objects vastly differ from one another. Their ontological differences are treated by Ingarden in terms of their particular qualities arising from three main fields: being derivative, contingent, and heteronomous. Thomasson explains Ingarden's concepts of derivation, contingency, and heteronomy as follows. First, intentional objects are derivative "in the sense that they can come into existence only by being produced by some act of consciousness."[206] This means that intentional objects, including the social and cultural artefacts here mentioned, are determined through a posteriori acts of cognition. The specific ways in which intentional objects are produced after the fact of cognition may differ as well – taking for example the different preliminaries needed for composing a ballad, a poem or short story, and a modernist painting. All of these are derivative (with reference to an artist's acts of cognition), but the intellectual containers within them are markedly different, and involves separate languages or modes (that of the musical score, of a natural language, and of visual cues). Second, Thomasson explains how Ingarden's intentional objects are contingent "in the sense that they remain founded on certain forms of consciousness (e.g. that attitudes of certain kinds be adopted towards them)."[207] This is a matter of how these objects are not only initially produced creatively or derived from the mind, but also are appreciated for instance, or recognized in a unique way according to the mind's way of figuring what sort of artefact it is. Intentional objects are contingent because of how their existential status relies on a corresponding adoption by an audience. The persons witnessing the intentional object do not treat it as some neutral item but as a special kind of artefact which calls one to be predisposed towards it. Insofar as an audience is needed to comport themselves to the intentional object for its determination, the more contingent the object is. Third, Thomasson shows how intentional objects are heteronomous "insofar as their determinate features or 'qualitative endowment' likewise depends on certain conscious acts."[208] This means that we may find within the intentional object aspects that indicate remnants of intentionality.

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206 Thomasson, 123.
207 Ibid, 123.
208 Ibid, 123.

A useful example by Ingarden showing remnants of intentionality concerns portraits. He notes how painted faces involve aesthetic qualities in the following,

'The same' face, for example, may seem beautiful in one shorthand (appearance) and in another decoratively indifferent, and in a third it may even be ugly or hideous. Similarly, in one appearance it may seem 'similar' and 'familiar,' lively and pleasant, and in another alien, unknown or lifeless and dull. As a result, in both layers of the image there may appear aesthetically valuable qualities as well as qualities of aesthetic values. The face of the person depicted may be 'beautiful' or merely 'pretty,' or in contrast 'ugly.' The qualities of aesthetic values may also have their basis in the corresponding qualities of appearances through which a given face is manifested. In connection with this, the possibility of defining a different concept of the composition of the image opens up.[209]

Were we to consider this idea further, the examples of an unedited photo of a person as opposed to a painted caricature of the same person prove to be different kinds of art object. The caricature reveals the more exaggerated traits of one's appearance as they look from the artist's perspective, whereas the photo is generally more neutral by comparison. Intentional objects are heteronomous by virtue of the fact that within themselves expressions of intentionality (including perspectives) can be found – as they rely on external sources of composition.

More briefly put, objects remain intentional ones because of how they uniquely exist along three fields: being derivative, contingent, and heteronomous through cognitive operations of the mind. The derivative aspect explains the sources of its initial composition, i.e., its origin. The contingent aspect refers to its recognition as such, i.e., its witnessing. While the heteronomous aspect indicates signs of the object being an expressed artefact i.e., its symbolic function.

Finding what makes an object intentional appears to suggest a dualistic monism, wherein on metaphysical grounds, one and the same object exists in reality, while under ontological conditions, this object is also creatively figured in the mind, as one cognizes it. Questions may be raised over whether specific properties belonging to an object are part of this actual metaphysical dimension, or whether they belong to the ontologically possible level of determination. However, the notion of intentional objects helps us to understand that it is in

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209 As translated from the original Polish: „Ta sama" twarz np. może się wydawać w jednym skrócie (wyglądzie) piękna", w drugim pod względem dekoracyjnym obojętna w trzecim zaś może być nawet brzydka lub szpetna. Podobnie jak w jednym wyglądzie może się wydawać podobna" i „znana", żywa i sympatyczna, a w innym obca, nieznana lub też martwa i tępa. W następstwie tego mogą w obu warstwach obrazu występować jakości estetycznie wartościowe, a także jakości wartości estetycznych Oblicze człowieka przedstawionego może być piękne" lub jedynie „ładne", albo w przeciwieństwie do tego „brzydkie". Jakości wartości estetycznych mogą mieć swą podstawę również w odpowiednich jakościach wyglądów, przez które przejawia się dane oblicze. W związku z tym otwiera się możliwość określenia innego pojęcia kompozycji obrazu." Roman Ingarden,. *Studia z Estetyki Tom Drugi*, (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1958): 54.

fact possible to be part of both. It is only perhaps a matter of our chosen discourse to decide which side is the case according to the given conceptual framework.

We have begun this chapter with the question of how it is possible for one and the same object to persist in its identity despite taking different modes of representation. After all, the three kinds of propositional claims indicate that what may be said of any object either takes the form of being of essence, appearance, or occurrence. The difference in these claims already creates differences in the meaning of sentences as found in a literary work, for instance. Meanwhile, we have also previously investigated how heteronomous objects depend on various external sources for their own composition, while the objects being represented fit a given state of affairs. So, the question also arises of whether or not what is actually being ascribed to the object would be more fairly ascribed to these sources. These are problems of qualifying the object through language as the mode of representation. Although it is not within our scope to investigate its entirety, it serves as a preliminary case for acknowledging the entangled relations bearing over the ontology of objects.

Intentional objects, as an Ingardenian concept, allows us to begin to see the relational components embedded in an object, especially as social and cultural artefacts. This kind of object is not reducible to its material composition, nor is it to be understood merely as existing only in the instances of cognitive acts and certainly not only as understood from language. An intentional object, in being derivative, contingent, and heteronomous, is both reliant on conditions of the natural world as well as the mind – as the two should not be placed in dichotomy, but in relations that intertwine.

In seeking to answer how objects remain the same throughout different modes, it must be because these objects are intentional. The derivative aspect of an intentional object maintains a consistent set of carried properties to be reproduced into whichever mode of representation it then adapts. Its contingent aspect also maintains them, but from the side of a posteriori recognition. And finally, the heteronomous aspect guarantees persistence in the unique qualities belonging to the intentional object in and of itself. For this reason, it is possible that an intentional object can carry with it the same identity no matter the mode of representation. Realism and imagination enable intentional objects to have a grounded and persistent identity.

2.3. Purely Intentional Objects and Places of Indeterminacy

So far, we have seen how objects that are purely intentional are also derivative, contingent, and heteronomous. Yet there is another aspect of them that marks their existence as only presented at a fixed point. There is only a miniscule ability to comprehend or concretize an intentional object in its entirety. Far more relations are parsed with the object than can be immediately known . This is to be explained firstly by the extensive range of different sources for their composition in being heteronomous. As we have seen, the material, formal, intentional, and existential aspects of objects as heteronomous are ways to conceive how they are dependent entities, making their relations to other things the sources of their existence. The second reason why there is more to an object than can be immediately sensed is that there are only mere impressions of consciousness signified through derivative origins and not the whole dynamic range of conscious creative and causal sources being presented. That is to say, for example, that we may only see parts of the artist's intentions, given the limitations of the relation between what is expressed in the moment from the artist's mind to what is there in general. Finally, more things belong to an intentional object than can be known at first sight because their quality of contingency to those who witness it may be far different than the way it was originally intended. As a result, intentional objects can be seen to have places of determinacy because of their nature in being heteronomous, derivative, and contingent.

The quality of intentional objects as lacking something is coined by Roman Ingarden as having "places of indeterminacy." This is how we may better understand intentional objects as being only partially presentable. Ingarden describes the situation in the following, with comparisons of intentional objects between the modes of language and vision:

> Another distinction between the picture and the literary work of art has to do with the places of indeterminacy. Since the objects presented in the two kinds of art are purely intentional, they must possess numerous places of indeterminacy. The range over which these places of indeterminacy are possible appears to be much broader in the picture than in the literary work of art. For the objects in the picture must be undetermined with respect to all moments that cannot be brought directly or indirectly to appearance through visual aspects, while such a limitation is not present in the literary work of art. For with language it is possible not only to hold extra-visual aspects in readiness and thereby to prepare the appearance of all determinacies nor presentable through visual aspects, but also to assign to objects in a purely signitive manner such determinacies as can be only thought, but not intuitively presented. This sphere of the purely conceptually determinable lies completely outside of that which can be brought to presentation in the picture. Thus, the sphere of the undetermined is much broader in the picture than in the literary work.[210]

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210 Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 222.

At first sight, the comparisons made between language and vision in terms of their limits seem to be based on the question over the extent of what can or cannot be presented in either. While Ingarden's argument appears to suggest that the scope presented is narrower for pictures than for literary works, according to them bearing only one moment in time and showing only one focal point, it is slightly different. The subtle nuance is that in this passage, Ingarden states that the "undetermined" is broad in scope for the picture, which means that there are several undepicted elements of the state of affairs to which a picture remains a mere instance or part of. It is not to say that a picture in some way presents only less than what is said. Otherwise, a comparison between the two modes in terms of being more or less presentable would rely on a general standard that is measurable but does not exist. As said earlier, propositions in language contain statements of essence, occurrence, and thus-appearance, with no such formal equivalence to what is merely given through vision alone. Therefore, as they are two separate modes, comparing them quantitatively and not qualitatively would be incommensurable. The second point of Ingarden's is that the two modes of presentation are different since language is conceptually embedded with meanings that go beyond appearances. Yet with either scenario, being the literary work or the picture, we are faced with the limitations of issuing a perspective that must count as only one way of depicting states of affairs. What this means for his theory of cognition, in terms of comprehending intentional objects, is that there is only a fixed reference point to view them, while independently from the subject, the manifestations of their appearances may come from all sides. As he states,

> In the seeing of the picture we involuntarily complete some sides or parts of the presented thing; we somehow—depending on the case and the circumstances—determine it more specifically and thereby eliminate one of the places of indeterminacy that are present in the picture. The viewer believes that he sees the complete thing, determined on all sides, although he neither explicitly ponders the matter, nor possess any sort of agreement on it during the apprehension of the picture itself.[211]

The orientation we have towards intentional objects is much like the rolling of dice. While each time we determine the set of dots marked on top as representing the final number to be then used for accounting for the randomness intended in a given situation, there are other sides of the die that are neglected. A die itself is a real object, although through its purposes is also an intentional object with places of indeterminacy. On one level, one can be aware of the myriad of elements which one is less attentive to in a given situation, such as the die having six sides. However, because of the nature of how being attentive is a matter of fixation, that which is rendered unimportant in a given context is left behind. What only matters is the final number

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211 Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 226.

rolled. In the case of pictures, their places of indeterminacy may be marked geometrically and spatiotemporally. Like the die, only one side of the objects being depicted is present. Meanwhile, the picture is only a snapshot of a single orientation in a given moment in time that does not contain what could be experienced over the course of events unfolding in the original situation.

The center of orientation represented in a literary work may share similar features with that which is recognized by sight by virtue of correspondence. In particular, it is through an experiential framework of correspondence that we come to see how intentional objects are represented with orientations. As Ingarden writes, "If things, animals, and men are represented in a literary work, the space that is represented along with them is not abstract and geometric, or homogenous and physical, rather, it is the kind of space that corresponds to perceptually given space […] through the medium of orientational space."[212] However, it is important to note that this corresponding space is still with reference to being an intentional object. Fictional characters, for example, occupy a space within a literary work in an imaginative way where the space of imagination itself is congruent with the perceptual form of orientational space. Other modes of representation for intentional objects may also bear congruence and correspondence, but with respect to other perceptual forms such as sound. These perceptual forms may differ from one another. However, the point of Ingarden's using the term correspondence for representations is with respect to phenomenological (rather than physical or geometric) categories, and with respect to our generalized cognition. It is this generalized cognition that decides the places of indeterminacy over intentional objects.

Thus, we can see that the places of indeterminacy belonging to intentional objects are interpretable in many ways. Firstly, applicable to all such objects is their three qualities of being derivative, contingent, and heteronomous. In being derivative, they are indeterminate by having limited origins with regard to their author's cognitive acts. More or less could have been illustrated by the person making the intentional object, such as a work of art. Secondly, intentional objects are indeterminate because of their contingency with respect to their witnesses either more or less recognizing their author's signification. And third, these objects are indeterminate by being heteronomous. Having a dependent mode of existence with various external sources along the material, formal, intentional, and existential fields means that their composition can be subject to change. Therefore, through these three qualities, virtually all intentional objects no matter their mode of representation contain places of indeterminacy.

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212 Ibid.

Although we may qualify in general what makes an intentional object indeterminate, there are also more specific ways to do so through analyzing their mode of representation. Taking fiction as an example, we have seen how language as the mode of literary works marks the nature of what is or is not depicted, as exemplified in two ways. One way is by the form of propositions – bearing limited capacities for how and to what extent meaning is projected as of essence, occurrence, and thus-appearance. Another way is by narration, where the narrator takes the center of orientation, qualifying places, characters, events, and such insofar as he is given the frame to do so through the author.

There is a congruence in these two ways of depicting the state of affairs in literary works to depicting them visually. For while one way pictures contain places of indeterminacy is through time, time as the marker for what is or is not shown is independent of the photographer, just as the forms of making propositions in language are independent of the author. So there persists places of indeterminacy, irrespective of one's expression, simply by the form or mode of representation.

Also, with respect to both modes of language and vision being in congruence, regarding indeterminacy, is the notion that the nature of frames of reference or orientations simultaneously reveal and conceal alternative perspectival contents. This is to be a consequence of that which depends on the artist. An author's literary work carries meaning through his or her intentional projections of the world being represented through fiction. Likewise, a filmmaker's production is the result of a process where several artistic choices are made, where conscious deliberations over what is and is not to be in the final cut is decided on her own accord.

There are various ways of depicting states of affairs through the creation of intentional objects containing places of indeterminacy. Between revealing and concealing states of affairs are questions over alternatives to what is and is not shown. The relation of these two opposites is further influenced by factors which remain independent of any human subject but are shaped by their mode (e.g., language, picture, video), as well as other factors which are dependent (e.g., the film producer's editing). In addition, the existential dependence of intentional objects may be generally qualified by virtue of being heteronomous. However, to better see this relation of dependence through particular instances, Roman Ingarden's concept of concretization is also applicable.

2.4   Perceptual Representations and Concretization

As of now, we have investigated how intentional objects are entities created by acts of consciousness, possessing a heteronomous or dependent mode of existence, with a composition from the domains of the real and imaginary, and having attributable places of indeterminacy. All of these features produce a whole that is more than the sum of their parts. This whole can be an intentionally projected state of affairs. Upon witnessing it, the perspectival essence of it signifies that we may perceive as how others perceive through representations and concretization.

Concretization is a general occurrence when we for example, read a work of fiction,[213] enjoy our favourite music,[214] or appreciate a painting.[215] In addition, the specific way in which we determine an object as a unique aesthetic object, separate from others, depends on further qualities of this concretization. These qualities determine an aesthetic object as something unique and artistically concrete, such as a particular painting being a work of art, or a poster as a mark of creative advertising, or a video on screen as an artistic film production. While Ingarden argues that "the literary work itself is to be distinguished from its respective concretizations,"[216] the idea of concretization allows us to understand the possibilities for interpretation – on the side of readers, audiences, and the like, when it comes to intentional objects which present a projected state of affairs. Concretization is what allows us to appreciate a work of art in its unique way of setting the basis for interpretation. The reason for the uniqueness is twofold. First, each aesthetic object depends on external sources for their own composition, as understood by the heteronomy of being. Second, the qualities of being derivative and contingent marks the relation of the intentional object to the persons involved in expressing and recognizing it as such. The many factors which go in to the composition of an intentional object serves to form a unique identity of such object.

One way to determine an object as something more than an artefact is by figuring whether or not it is mediatory in terms of it representing a state of affairs and us being able to

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213 Roman Ingarden. *The literary work of art: an investigation on the borderlines of ontology, logic, and theory of literature : with an appendix on the functions of language in the theater*.

214 Jan Stęszewski. "Roman Ingarden's theory of intentional musical work." *Muzikologija* 4 (2004). See also: Małgorzata Szyszkowska, "Roman Ingarden's Theory of Aesthetic Experience From Idea to Experience and Back, " in *Roman Ingarden and His Times* ed. Dominika Czakon, Natalia Anna Michna, and Leszek Sosnowski (Księgarnia Akademicka Publishing, 2020): 229-233.

215 Roman Ingarden. *Ontology of the work of art: the musical work, the picture, the architectural work, the film*. Translated by Raymond Meyer and John T. Goldthwait. (Athens: Ohio University Press., 1989)

216 Roman Ingarden. *The literary work of art: an investigation on the borderlines of ontology, logic, and theory of literature : with an appendix on the functions of language in the theater*, 252.

concretize it by recognition. However, further parts need to be analyzed in specific cases, such as literary works. According to Ingarden, when one reads a literary work, one is not merely understanding words and sentences in the forms of propositions. One is not only imagining the story insofar as language allows the author to demonstrate it. Rather, "the reader usually *goes beyond* what is simply presented in the text (or projected by it) and in various respects *completes* the represented objectivities."[217] What this means is that, since many parts of a story have intentional objects (such as fictional places and characters), and also since these objects have places of indeterminacy (e.g., traits of a character left unknown, possible descriptions of the place rendered unimportant and thus never mentioned, etc.), the reader may use her imagination, "so that at least some of the spots of indeterminacy are removed and are frequently replaced by determinations that not only are not determined by the text but, what is more, are not in agreement with the positively determined objective moments."[218] On one side of this occurrence is the fact that what is or is not determined takes the scope of language through the three kinds of propositions. However, it is on the other side of the reader's comprehension that concretization allows herself to make sense of the work of fiction by both interpreting what is said and estimating what would coincide with what is not said.

Still for while language determines the scope of concretization in the literary work, questions remain as to how concretization works in other modes, in particular vision. Although we have preliminarily noted the fact that the scope of what is presented between the two are incommensurable, because what is seen at first sight remains non-propositional, the constitution of intentional objects suggests that there are other points of comparison. Taking the concept of intentional objects in a visual sense, Ingarden considers pictures as a possible kind of aesthetic object that can be concretized.

> In the case of the literary work of art, we distinguished between the work itself and its concretizations. Does this distinction also hold good in the case of the picture? Are not the picture and its concretization one and the same? Would it not be better to be content here with the distinction between the picture and the painting that maintains it in being? We would then have the distinction between the painting as the Objective work of the art of the painting, which is also the concrete formation made by the artist, and the concretization of the picture, as that which comes into existence as an intentional object through the cooperation, on the one hand, of the painting, and, on the other hand, of the process of apprehension. This contrast would be sufficiently sharp and would also suffice for giving an account of the facts presented by the art of painting and by the apprehension of the works of this art.[219]

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217 Ingarden. *The Literary Work of Art*, 252.
218 Ibid, 252.
219 Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 224.

Before investigating what would be part of the picture's concretization, Ingarden questions how concretization is possible for paintings. In distinguishing between "(a) the painting, (b) the picture, and (c) its concretizations[,]"[220] Ingarden claims two positions may be held. Either "there would be in every case one single painting and many picture-concretizations of the same painting, in fact, exactly as many as there are apprehensions of a given painting," or otherwise, "there would be a single painting, a single picture, and many concretizations of the latter."[221] Such distinction sets the ground from which we may figure how the picture exists as an intentional object. Of course, the painting is distinct from the picture shown from it, for we may describe the painting in terms of its material composition apart from the picture as the state of affairs it represents. Ingarden argues how

> that which in this product possesses only its indispensable existential foundation, but for its full constitution requires yet another existential foundation in the viewer, this is precisely the image in the sense of the theory of art and by its essence goes beyond what is real, and in various ways, namely precisely because it consists of layers (object and appearance) which in the real thing called painting simply do not contain themselves at all[,] through this, the task of defining the mode of existence characteristic of the image opens up before us.[222]

The second objectivity of the picture then brings to question how it is interpreted. If the picture materially constituted by the painting is to be uniformly interpreted among viewers, then as Ingarden states, there would be one painting, one picture, and different concretizations thereafter. By contrast, if the picture is to be interpreted in various ways among different viewers, then there exists only the painting and its picture-concretizations. In other words, it would mean that the picture as a represented state of affairs is only determined as such by the viewing subject in the instances of its being concretized, whereas the painting itself materially exists independently of it.

Taking novels by comparison, arguing that there are only paintings and picture-concretizations would firstly amount to the claim that a book, as materially bounded by ink, paper, and other parts, exists independently of the literary work as an aesthetic object. Secondly, it would mean that the reader's comprehension of the novel (which functions as an intentional object with places of indeterminacy), grounds the novel itself as an aesthetic object;

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220 Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 224.

221 Ibid, 224.

222 As translated from the original Polish, „[t]o zaś, co w tym wytworze posiada tylko swój niezbędny fundament bytowy, ale do swej pełnej konstytucji wymaga jeszcze innego fundamentu bytowego - w widzu, to jest właśnie obraz w sensie teorii sztuki i wykracza z istoty swej poza to, co realne, zresztą jeszcze w rozmaity sposób, a miano- wicie przez to właśnie, że się składa z warstw (przedmiot i wygląd), które w rzeczy realnej zwanej malowidłem po prostu wcale się nie zawierają. Przez to otwiera się przed nami zadanie określenia sposobu istnienia, charakterystycznego dla obrazu." Roman Ingarden,. *Studia z Estetyki Tom Drugi*, (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1958): 31.

what makes such object literary is the act of reading it. This, however, appears implausible because we do in fact directly refer to and understand what is meant by speaking of a physical book as a literary work or fictional novel.

We are able to comprehend literary works and appreciate their signification in terms of their content, which for while in various ways and degrees are understood somewhat uniformly among reading participants, remain entirely separate from speaking of its material parts. For this reason, insofar as we may compare intentional objects by their modes of representation, by a similar fashion there must be one painting, one picture, and many concretizations. That is to say, since what is intangible still remains part of the essence of intentional objects, such as literary works and paintings, the act of comprehending their contents (i.e., concretization) is an act concerning the represented state of affairs (or objectivity) suggested. It is not simply an imposed concretization of the material components which may be partially constitutive of it.

However, further relations between different modes of representation in their producing intentional objects by concretization must be investigated. As Ingarden explains,

> [e]ven if we grasp in the first moment (from a certain point of view) the whole of a picture, we pay attention, later on, to its various details and parts from various points of view, supplementing the "first impression" of the whole with the qualities of details and with their relations. It is not otherwise with the works of art which - as a literary or a musical work - cannot be comprised in concretization within a single moment of time.[223]

Given the uniqueness of the picture in its more immediate appeal to basic vision, as compared with literary works of art, there raises the question of how intentional objects exist via a concretizing perception altogether, to which we shall turn next.

2.5   Genki Uemura's Evidence for Purely Intentional Objects of Perception

Taking our findings, we have seen how objects of the mind may be considered intentional through acts of concretization and the fact of such object containing places of indeterminacy. By extension, we have also seen that in the case for screens creating intentional objects, presented, reconstructed, represented, and immersive qualities are also found as immanent. However, we may still question on what grounds this is at all possible, on the basis of Ingardenian ontology. It is useful to consider that such ontology does not merely qualify objects as existent or non-existent, but provides a whole range of ways to describe how objects exist and can also be non-real. The question is thus not of what exists and what does not, but rather

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223 Ingarden, "Aesthetic Experience and Aesthetic Object," 292.

of what forms of existence different kinds of objects possess. The purely intentional objects we speak of that are found in literary works, as well as pictures and videos, are to exist as objects of the mind which, moreover, have their nature embedded on representational (as opposed to propositional) grounds. To prove this, Genki Uemura sufficiently demonstrates how the best reading of Ingardenian intentional objects recognizes them as non-veridical and representational contents belonging to our perceptual faculties of cognition. This shall be also shown as the most fitting way to understand the latter two qualities of screens bearing contents that involve represented objectivities and concretization and immersion, in serving our investigations thus far.

Beginning with a reflection of Roman Ingarden's teacher, Edmund Husserl, Uemura recounts the reason why Ingarden turned away from his predecessor's alleged transcendental idealism.[224] Using Ingarden's own philosophical categories, he suggests the reason Ingarden appears to have disagreed with Husserl's idealism was because it would amount to the following claim, "any real object in the world does not exist autonomously, because it is *by its essence* an intentional object and such a *purely* intentional object in general do[es] not exist autonomously."[225] Since Ingarden allows for real objects to exist autonomously, this claim would be taken as false. It therefore appears that an extreme form of Husserlian idealism seeks to place all entities as merely subsumed under contents of the mind without actual independent existence in the world, by virtue of their essence. It amounts to the claim, all objects are intentional objects.[226] However, unlike his predecessor, Ingarden provides a sharp distinction over how intentional objects differ from other objects. The essential category of understanding separate modes of existence between objects, as we have seen, some of which depend on the mind, but others which may not, is thus a broadened ontological achievement.

A four step argument to disprove Husserlian idealism is presented by Uemura with Ingardenian categories in the following:

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224 However, were we to consider the need for separate treatments between inner representations as a phenomenological claim from transcendental modes of being as one that is ontological, the apparent disagreement between Roman Ingarden's and Edmund Husserl's conceptions here can be seen to have different objects. As Michela Summa, Martin Klein, and Philipp Schmidt claim, "[r]ather than postulating inner representations, Husserl argues that the experience and cognition of unitary transcendent objects is possible thanks to the mind's capacity to synthesize the different modes of appearance of objects—that is, the "mat- ter" of the act, or the intentional content (Husserl 2001b, pp. 112–113)—into a unity." In Summa, M., Klein, M. & Schmidt, P, "Introduction: Double Intentionality," *Topoi* 41 (2022): 96.

225 Genki Uemura. "Demystifying Roman Ingarden's Purely Intentional Objects of Perception." In *New Phenomenological Studies in Japan - Contributions to Phenomenology 101*. Edited by Nicolas de Warren and Shigeru Taguchi. (Cham, Switzerland: Springer 2019): 141.

226 Such claim may be critiqued as a fallacy of *petitio principii*.

1. Every purely intentional object is double-sided and indeterminate (Premise)

2. No real object is double-sided and indeterminate (Premise)

3. $x = y$ only if every property of x is a y and *vice versa* (Leibniz's Law)

4. Therefore, any purely intentional object is not numerically identical to a real object (From (1), (2) and the contraposition of (3)[227]

To fully consider the reasoning behind the conclusion, it is necessary to investigate the contents of the first two premises. What does it mean for an object to be double-sided and what does it mean to be indeterminate? While being indeterminate is to be partially explained by an object's being held in places of indeterminacy as previously investigated, the double-sidedness of an object is a new concept here to be explained. According to Uemura, the double-sidedness of an object is about the two kinds of property-instantiations belonging to an object. On the one hand, what it means for an object to bear a set of properties is for it to contain necessary and sufficient conditions that determine it as such object - whether or not the mind is able to recognize it. This is to be termed, the "standard" sense of property-instantiation.[228] On the other hand, there is another kind of property-instantiation that is non-standard. It is the set of properties imposed by the mind used to qualify an object insofar as it is held in relation to the mind or intellect. Thus, in a related note, he writes, "[w]hen looking for a chair to sit on, you have a purely intentional object in your experience. While the purely intentional object is a chair in the modified sense, you might not be able to determine whether it is made of oak, or whether it is 8 kg in the same sense."[229] The chair as an intentional object is qualified as such by the mind's projection of categories, such as the expectation of a sofa being cushioned, or simply one's own needing a place to be seated, hoping for the chair to be comfortable, etc. This differs of course from the particular chair one encounters as bearing specific properties (e.g., being made of oak, weighing 8 kg, having leather armrests, etc.) which although make up the chair itself, are independent from those who orient themselves with it. For this reason, Uemura posits that "the mode in which the purely intentional object in question instantiates the property of being a chair is different from the mode in which a real physical object in your office, for instance, does. While the latter is a chair in an ordinary or standard sense, the former 'is' a chair only in a *modified* or *non-standard* sense."[230] The fact of there being these two kinds of property-instantiation indicates that intentional objects are double-sided and indeterminate.

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227 Uemura, "Demystifying Roman Ingarden's Purely Intentional Objects of Perception," 142.
228 Uemura, 143.
229 Uemura, 143-144.
230 Uemura, 143.

Real objects, by contrast, are claimed to not be double-sided and indeterminate. This would implicate that they are either one-sided, determinate, or both. These two properties of real objects do seem to hold, given that when speaking of objects in terms of their independent and actual existence in the world, the propositions we may claim of them bear a truth value. Whatever may be said of a real object may or may not be true. Hence, if someone were to ask in what country and which year a chair was made, there is a determinate answer, and there is only one sense by which we refer to its being as identical with itself.

Intentional objects are entities of a different kind. Their double-sidedness and indeterminacy means that their truth conditions are more complex, by being both with respect to the intended object and the subjects involved. Moreover, the problem of their truth conditions is not merely of what may be said of them, but what may associated with their properties as they pose themselves in a perceptual experience. Uemura states, "if a perceptual experience is *veridical*, there exists a real object in the world, which is contingently a target of that experience."[231] If however, it belongs to the nature of some intentional objects that on sensory grounds they remain non-veridical, one may question what sort of bearing in reality or mode of existence they consist in. We may seek to answer this question through the way Uemura cites Arkadiusz Chrudzimski's account of Ingardenian intentional objects as having significance through the category of representational contents.[232] Uemura explains,

> The idea is that every perceptual experience is about real objects by representing the world, just as some beliefs are about real objects in the same way. A belief about real objects is representational in that it *takes the world* (or a part of it) *to be thus and so*. In believing, say, that a chair in front of you right now is black, you take the world to be such that it is the case that the chair in front of you right now is black. Likewise, according to the intentionalist strategy, your seeing a chair, for instance, takes the world to be such that the chair is in front of you at the moment you have that perceptual experience. What is important here is that, construed in this way, every perceptual experience would be regarded uniformly as having a real object as its target, whether or not it is veridical.[233]

For this reason, it is plausible that insofar as real objects then figured in the mind pose a representational signification for one's picturing of the world, including through perceptual sensory experience, it is at the same time possible to set aside the truth or falsity of their

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231 Ibid, 147. He challenges however, Ingarden's conception here, with the following: "It would then be unclear, however, what role purely intentional objects play in perceptual experience. How do those objects contribute to the intentionality of perceptual experience that opens us to the world in perceiving something? [...] Suppose that you are *hallucinating* a chair. Being intentional, your experience must have something as its target. Since, by definition, hallucinatory perceptual experience has no corresponding real object in the world, nothing in the world is identified with the target of your experience. Then, it might seem tempting to say that the purely intentional object, which is a chair in the modified sense, is the *ersatz* target of your experience." Uemura, 148.

232 Ibid, 149.

233 Ibid, 149.

contents. However, setting aside truth or falsity on these grounds does not limit experiences to mere qualia, as Uemura claims, "[a]n insight that Ingarden inherits from his teacher is that perceptual experience is something more than merely having a sensation. As Husserl writes: 'I do not see colour sensations but coloured things. I do not hear tone-sensations but the singer's song etc.' (Hua XIX/1: 387 [=Husserl 2001, vol. II: 99])."[234] So within experiences, there occurs the recognition of items in their entirety being more than the sum of their components.

Going further, Uemura points to how representations connected with perceptual sensory experience become an issue over satisfying accuracy and truthfulness. As he claims,

> Further suppose that a chair, which instantiates in the standard way all the properties the purely intentional object instantiates in the non-standard way, happens to actually exist in front you. If the purely intentional object realizes the representational function in this case, your imaginative experience would be veridical. But that seems nonsensical, because (pure) imagination should not be evaluated in terms of veridicality (or accuracy). In other words, our experience of imaging something does not have a condition of satisfaction. In an experience of this sort, there is no other target than a purely intentional object.[235]

In regard to how intentional objects are double-sided and indeterminate, we therefore have a problem arising over the degree of their accuracy in representing real states of affairs, which some may claim, is a matter of veridicality. Although this degree of accuracy may be compared, it is more so the fact of there being two separate modes of existence in objects – i.e., being double-sided and indeterminate, that allows us to see closer the nature of our relation with screens. This is why Uemura's suggestion that purely intentional objects need not have truth conditions apropos the mind's imagination of something is plausible, and that the treatment of intentional objects on representational grounds (as opposed to propositional grounds) gives the best insight to the nature of witnessing pictures and video. Most fervently, Uemura brings to attention the fact that from Ingarden's insight, "the purely intentional object of a perceptual experience realizes the representational function because the properties it instantiates in the non-standard way is projected onto the world."[236] So it is in this sense what is shown is not some passive reception of sense data nor an entire judgement over the facticity (veridicality) of the content. In both a broad and deep sense, it is an occurrence involving the mind's capacity for being attentive to what is being represented – through the projection of categories, but with limited awareness of the means by which this is possible. A sensory congruence[237] is essential for pictures and videos in their mode of being intentional objects.

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234 Ibid, 153.
235 Uemura, 152.
236 Ibid, 154.
237 In terms of qualia.

A reason in favour of Uemura and Chrudzimski's accounts of Ingardenian intentional objects being representational is because an alternative propositional account of screen contents and experiences does not explain cognitive dispositions but only rather logical decision procedures. Were we to only look at propositional features of screen contents, then the scope of our investigation may be limited, for instance, to symbolic tools and decision procedures within programming languages. Given that these propositional models bear truth values (either 1 or 0) with respect to their own formats, thus being models of coherence and consistency, we are less able to understand the cognition overriding these contents which, by their nature, are able to reference objects under different modes of existence. Especially with regard to cognizing screen contents, in phenomenological terms, we are to recognize the means by which categories of the mind either align or not with the pixels and frames cast on screen. And to remind ourselves of the background of Ingardenian ontology, this is not to discredit the experience as illusory or non-existent, but rather to embrace the hypothesis that artefacts, particularly mediatory ones, have a special mode of existence.

To summarize Roman Ingarden's concepts of the heteronomy of being and intentional objects as a precursor to their exact application to screens, a few general remarks are notable for artefacts as a whole, and mediums in particular. First is that there are many objects in the world which are sourced externally. In being so, they hold a relation of dependence with other entities, and this is to be otherwise taken as being non-autonomous. This serves to explain, for example, an architectural work such as a shopping centre having its foundation with the functioning of the economy. Moreover, heteronomous beings depend on four main areas which help qualify it as a particularly unique object, namely intentional direction as well as material, formal, and existential parameters. These areas also can set the conditions for some artefacts to be mediatory – i.e., books, cinemas, songs, etc. Through mediation a new feature arises – there being a representation produced, as a frame of reference or represented objectivity. Different kinds of objectivities may then be recognized, for instance with time. By the fact that three kinds of time exist (i.e., conventionally standardized, personally experienced, and presented as unfolding within a fictional world as in the case of narration), we can start to see the different ways to represent an objectivity and state of affairs. Additionally, through a sense of consistency being carried over through intentional direction as well as a comparison between relations of objective aesthetic structures and both the authors' composition and audience's concretization of these structures, it is possible to imagine how heteronomous objects in fact

become intentional objects, with them being represented in a manner characteristic of their corresponding states of affairs.

3.   **Heterogeneous Strata**

3.1   Ontological Categories

Understanding how items exist in the real world requires a distinguishing between the way they are experienced from their separate form of existence. This is the standard treatment within the philosophy of subject-object relations.[238] However, it is more challenging to discern how we may qualify environments we are situated in, as both perspectivism and states of affairs appear necessary. Investigating screens comprehensively thus requires an account of how they represent not merely objects or virtual objects, but states of affairs, environments, perspectives and such, as these take various forms of subject-object relations.

In constructing a general representation of a state of affairs, there are elements which remain consistent to specific kinds of experiences as well as specific kinds of intentional objects. The literary work of art as an intentional object (which as well contributes to ranges of experience through concretization) according to Ingarden is composed of heterogeneous strata. Within them representations of states of affairs are possible. The idea contrasts homogeneity in the sense that the elements or strata individually are composed with unique contents for each type of work of art. In setting out the stratified formations appearing in literary works, he asserts,

> [t]he essential structure of the literary work inheres, in our opinion, in the fact that it is a formation constructed of several heterogeneous strata. The individual strata differ from one another (I) by their characteristic material, from the peculiarity of which stem the particular qualities of each stratum, and (II) by the role which each stratum plays with respect to both the

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238 Moreover, Roman Ingarden sought to demonstrate (beyond simple subject-object relations) how ontological investigations can be grouped into three: a) existential-ontological b) formal-ontological c) material-ontological. He then raised questions for each: [For the existential:] "*ad* 1. a) Does an object in question (a thing, a human being, the world) in fact exist in a manner proper to it?; b) Which mode of being is it that is proper to it; that is to say, is prescribed by its essence – irrespective of whether it actually exists that way or not? The first question is metaphysical or belongs to the special sciences, the second one, on the other hand, is ontological and requires for its answer, before all else, a strictly ontological analysis of the idea of existence in general and of the ideas of the particular modes of existence, as well as an analysis of the object at issue, and indeed with regard to both its form and matter. [For the formal:] *ad* 2. When the form of something is involved, the questions to be answered are questions like 'Is the respective something, as regards its form, a thing, a process, or say, a relation?' [For the material:] *ad* 3. […] an object can be analyzed [in] the total ensemble of its material ('qualitative' – Husserl says '*sachhaltigen*') determinations. […] And here once again ontological investigations move to the fore, investigations whose goal is to elucidate the material constants and variables of the corresponding idea's content." Roman Ingarden. *Controversy Over the Existence of the World - Volume 1*, trans. Arthur Szylewicz (Peter Lang, 2013): 88-89.

other strata and the structure of the whole work. Despite the diversity of the material of the individual strata, the literary work is not a loose bundle of fortuitously juxtaposed elements but an organic structure whose uniformity is grounded precisely in the unique character of the individual strata.[239]

While we have so far investigated the strata that are uniform in literary works, further conceptual remarks are needed to specify how they are generally demonstrable. To do this, a set of existential (ontological) considerations from Roman Ingarden's book, *Controversy Over the Existence of the World* is beneficial. In his third chapter, Ingarden lays out the conceptual foundations for classifying separate modes of existence as follows:

1) The Problem of the Possibility of Analyzing Existence
2) Modes of Being and Existential Moments
3) Existential Autonomy and Existential Heteronomy
4) Existential Originality and Existential Derivativeness
5) Existential Selfsufficiency and Existential Non-selfsuffiency
6) Existential Dependence and Existential Independence
7) Absolute Being – Relative Being[240]

Let us begin with the first point of interest of being able to analyze existence. Ingarden posits three general ways entities exist. Either real, ideal, or possible. By contrast, when speaking of their negation, he does not posit three corresponding non-modes of existence. Rather, he claims, "[t]he being real, being-ideal, being-possible of something, and the like, are modes of being of this something. Non-being, on the other hand, is no mode of being, but rather the outright *privation* of all being."[241] To treat non-being as outright privation is a strong ontological claim. However, it is not without challenges. For example, how can all forms of non-being be reduced to privation if we were to consider counterfactuals? If I had consumed tea during lunch instead of coffee, my not drinking coffee is not simply privation or absence.[242]

Generalizing all forms of non-being to privation is challenging as we have seen with counterfactuals. Also, if privation is equivalent with spots of indeterminacy (attributed with intentional objects) then concretization becomes obfuscating. How could a literary work be concretized and rendered meaningful by gaps that cannot be described? To identify these spots

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239 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 29.

240 Ingarden. *Controversy Over the Existence of the World - Volume 1*, trans. Arthur Szylewicz (Peter Lang, 2013): 15.

241 Ingarden. *Controversy Over the Existence of the World*, 99.

242 Similarly, as Alenka Zupančič recounts Ernest Lubitsch's *Ninotchka*: *"A guy goes into a restaurant and says to the waiter: "Coffee without cream, please." The waiter replies: "I am sorry sir, but we are out of cream. Could it be without milk?"* Alenka Zupančič, "Not-Mother: On Freud's Verneinung,". *E-flux Journal* 33 (2012). https://conversations.e-flux.com/t/not-mother-on-freud-s-verneinung/6125.

of indeterminacy there must be a way to conceptualize how they may be filled in. Therefore, for resolving this challenge, we must consider counterfactuals as not a mode of non-being, but rather the mode of being possible.

For literary works, the limits of content and meaning by the author's expression is also interpreted by the reader with a relativized understanding of what is left unsaid (indeterminate). In this respect, indeterminacy is a counterfactual (in the mode of being possible) that itself is not simply non-being and neither privation. In other words, the reader may interpret the author's intent and expression by also taking into consideration what else could have been said. Although indeterminacy may therefore be understood apropos the mode of being possible, this solution only holds as we know so far for literary works. One may ask how would this hold for objects themselves? Are all intentional objects indeterminate[243] only with respect to counterfactuals? If screens filter in perspectives, does this mean that possible alternatives are left indeterminate? Or rather do they exist as possible and counterfactual? Ingarden offers a preliminary remark about objects by making a distinction between modes of being and existential moments.

While Ingarden claims there is a co-occurrence between an object's being (existing) and mode-of-being (way of existing),[244] he also mentions co-occurrences of an object's material moments which also are bound together.[245] Colour for example may be a visual (but also a temporal) property of a rose such that its vibrance is a matter of the extension time. In addition, as Ingarden describes, "[t]he colour orange, for example, is certainly not composed out of redness and yellowness; it is something unique onto itself, and yet it is possible to distinguish within it the two moments in virtue of which it is similar to the colour red on the one hand, and to the colour yellow on the other."[246] Thus, the following may be distinguished. There is first the fact of an object's existing and way of existing. And second, there is a temporal dimension to this ontology, such that co-occurrences of properties (or material moments as well as moments of being) are found. The mode of being possible and other ways we may qualify an object, bears relations with factors of time.

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243 This general ontology however, is separate from Ingarden's phenomenological treatment of intentional objects being double-sided (by virtue of being with respect to subject-object relations), referring back to Genki Uemura's account of property instantiation.

244 Ingarden. *Controversy Over the Existence of the World*, 99.

245 Ibid, 99-100.

246 Ibid, 96.

Although the relation of co-occurrences is discoverable among modes of being and material moments, existence and material are not the same in this respect. Ingarden seeks to clarify how these two are incommensurable, as he states:

> The being of an object and this object itself are not two different entities that happen to occur, so to speak, *alongside* each other, as are, say, the being-red and the being-soft of a rose. Nor are they even juxtaposed in the manner of the red colour of this rose and the concrete extension of this colour, which are amalgamated […] with each other, and indeed in such a way that every part of this extension is saturated by the red colour and from the perspective of this redness or red-colouration […] is in itself extended. Still, the extension does not permeate the red colour (and conversely) in that peculiar manner in which the existing object is permeated by its being. Nor is this being separate from the object as something that can be grasped in and for itself. It is perhaps for this reason that Hume rejects the notion of a *distinct* 'idea' of the being of an existing object.[247]

So, when distinguishing an object from its properties, it is also possible to separate modes of existence from contents. Ingarden rightly demonstrates how this may be found more readily in the case of properties of colour as belonging to objects. Yet more succinctly, he claims, "[i]f something is real, then *everything* in it is real (apart from the being-real itself, of which it can obviously not be said in any way that it 'exists' in some sense or other)."[248]

Yet Ingarden problematizes further that if "we concede that everything attaching to a real object is real, then nothing attaching to it could be possible in the sense of the empirical possibility we have established. And this is all the more so, given that being-real and empirical being-possible are mutually exclusive modes of being."[249] Making matters more intricate:

> But now something else is at issue, namely whether *within* the confines of one and the same object *all* properties, *all* states of affairs, *all* parts, relations, etc., exist or have to exist *in the same mode*. If that were so, it would preclude two *different* properties of the same object from existing in different modes; e.g., it would prevent *one* property from being real while several others are merely empirically possible. But how could this be reconciled with the fact that we attribute to individual, real objects properties or states of one sort or another – and rightfully so, it would seem – that are merely empirically possible, one or another of which are then actually realized?[250]

This relates to how when trying to separate an object from its properties, problems arise as to the mode of existence of these properties, were we to question whether for example they are real or possible (generally in empirical terms). One may compare this problem as well to the question of what properties are essential to an object (to determinate as such) beyond possible temporal and empirical contingency. In this case we consider how different kinds of properties bear a distinct mode of existence for one and the same object, particularly with matters of

247 Ibid, 100.
248 Ibid, 105.
249 Ibid, 105.
250 Ibid, 105.

temporal extension and description. A valid reason Ingarden carefully introduced these ontological lines of investigation may be supported under that these issues pertain directly to questions of the essence of distinct objects.

Subsequently, from these remarks it is possible to analyze the four particular ways objects themselves may be understood in relation to their property-instantiations. These four consist of relations between: existential *autonomy* and existential h*eteronomy*; existential *originality* and existential *derivativeness*; existential *selfsufficiency* and existential *non-selfsufficiency*; existential *independence* and existential *dependence*; *absolute being – relative being*.[251] In these concepts Ingarden provides the following definitions:

- An entity (in the sense of any something at all) exists *autonomously* (is existentially autonomous) if it has its existential foundation with itself.[252] […] On the other hand, an entity is existentially *heteronomous* (exists heteronomously) if it has its existential foundation outside of itself.[253]

- An entity is existentially *original* if, in accordance with its essence, it cannot be produced by any other entity. In contrast, an entity is existentially *derivative* if it can be so produced. If an original entity exists at all, that is only because it is incapable of not existing in virtue of its very essence – provided there is such an essence, and more precisely, such an ideal 'quiddity' as determines their nature.[254]

- An entity is existentially [*separable*] if in accordance with its essence it requires for its being the being of no other entity which would have to coexist with it within the unity of some whole, or, in other words, if its being involves no necessary coexistence with some other entity within the unity of a whole. In contrast, an entity is existentially [*non-separable*] if, as implied by its essence, its being involves a necessary coexistence with some other entity (which may have to be quite specifically qualified in its material essence) in the unity of a whole.[255]

- [An entity is existentially *dependent* if it is] separable and still require[s], in virtue of its essence, the existence of some other [*separable*] entity for its own 'continued subsistence.' […][I]f in virtue of its essence a separable entity requires the existence of *no* other [*separable*] entity for its own existence (and hence, of no other entity whatever), then it is *independent* in the absolute sense.[256]

- [I]f an entity is *simultaneously existentially autonomous, original,* [*separable*] *and independent*, we say that it is *absolutely existent*. If, on the other hand, an entity exhibits in its mode of being even a *single* opposite of the existential moments just enumerated, then its being is *relative*.[257]

251 Ingarden, *Controversy Over the Existence of the World*, 109.
252 Ingarden includes here individual objects, properties, states of affairs, ideas, and ideal qualities. Ingarden, *Controversy Over The Existence of the World*, 109.
253 Ibid, 110.
254 Ibid, 118.
255 Ibid, 147.
256 Ibid, 153.
257 Ibid, 155.

Although these distinctions are conceptually generic, they are helpful for analyzing different kinds of intentional objects. Exploring the combinations of these categories and following rules of mutual exclusivity Ingarden sets eight possible outcomes, only one of which involves I. absolute being (i.e., autonomy; originality; selfsufficiency; independence), with all others (II.-VIII.) as forms of relative being. The remaining seven outcomes consist of the following:

II. Autonomy; Derivativeness; Selfsufficiency; Independence

III. Autonomy; Originality; Non-selfsufficiency

IV. Autonomy; Originality; Selfsufficiency; Dependence

V. Autonomy; Derivativeness; Selfsufficiency; Dependence

VI. Autonomy; Derivativeness; Non-selfsufficiency

VII. Heteronomy; Derivativeness; Selfsufficiency; Dependence

VIII. Heteronomy; Derivativeness; Non-selfsufficiency[258]

While absolute being may be ascribed to omnipotence, the seven other forms of being as relative may be subsumed under it. So, for example, II. is comparable to a natural legal person in the sense of being autonomous, self-sufficient, and independent, yet at the same time is derivative in the sense of being recognized and protected as such by the state and jurisdiction. Option III. may be interpreted as an original and autonomous idea that still requires the coexistence of other ideas. An example here is that of a square or triangle. Although the two geometric concepts are original and autonomous, they require other concepts to be determined (e.g., two sets of lines being parallel and of equal length, or having three sides, three corners, and bearing a sum of 180 degrees internally, notwithstanding the full set of laws presumed only in Euclidean geometry). Option IV. may also belong in the realm of ideas which may be of one order above the previous, as dependence may still include selfsufficiency. Option V. can be illustrated in the sense of one's offspring being autonomous, original, and self-sufficient living persons, yet at the same time dependent on parents to be brought to life and ensured sustenance. Option VI, can be understood with reference to things that are physical. Although they may be derivative and non-separable, they remain autonomous by having an "existential foundation within itself,"[259] and thus need not have observers or witnesses to maintain their own existence. The final two options VII. and VIII. are modes of being that are heteronomous.. While heteronomy excludes autonomy, it also excludes originality.[260] and therefore involves

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258 Ibid, 156-157.

259 Ingarden, *Controversy Over the Existence of the World*, 110.

260 Ibid, 155-156.

derivativeness as its mode of being. This leaves option VII. as distinct from option VIII. only by virtue of selfsufficiency and dependence on one side, and lack of these on the other. Option VII. is best characterized through the notion of intentional objects as found in Ingarden's exploration of literary works of art. Here intentional objects are heteronomous, derivative, separable, and dependent with respect to the author and reader's acts of cognition. Whereas option VIII. can be understood in the sense of properties belonging to these intentional objects. This is because in addition to being heteronomous and derivative, they also lack selfsufficiency. As Julio de Rizzo claims,

> a long standing tradition has it that God is an autonomous, original, self-sufficient, and independent being; a person, say Elizabeth II, is autonomous, derivative (upon her parents, for instance), self-sufficient, and dependent (upon oxygen, to stay faithful to Ingarden proposed example); {Socrates} is heteronomous (it is identical to {Socrates} because Socrates is its sole member, say), derivative, self-sufficient, and dependent (on Socrates himself); Sherlock Holmes is plausibly heteronomous, derivative, self-sufficient, and independent; finally, Socrates's wisdom, conceived of as a moment, is autonomous, derivative, and non-self-sufficient (inasmuch as Socrates himself might be considered a whole in the sense relevant to the definition).[261]

These eight possible modes of being offer us an insight to how we may refer to entities[262] in special senses, whether or not they actually exist in similar forms. What we can glean from Ingarden's analysis here is the recognition that objects are given categorial qualification by virtue of correspondence with uniform strata which appear in them. An object on my desk is qualified as a pen insofar as a set of consistent strata (or properties) are satisfied e.g., possibly containing ink which is to be used for writing on paper. The pen as a physical artefact can be ontologically categorized further as belonging to option VI as autonomous, derivative, and non-separable because its existential foundation is with itself, its essence can be produced by entities outside of itself (i.e., a product designer and assembly plant), and it involves a necessary coexistence with other entities (i.e., plastic, ink, metal springs, rubber). Therefore, when speaking of practically anything, an ontological mode of existence is presumed with strata that belong to them. For the purposes of our investigation of screens, the method of identifying them by correspondence to possible mode of existence shall also serve in drawing their uniform qualities and strata.

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261 Julio de Rizzo, "Ingarden on the Varieties of Dependence," *Wiley - European Journal of Philosophy* 30
262 Including ideas, persons, objects and artefacts, processes, events, states of affairs, and the like.

3.2   Object-Artefact Correspondence by Strata

As we have seen with literary works and pens, entities belong to a particular mode of being. These modes of being involve individual strata. Pens, books, cameras, and the like are often characterizable as physical artefacts belonging to the sixth mode of being (i.e., as autonomous, derivative, and non-separable). By contrast, ideas may take one of several modes of being. This is because the way we qualify an idea is already at a chosen level of abstraction which may or may not be generalized or narrowed further. To know what screens are requires the identification of which level of abstraction they belong

Ingarden shows how texts – and literary works in particular – can be analyzed at the levels of "words, sentences, and clusters of sentences."[263] With the first two strata of literary works again being: "(1) […] word sounds and the phonetic formations of higher order built on them; [and] (2) the stratum of meaning units of various orders[,]"[264] there is a connection between them allowing for variability in the level of abstraction by which we draw their meaning. In *The Literary Work of Art*, Ingarden distinguishes two elements within single words which together bring about their meaning. Each word comes from a distinct *phonic material* that produces a *word-sound* which serves to create meaning.[265] Although what we may hear from instances of word-sounds from a speaker varies from person to person and are technically unique on each occasion (especially with regard to intonation), the fact of there being a consistent and repeatable form contributes to their meaning. As Ingarden states, "[a]s far as the constitution of the word sound is concerned, the strictly identical meaning bound to it by the repeated usage also contributes essentially, but in a different way."[266] While language can be divided into words, sentences, and sentence clusters, meaning can be divided just as so. Consequently, ideas have a complex structure in their possible modes of being. Moreover, ideas are not all of the same type. Apart from how language is entrenched with ideas through words, sentences, and their numerous combinations, ideas also can be differentiated from each other in terms of their proximity to the absolute mode of being and their form of reference.

Properties of intentional objects on occasion may be subject to change within intentional objects themselves. We see this with literary works and film wherein on one hand, an original plot, setting, narration style, and character depiction is illustrated, while on the other

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263 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 34.

264 Ibid, 30-31.

265 Ibid, 35.

266 Ibid, 36. However, the extent this is the case may be challenged were we to consider synonyms and their entirely different meanings.

hand contingencies in describing these elements (as intentional object-properties) are also found. A way to consider how intentional objects differ from their properties is the fact that one and the same work of art (e.g., Spiderman) can have many adaptations. The hero remains the primary intentional object of the work, yet in each adaptation slightly different properties are ascribed. The fact that each adaptation is still recognizable is owed to how works of art in their modes of being keep the same intentional object(s), yet at the same time allow for changes to intentional object-properties that are generally contingent.

While there are different sorts of intentional objects, especially in terms of their mode of representation, they in turn are subsumed either from real or ideal objects. Further, these real and ideal objects in many senses can be conceived as subordinate to absolute being. Yet in any case, each entity is interpretable through its mode of existence using these categories. For this reason, there are several applications with Roman Ingarden's ontology.

Physical artefacts, ideas, and intentional objects have been positioned along Ingarden's outline of eight possible modes of being. While these entity types are relativized modes of being, falling under the planes of autonomy-heteronomy, originality-derivativeness, selfsufficiency-nonselfsufficiency, and independence-dependence, there remains open the question of how representations are determined. Given that artefacts, ideas, and intentional objects all may be found through representations, we may question what to make of representations themselves and in what mode of being they consist.

To determine this, we must first distinguish between representation as a quality from representations as modes of this quality. Returning to the Cartesian separation of the body from the mind, which in turn led to several discussions over subject-object relations and distinct notions of representationalism[267] as possible solutions, the item in question of these investigations concerned representational qualities. By contrast, modes of representation are immediately demonstrable cases of this quality. For instance, systems of symbols as treated in linguistics explains how natural languages on a narrow level are unique modes of representation. With this, individual words across languages can be compared in terms of meaning, usage, and reference. Language in a general sense, such as with Noam Chomsky's

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267 Michela Summa, Martin Klein, and Philipp Schmidt note how in this philosophical tradition, "representationalist accounts of the mind contend that intentional acts are directed at immanent objects or contents, which function as mental representations of external objects, whereas non-representationalist accounts hold that acts directly intend what medieval philosophers call extramental objects and phenomenologists call transcendent objects." Summa, M., Klein, M. & Schmidt, P, "Introduction: Double Intentionality," *Topoi* 41, 95.

postulate of a priori universal rules for grammar and syntax[268], may also be considered as a broader mode of representation.

Image[269] is a significant mode of representation because of its various ways of reference. An image may point to another state of affairs by offering another lens, while elements belonging to the image may exceed natural limits. The web of relations embedded with images through a conceptual standpoint is thus made of two parts. First, there is a sense in which an image itself is conceived as an intentional object. This obtains insofar as the image represents a distinctive point in space and time, with further possible editorial curations, which had been determined by the designated author's cognitive acts. Second, elements of the image may be presented in such way that they themselves are also intentional objects. As a result, the blending of these two types of intentionality (pertaining to objects depicted and states of affairs illustrated) creates a complex set of possible modes of being through heteronomy.[270]

To align each possible mode of being to sets of strata concerning images, Ingarden distinguishes different kinds of representational modes among them. These are "pictures with a literary theme"; "the portrait"; "the pure picture"; "pictures without presented objects"; "aesthetically valuable moments" in the picture (and in the stratum of presented aspects); "the painting"; "non-presentational ('abstract') pictures'" and "the film" (compared with literature, paintings, music, space, and the general arts).[271] Considering Ingarden's ontology, it can be inferred that these types of images are abstractions to be investigated in the realms of the heteronomy of being and intentionality. Further, this is suggested since, as a preliminary remark, he states:

> In everyday discourse one understands by 'picture' a real thing hanging on the wall, made of paper, wood, linen, etc., that is overlaid on the surface facing the viewer with pigments

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268 See: Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, 50th ed. The MIT Press, 1965.

269 The use of the term image here is meant to be synonymous with Roman Ingarden's use of the term picture.

270 Moreover, Ingarden points to how images such as those in paintings are connected with several material and immaterial elements: "The 'picture'-thing[,] […] a 'painting—is , for example, made of linen; it occupies a definite section of *real* space, and in fact a section that is of different sizes at different temperatures. It has various visual and tactile characteristics, and also definite chemical and physical properties, for example, electrical, thermal, and so forth, that are not directly accessible to us in perception. It is given to us in straightforward sense perceptions, and indeed just as well in visual as in, say, taste or olfactory perceptions. Consequently, there belong to it, as a determinate, self-identical, real, perceived thing and it is in the experiencing of these multiplicities of aspects that this self-identical thing is given to the perceiving subject. As far as the 'picture' […] is concerned, all this has either no real meaning whatever or else can be ascribed to this 'picture' only in a figurative, modified sense. Therefore, the picture must be regarded as an object different from the real painting, although perhaps standing in an ontic relationship with it." Ingarden*, Ontology of the Work of Art*, 137-138. It is also important to note that Ingarden is not proposing a form of sense-data reductionism. He states, "[…] it is not true that in the picture we apprehend only the colours, lights and shadows—and not the things themselves that are brought to exhibition in it." Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 140-141.

271 Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 137-251; 317-339.

distributed in a certain way, and is thereby covered with various patches of colour. However, the 'picture' as object of our aesthetic contemplation is not identical with this real thing. This thing is simply the Objective, real condition of the concrete seeing and of the existence of the 'picture' in the aesthetic sense; but the seeing and the existence of the 'picture' require that various subjective conditions also be fulfilled, if the 'picture' is to be given to us.[272]

The requirement of "subjective conditions" here to determine the givenness of a picture is therefore evidence that pictures are intentional objects. As a result, pictures are also heteronomous in terms of their reliance on minds to be recognized, if not given qualification altogether. Whatever physical properties used to construct a picture or image (such as paint) remains autonomous in the sense that with respect to these properties only, their existential foundation is bound to themselves. By contrast, whatever depiction is illustrated by the painting in terms of describing what it is that it represents has its existential foundation outside of itself due to reliance on observers and the faculty of perception.[273] This is what Ingarden means by the picture of a painting.

While Ingarden separated pictures from their constitutive material, with the former conceivable as heteronomous and intentional – and the latter not, he also demonstrated how pictures are of different kinds and therefore have different structured elements (or strata).

In his analysis of literary themes being ascribed to some pictures, Ingarden had shown the perspectivism of our witnessing Leonardo da Vinci's painting of *The Last Supper*. While it is an illustration of biblical events as written in the books of *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and the *First Corinthians* of the *New Testament*, he claims that in the painting

> [t]his situation is present to us in the picture, but of course not in the way it would be present to us if we were at some time actually to take part in the 'Last Supper.' We see there, as it were, the persons, things, and household implements taking part in the exhibited 'Last Supper' themselves, and yet we cannot say that they are given so truly and in their own selves as are the real things of our immediate surroundings, such as, for example, the thing made of linen on the wall, that I call a 'painting.'[274]

Once again we are reminded of the separation of the material constituents of the painting from its situational depiction. However, the uniqueness of this form as involving a literary theme is that there is a historical significance and, consequently, a special marking of necessary elements required to make it recognizable as such.

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272 Ibid, 137.

273 Paintings, arguably imitative of reality or not, rely on either perspectivism or expression, as Ingarden brings to light that "the activity of the painter consists—although not exclusively—in reconstructing in the picture with the means of painting the appropriate visual, even if not purely visual, perceptual aspects, assuming that the picture is to be so constructed that it can bring this or that object to presentation for the viewer." Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 149.

274 Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 139.

One may think that depictions (copies) are less accessible than their origin, as Ingarden brings to attention the fact that "one will say, 'the situation brought to appearance in Leonardo's picture is not and cannot be given to us immediately in its own selfhood. It took place some nineteen hundred years ago and was at that time given perceptually to its participants. But it is past for all time and can never again be given in perception or in recollection."[275] However, it is a different point he is making beyond this. The "mode of givenness" of the painting "cannot be given otherwise" than through the visual,[276] while the original event's witnessing may involve all other perceptual faculties as well.[277] For this reason it is more convincing to attest "both the kinship and the differences between these two modes of apprehension, the purely perceptual and that in which we 'see' presented objectivities in the 'picture.'"[278] This is why we may at the same time agree on what is shown on an image, yet disagree on what it represents.

Another unique element Ingarden sets out for some pictures is a consequence of their historical origin.

> Of course, the means of depiction in the work of painting are completely different from those that are present in the literary work. But the depicting function which is performed with respect to the situation that once took place, by the situation brought to appearance in the picture itself is entirely the same as in the literary work. This 'depicted' situation, and every object participating in it, does not belong to the work of painting itself; on the contrary, it is precisely by virtue of the depicting function of the 'subject of the picture' that one does or can establish a relationship that the picture in question is taken to be a 'historic' picture. We can also call the past real situation, which is only 'depicted' in the picture, the historical theme of the picture.[279]

Thus, what is suggested here is a separate historical depicting function of situations and events which may then be represented through such modes as literary works and paintings. A common measure between these different modes of representation is conceived in the sense of them serving as momentary ways of illustrating objects and states of affairs. Ingarden explains that

> Literary Art is characteristic of presenting by means of states of affairs designated by sentences included in the work. In addition, the appearance of a certain thing, reconstructed in the image, is one and only, and at the same time – if one may say so – stiffened, immobilized, whereas both in a pure literary work and in a theatrical performance (or film) there is usually a whole multitude of appearances of the same object, and these appearances are as if fluid, changing into each other, and at the same time often of different kinds. Thus, the image is by the essence of its structure, as regards the temporality of the objects presented in it, a momentary creation:

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275 Ingarden, 139.

276 Ibid, 139.

277 As he states, "in the exhibited situation people and things take part who, in consideration of their portrayed properties, should also be accessible to other kinds of perception, since, for example, people take part in it who speak, thus producing certain sounds; and since there are dishes on the table that have this or that taste or this or that degree of warmth. But we can neither touch, nor smell, nor taste these things. It would be impossible and unreasonable to suppose or require that we be able to." Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 140.

278 Ibid, 142.

279 Ibid, 142.

these objects are always presented only at a certain moment of their supposed existence, if at all a moment of time is revealed in the image.[280]

The depicting function is separate from the functions of the modes themselves because it more so aligns with the mind's capacity to reconstruct an event or state of affairs using different tools (and modes). We may then say that the fact of originally witnessing a real event sets the possibility for its different modes of representation.

Ingarden includes another kind of picture that lacks a depicting function, with "no definite real correlative[,]"[281] yet nonetheless presents a situation. He claims it is "a human situation[…], presented and brought to appearance in the picture itself, and that can be narrated as a whole 'story' only in words. […] it requires, so to speak, an unfolding into a temporally extended process, and in particular into a 'story,' in which humans ordinarily take part."[282] The difference between this and pictures with historical themes is that the literary theme need not originate directly from the real world outside the mind of the artist. Moreover, literary themes may be entangled with a greater number of entities, marking them as bearing greater heteronomy given that the "literary theme is not directly presented in a picture. It results from the presentation of a number of objects (things and people) which in an appropriate arrangement and with appropriate properties, are brought to exhibition in the picture."[283] Therefore, we are to interpret the signification of literary themes in pictures only with reference

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280 As translated from the original Polish: „Sztuki Literackie są charakterystyczne dla przedstawiania za pomocą stanów rzeczy wyznaczanych przez zdania wchodzące w skład dzieła. Prócz tego wygląd pewnej rzeczy, zrekonstruowany w obrazie, jest jeden jedyny, a zarazem — jeżeli tak można powiedzieć - stężały, unieruchomiony, natomiast zarówno w czystym dziele literackim, jak i w widowisku teatralnym (ewentualnie filmowym) istnieje zwykle cala mnogość wyglądów tego samego przedmiotu, i to wyglądów jakby płynnych, przechodzących w siebie, a zarazem często różnego rodzaju. Tym samym obraz jest z istoty swej struktury, co do czasowości przedmiotów w nim przedstawionych, tworem momentalnym: przedmioty te są zawsze przedstawione tylko w pewnej chwili swego domniemanego bytu, o ile w ogóle dochodzi do ujawnienia w obrazie momentu czasowego."Roman Ingarden,. *Studia z Estetyki Tom Drugi*, (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1958): 89-90.

281 Ibid, 143.

282 Ibid, 143.

283 Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 144. Illustrating in greater detail, Ingarden writes: "But the presentation of a 'literary theme' requires more. It requires in most cases the presentation of a number of objectivities, whose presented conditions are such that all of them together yield one and the same 'event,' the same fact, the same situation which forms a transitional phase of a happening. The literary theme thus presented is usually an event from human life, or at least an incident in nature, for example, a storm at sea. Nature is then regarded as our environment, as that with which we have to struggle and have commerce in life. But it is of decisive significance that this event—even if it sometimes takes place only in a single presented object; for example, despair brought to expression in a face—forms not simply a component of the picture, but is the structurally (although perhaps not aesthetically) most important element of the work of art in question, 'what it is really about,' that upon which the attention of the viewer is concentrated, and to which the principal emotional factor of the aesthetic apprehension, so to speak, must cling. With respect to this element, other components of the work perform only ancillary and supplementary functions, which fact, however, does not exclude that these other components bring certain values into the work of art. They may not, however, overshadow the chief event, the true theme of the picture." Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 145.

to some of their contents that are to be affiliated with more than that which is immediately present.

There still remain complications, however, to qualifying objects and their properties as illustrated immediately in a painting. With the sense of representationalism demonstrated in paintings, Ingarden remarks that certain aspects such as non-visual properties may still be indirectly presented through colour patches and owing to the fact that some "non-visual properties are constituted in visual properties as objectual entities."[284] It is because of this that, "the water of waves painted by a good painter is not 'dry' or even completely undetermined with respect to 'wetness' or 'dryness'; that is to say, it is not positively deprived of such properties. If the water is well painted, then it almost seems to be 'wet' […]."[285] Given this experience, the fact that it is possible to associate qualities, outside the painting but pertaining to the represented objects themselves shown in its image, indicates a double-intentionality.

This double form of intentionality, understood as a "two-way directness"[286] at objects, or as "how two intentions can be connected and interwoven in a single act[,]"[287] explains how several factors are involved when witnessing and concretizing pictures. In representing a state of affairs, pictures include a number of possible connections to one's thought process. On one level of intentionality, an immediate sensory input is given when being acquainted with a picture such that there is a recognition of certain facts about the picture itself. On another level. the recognition of these facts may bring about other ideas to one's mind not directly about the picture, but about several associations. Also on this secondary level it is possible to note missing elements or "places of indeterminacy" within a picture such as wetness or dryness and "odor, taste, or warmth."[288]

Michela Summa, Martin Klein, and Philipp Schmidt analyze three main forms involved in the primary and secondary order of intentionality:

(i)   the relation between object intentionality and self-experience, both as immediate self-awareness and as memory-based self-consciousness;

(ii)   the relation between intentions directed toward objects and toward different kinds of concept; and

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284 Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 146.

285 Ibid.

286 Michela Summa, Martin Klein, and Philipp Schmidt, "Introduction: Double Intentionality," *Topoi* 41 (2022): 93.

287 Summa, Klein, and Schmidt, "Introduction: Double Intentionality," 94.

288 Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art,* 146.

(iii)   the intentional relations involved in both action and emotions.[289]

It is in these three forms that we may investigate Ingarden's treatment of pictures as relationally and intentionally embedded. The collective self-experiences of oneself results in a stock of conceptual categories to make sense of surrounding objects, related to Edmund Husserl's idea of the horizon. When encountering an image, a whole stockpile of secondary categories of intentionality may arise beyond the illustration itself. Adopting the authors' three forms of secondary intentionality previously mentioned, three cases may correspond:

(i) Leonardo Da Vinci's painting of *Mona Lisa*, whether being the original work or a copy, is known for its quality of appearing as though the woman depicted glances over whoever is observing no matter the positioning and angle. In addition, one's copy of the painting may allow another to recall their visit to its place of origin.

(ii) René Magritte's painting, *La Trahison des Images*, features a brown smoking pipe with the text, 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe' ('This is not a pipe'). Although at first glance the text seems to contradict the image, one realizes it involves a separate claim which is true, that the pipe depicted is not an actual one (but an illustration).

(iii) Pablo Picasso's painting, *Guernica*, exhibits in surrealist form the bombing of Guernica which took place in 1937. As one recognizes the faces of despair, the disfigurement of limbs, and general tumultuous imagery, one senses the tragedies of war.

While we see here how there are differences in the secondary order of intentionality for observers, Ingarden does put forth three strata that are found in these pictures. These are: "(1) the reconstructed aspect, (2) the presented object coming to appearance, and (3) the literary theme, which implies a more or less definite preceding and following story."[290] Moreover, in the third point, if the picture happens to be historical (being real, and not fictional), then its depicting function "constitutes a factor that is present in the picture itself and is important for the constitution of its aesthetic value."[291]

Further issues are to be raised over this. How are we to clearly distinguish between literary themes and historical themes when for instance, we are dealing with the genre of historical fiction and pastiche? What are we to make of visual works of art that seemingly bear no object, thus challenging the second strata? With a patent issued in 1960, Yves Klein's *International Klein Blue 3* is a painting that bears a unique ultramarine blue-tint created by

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289 Ibid, 146.
290 Ingarden. *Ontoloogy of the Work of Art*, 151.
291 Ibid.

synthetic materials, without any other feature on it designated besides its colour. This work serves as a special case in which "pictures [are] deprived of represented objects,"[292] wherein the problem is conceived as follows,

> The so-called deformation of reality, as I have already stated, cannot go too far if the picture is to represent certain objects. Otherwise, a completely different type of painting results, which can only with difficulty be called an "image". As indicated by, for example, arabesques, some stained glass works (e.g. the famous rosettes in the transverse winder of the church of Notre Dame in Paris), and recently some paintings of so-called abstract art, there can be painting works, and even great works of art, in which no uniform objects (things or people) are represented and which, in addition, do not contain any reconstructed appearances of things in the strict sense of the word.[293]

Is it impossible to qualify this as a painting or picture, given that there are no objects being depicted? Or are we to treat the proper object of its being a work of art the colour itself which has not been otherwise identically repeated?[294] Finally, regarding the stratum of reconstructed aspects, is it not the case that these aspects are merely the repeated patterns used to make an intentional object recognizable? And if so, would this not mean that they are ipso facto independent of any single mode of representation to begin with? While these issues persist apropos Ingarden's treatment of "pictures with a literary theme," his further distinctions made between portraits, pure pictures, pictures without presented objects, aesthetically valuable moments, the painting (itself), non-presentational pictures, and film provide possible solutions, for which we shall turn next.

Within Roman Ingarden's notion of the picture, he specifies the portrait as one involving a depicting function, where "objectivities are brought to appearance in which usually people are portrayed."[295] While this is obvious, he makes two claims about portraits in particular that speaks to how objects are shown in distinct forms. As Ingarden states, the "object presented in the picture must at least be similar in a certain respect to the object that is depicted"

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292 Roman Ingarden, *Studia z Estetyki Tom Drugi*, (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1958): 30.

293 As translated from the original Polish, „§ 4. ZAGADNIENIE OBRAZÓW POZBAWIONYCH PRZEDMIOTÓW PRZEDSTAWIONYCH Trw. deformacja rzeczywistości - jak już stwierdziłem- nie może jednak iść zbyt daleko, jeżeli obraz ma przedstawiać pewne przedmioty. W przeciwnym razie wynika stąd całkiem odmienny typ dzieła malarskiego, który z trudnością tylko można nazwać jeszcze „obrazem". Jak na to wskazują np. arabeski, niektóre dzieła witrażowe (np. słynne rozety w nawie poprzecznej kościoła Notre Dame w Paryżu), ostatnio zaś niektóre obrazy tzw. sztuki abstrakcyjnej. mogą istnieć dzieła malarskie, a nawet wielkie dzieła sztuki, w których nie dochodzi do przedstawienia żadnych jednolitych przedmiotów (rzeczy lub ludzi) i które też w parze z tym nie zawierają w sobie żadnych rekonstruowanych wyglądów rzeczy w ścisłym tego słowa znaczeniu." Ingarden, *Studia z Estetyki Tom Drugi*, 30

294 Yet, as the original painter himself claimed, "Blue has no dimension, it is beyond dimensions." Yves Klein, "IKB 3, Monochrome bleu," *Centre Pompidou.* Accessed September 10, 2024 https://www.centrepompidou.fr/en/ressources/oeuvre/cAne9x5

295 Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 151.

and meanwhile, for portraits, a "spiritual similarity com[es] to expression in the face."[296] What is drawn from these claims is there being differences between objects presented in contrast to objects depicted. The manner of presentation is unique in its attribution to the expressions of the artist. By contrast, the depicting function of the painting is the means by which one may recognize a person in a portrait, for instance, and the fact of there being an individuation or personalization of the "object presented." Further evidence for why these two factors are separate is given by Ingarden's later statement that "[b]oth the literary theme and the depicting function occurring in the portrait are not at all essential for the picture as a work of painting, that is, in order for something to be a picture."[297] He later supports this in an example "when we view old portraits that depict persons long dead, and who are not known to us even by name; in consequence of this we cannot truly apprehend the picture in its depicting function[,]" meaning that without this function, a person's portrait "can in no way be phenomenally constituted" as a picture.[298] Without a depicting function there remains the fact of the person being presented in the picture, but there is no possibility for familiarity outside the context and manner of presentation. Ingarden summarizes the issue; "[t]here is a boundary that cannot be crossed: On one side of it, we have a 'person' merely presented by means of painting and only brought to appearance; on the other, the genuine unique reality that can only be imitated, depicted in the picture, but never in the true sense embodied."[299] The presentation of a portrait is limited. It is easier to intuit that accessing the true embodiment of a person would require knowledge of, or at least familiarity with, several personable elements that may be missing within the painting as a still image. For completing this, a "filling in" of the spots of indeterminacy located in the portrait through one's conceptual repertoire – to the order of secondary intentionality – would be needed. Despite portraits being mere imitations or copies representing the natural person, a "person well known to us, […] seems to us as if we were having to do with the person himself, so alive, concrete, and authentic does the person confronting us in the picture appear to be" although it is not a "straightforward perception."[300] Therefore, a picture is capable of serving a depicting function when the observer has in mind a set of facts and categories attributable to the person illustrated, thereby filling in potential spots of indeterminacy, and making the entire work of art more lively.

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296 Ibid, 151.
297 Ibid, 152.
298 Ibid, 152.
299 Ibid, 153-154.
300 Ibid, 153-154.

With the support of historical and literary themes, it is conceivable why Roman Ingarden considered the depicting function as a distinct capacity from objects being presented because these elements often involve the domains of knowledge and memory – which in turn means that they are factors dependent on the observer, separate from the painting itself. Moreover, as a consequence of this, we see further why portraits are especially heteronomous. The image taken as a portrait externally relies on both the artist's talents as well as the audience's personal familiarity with and knowledge of the individual represented. However, Ingarden also investigated the possible mode of existence of pictures that lack these historical and literary themes, and also do not have a depicting function. The kinds of pictures that lack this, he coins, "the pure picture." According to his theoretical framework, pictures without historical and literary themes are reducible to two strata that are consistent throughout. The first being "the reconstructed aspect" and the second being "the object appearing" (presented) in this aspect. Taking into account his treatment of the two notions, it becomes apparent that the two serve each other to create a representation. This is to say that there cannot be an object in a picture without reconstructed aspects, just as reconstructed aspects cannot exist without an object to issue a representation of some part of the natural world. Objects in pictures bear reconstructed aspects, such as with the colours used and geometric configurations to reproduce a sense of depth. While reconstructed aspects themselves require an object from which changes or reproductions can be made, a picture does not have aspects reconstructed if there is no such object to reconstruct. The relations between reconstructed aspects and the objectivity later represented determine the degree of congruence between the picture and how we view the world. This congruence is what Ingarden refers to as "objectual consistency."[301] It is however not only a feature relevant for the picture, but a general remark on the means by which we draw conceptual categories for objects. As he sates,

> 'objectual consistency' must be maintained within certain limits in the picture, if any object at all is to be brought to appearance. […] The objects given to us in experience (and especially in sense experience)—or even the objects determined by a certain *a priori* axioms—fall into certain genera and species, according to the superordinate moments occurring in them, which […] we usually call generic or type moments. They occur, at least in some cases, in sense experience as intuitive moments of the object in question and mark it in a characteristic way as a whole. They also require that along with them a determinate multiplicity of other qualitative moments or properties occur in the same object that, as it were, harmonize with one another and at least in some cases result in a synthetic and superordinate moment—the type or generic moment […] this multiplicity can, moreover, undergo certain modifications, […] The question of which modifications in particular are possible requires special deliberations regarding the individual type moments.[302]

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301 Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 155.
302 Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 156.

Affiliated with the feature of moments for objectual consistency is the fact of temporal aspects of properties from which we may then qualify an entity as a certain kind of object. How we figure what sort of situation we are observing and what sort of object we are seeing is a consciously experienced process, issued personally overtime beyond the intuitive represented time implicitly shown by a picture or painting.

The determination of the image we are seeing, by virtue of objectual consistency, comes in various degrees. Ingarden explains how this is a standard of accuracy in relations between the natural object and the representation, stating,

> Or to put it the same way in relation to the object presented in the image: if an object of a certain specific type is to be visually shown in a certain image at all, then any deviations ("deformations") by which the presented object differs from real objects of this type, usually given to us in experience, can only go as far as the object consistency allows, i.e. as necessary to maintain the identity of type or the identity and internal unity of a given object. It is true that it is often difficult to decide in detail how far deviations from 'nature' can go, because it is often a matter of purely empirical connections between parts, or properties of things, which "are" to be presented in a given image. And there is no doubt that it is precisely the boundaries of purely empirical (accidental) connections of belonging to each other of individual objective moments that can often be crossed by the painter without destroying the unity and type of the object visually presented in the image. painting.[303]

Thus, in terms of the image cast on the painting bearing a representation of some natural object and state of affairs, there are ways to determine the degree to which this feature is empirically accurate. Ingarden also suggests a hierarchy of genera and species belonging to the properties and individual moments of objects, which is consistent with his ontology presented in *Controversy Over the Existence of the World*. It may also be said that, concerning a phenomenological account of images, objectual consistency is necessary on two sides (the image and the categorical recognition of the observing subject). It not only is a matter of personal experience, knowledge, and familiarity with different kinds of objects and environments to reach congruence and consistency. It is also a matter of how the picture is

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303 As translated from the original Polish: „Lub to samo powiedziawszy w zastosowaniu do przedmiotu przedstawionego w obrazie: jeżeli w pewnym obrazie w ogóle ma być naocznie pokazany przedmiot pewnego określonego typu, to ewentualne odchylenia (..deformacje"), którymi przedmiot przedstawiony odróżnia się od przedmiotów realnych tego typu, danych nam zazwyczaj w do- świadczeniu, mogą iść tylko tak daleko, jak na to pozwala konsekwencja przedmiotowa, tzn. jak to jest niezbędne dla zachowania identyczności typu lub tożsamości i jedności wewnętrznej danego przedmiotu. Wprawdzie często w szczegółach jest trudno rozstrzygnąć, jak daleko mogą iść odchylenia od „natury", ponieważ nieraz chodzi tu o związki czysto empiryczne pomiędzy częściami, resp. własnościami rzeczy, które mają być w danym obrazie przedstawione. I nie ulega wątpliwości. że właśnie granice czysto empirycznych (przypadkowych) związków przynależności do siebie poszczególnych momentów przedmiotowych mogą być często przekroczone przez malarza bez zburzenia jedności i rodzaju przedmiotu naocznie przedstawionego w obrazie. [....] Wprawdzie trzeba przy tym baczyć jeszcze na to, żeby odchylenia (deformacje) przedstawionego w obrazie przedmiotu od odpowiedniego przedmiotu realnego nie były prostymi ..błędami" rysunkowymi, np. błędami perspektywy - krótko mówiąc, następstwem wadliwej techniki malarskiej lecz deformacjami, które są wyraźnie wynikiem woli artystycznej i odgrywają pozytywną rolę w artystycznej kompozycji całości obrazu." Roman Ingarden, *Studia z Estetyki Tom Drugi*, (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1958): 29.

detailed with reconstructed aspects for the appearing object(s), and how it achieves an accurate (objectually consistent) or imaginary (objectually inconsistent) representation. As Ingarden states,

> If in the reconstruction of aspects in the picture, and hence in the presentation of objects in it, we succeed in observing the laws of 'objectual consistency,' then the object attaining to presentation appears *sub specie* of a general type. If, on the contrary, the properties in which we wish, by means of painting, to bring a given object to presentation, or the corresponding elements of the aspects, are not appropriately selected, if therefore they are not consonant with the type of the object, then either the object type in question does not appear in the picture at all, or else this type is nevertheless successfully preserved but with the consequence that there are clearly appearing inconsistencies between the type and at least so the presented properties of the object. There can also be different types and degrees of such inconsistency in the picture.[304]

In this sense, consistency refers to how aspects are reconstructed. Either an object's aspects in a picture are reconstructed with special attention to how they would appear naturally (and thus consistent with one's natural observations of the object-type in general), or, conversely, without such natural limits. When speaking of lifting any natural restrictions to represent objects in a different light, Ingarden describes how some inconsistencies "do not disturb the general presentational function of the reconstructed aspects—an individual thing of a definite kind still appears in the picture, and only some of its properties or merely certain intuitive traits refuse to harmonize with each other."[305] Thus, for example, we may consider Erik Johansson's surrealist photograph titled, *Shores of Home*. It features a realistic image taking place in woodlands, with a red barn, and also contains an active lighthouse illuminating the trees.[306] Intuitively we would associate the lighthouse as being positioned along a shore, as it is consistent with its general purpose to signal and warn oncoming ships, and for this reason its being placed in the woodlands seems peculiar. However, it is also not outright impossible, and does make the work interesting. On these grounds, Ingarden's claim holds truth, "inconsistency can even have a certain aesthetic charm, precisely because of which it is introduced into the whole of the picture."[307] Yet he also points to the possibility for some pictures of which their "inconsistency is so great and so striking that it is not only of negative value aesthetically, but also makes impossible the exhibition of the object in question."[308] What this means is that there is neither a depicting function nor picture illustrated, wherein a sense of alignment is also

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304 Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 156-157.

305 Ibid, 157.

306 Erik Johansson, "*Surreal Photography*," https://www.erikjo.com/work/shores-of-home. Accessed 15 September, 2024.

307 Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 157.

308 Ibid, 156-157.

missing concerning the object, its properties, and positioning with a represented state of affairs. At a moderate level, the notion here does not immediately exclude objects nor environments, but rather concerns severe objectual-inconsistencies and deformations over their properties, to the point of an inability for recognition. For this, Ingarden accounts that, "[i]f any object of a definite kind is supposed to be brought to pictorial appearance, then any deformations, that is, deviations from and dissimilarities with real things of the same kind actually perceived by us may not go beyond the limit whose observance is indispensable to the preservation of the identity of the kind or of the unity of the object."[309] Ingarden does suggest nuance to this, given that artistic signatures such as, "living beings—with two or more heads or two faces, or in entirely different proportions" may cross boundaries over what is empirically given, but nonetheless are not disqualified in their being works of art.[310] As a result, it is not necessarily simply through laws sustained through empirical and natural evidence that we come to qualify what counts as an object's properties being consistent or not, apropos its representation. Perhaps it is more so a matter of coherence.

At an extreme, beyond objectual consistency or lack thereof, the question may be raised over whether it is possible for a visual work of art to be such, yet not include an object, affiliated properties, and environment. Ingarden explains this issue as "'pictures' without presented objects" facing a "special borderline case" which concern for example "works of art in stained glass" and "many pictures of abstract art."[311] This also returns to the problem of Yves Klein's painting, *International Klein Blue 3*. If its only feature is the unique colour of paint used, then there is no immediate object or state of affairs being represented. If the colour is reduced to a property, moreover, then we simply have a canvas (as object) being painted ultramarine blue (as property). Were we to consider the colour's unique composition as reason to justify the painted canvas as being a work of art, then the grounds for this is still not concerning any remarks on representational qualities, neither of being a picture, but still may be enticing. Ingarden states, "an intensely blue area, that brings the person's garment to presentation, can be especially 'beautiful' by virtue of the intense depth of its blueness and can thereby contain an aesthetically valuable quality in itself."[312] If in accordance with its description as ultramarine blue, the painting is supposed to represent the objectual consistency between its synthetically produced colour and the actual colour of an ocean or sea, then we do seemingly have an object,

309 Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 157.
310 Ibid, 157-158.
311 Ibid,, 159.
312 Ibid, 168.

property, and environment depicted, yet all in one thing identical with itself. Similarly, Ingarden claims,

> If the aspect reconstructed in the picture is supposed to be an aspect of something unitary, and especially of a thing of a particular kind, then—not so much with respect to similarity with a real thing that is transcendent to the picture, as with regard to the inner unity of the object, to its inner harmony dictated by objectual consistency—there may not occur on the surface of the picture any such patches of colour as are not in accord with the content of the corresponding reconstructed aspect and that interfere with the aspect's function of bringing a determinate object to its intuitive own presence, or would make this entirely impossible.[313]

For *International Klein Blue 3*, the same format of objectual consistency applies, however not with reference to pictures under the strata of reconstructed aspects and objects appearing in these aspects, but rather to a separate level of semantics concerning properties being consistent between constitutive material (patches of colour) and the work of art as an illustration.

The painting's illustration itself does not necessarily rely on a one-to-one correspondence with constitutive material, as is the unique case of Yves Klein's painting. Or while the material is ontically necessary, it is not representationally sufficient. An illustration is determined by the painting's capacity of being at the same time a picture.

While acknowledging that the picture's stratification (being of presented objects and reconstructed aspects) is still too general of a qualifier, Ingarden provides a more elaborate account. This includes three functions of the picture, three qualities of the picture, and two separate moments involved in the content of their reconstructed aspects.

In terms of function, first is the "pure and simple presence within the framework of the picture," which he also claims is participatory.[314] Second, the picture functions by its aggregate parts, including "every element or moment[,]" enriching the picture and "contribut[ing] something to the whole of the picture by being determinately constituted in itself."[315] Third, the picture functions through playing "a constructional role in the whole of the picture that results from the way the element is constituted and from its participation in the picture [...] based on the fact that the element either calls forth (or gives rise to) some other element of the work of the work or at least supports their presence in the picture."[316] The third function that is constructional, which is a consequence of how elements are "constituted" and the way they participate in the picture, includes but is not limited to colours, shapes, object and aspect arrangements, related qualities to colour such as, brightness, intensity, harmony and

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313 Ibid, 157.
314 Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art,*, 161.
315 Ibid, 161.
316 Ibid, 161.

disharmony, as well as features with indirect consequences pertaining for example to facial expressions, emotions and suggestive traits with respect to one's intuitions.[317]

Returning to the first function, presence, its general form is similar to displaying in the sense that some unique state of affairs is presented to the viewer, separate from his natural environment. Second is another formal remark about the fact of there being parts of the picture contributing to the whole (which is conceivable as a mereology of aesthetics). Third is the most significant aspect of grasping the way pictures function, which is the relation between elements of the picture to the whole - not only in the mere fact of them existing, but the way they produce a construction. Virtually limitless relations can be constructed in this sense, leading to further possible qualities.

Ingarden sets three different kinds of qualities featured by a picture, those that are "neutral aesthetically," others that are "aesthetically valuable" and "aesthetic value qualities" themselves.[318] Qualities of a picture that are neutral aesthetically do not have a positive or negative value. Meanwhile, there exist qualities which are aesthetically valuable in a picture, such as being "symmetric, asymmetric, formed, lacking form, self-contained, succinct, diffuse, non-unitary, clear, transparent, dark, opaque, confused, indistinct, noble, distinguished, elegant, common, vulgar, inelegant, coarse, novel, fresh, original, interesting, banal, comic, witty, grotesque, serious, solemn, sublime, light, heavy, 'soft,' 'hard,' stiff, sharp, in equilibrium […] and so on."[319] While these are indeed qualitative terms that may be relevant for things taken visually, it is arguable whether all of them belong to the picture at all, as (at least some) are more suited to the secondary order of intentionality.[320] For this reason, it may be better to discern (as Ingarden does), aesthetically valuable qualities (which contribute indirectly) apart from aesthetic value qualities that are "more specific determinations[,][…] belong[ing] mediately to the work (especially to the picture) as its own proper qualifications, and are characteristic of the work itself as a whole" leading to "value judgements."[321] Using this distinction, it is conceivable that while aesthetic value qualities are characteristic of works of art to the first order of intentionality, aesthetically valuable qualities are possible features which may contribute to one's appreciation of the work

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317 Ibid, 161-162.

318 Ibid, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 162-163.

319 Ibid.

320 Moreover, Ingarden does add the caveat that, "[i]t may be that this is merely a purely conceptual distinction and that in actuality there can be found no independently and absolutely valuable aesthetic qualities. Nevertheless, it is useful to introduce this distinction." Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 163.

321 Ibid, 163.

of art at a secondary order, through associations.[322] On the one hand, aesthetically valuable qualities contribute to the appreciation of the painting as a work of art. On the other hand, aesthetic value qualities, listed by Ingarden, include such illustrative ideals as beauty, charm, fullness, synthesis, depth, maturity, perfection, and coherence realized uniquely.[323]

Ingarden's elaboration of what constitutes a picture starts from the strata of reconstructed aspects and the objects appearing, reaching to the picture's functions, with further remarks on aesthetic value. The omission of time as a factor may lead one to imagine the picture as atemporal or still and unchanging. However, the case is not as simple as he accounts for two dimensions pertinent to the reconstructed aspects of the picture. They consist of:

(1) moments (or elements) that exclusively perform the function of presentification (the rendering present) of an object occurring in a determinate multiplicity of intuitively given properties, and that are thus the bearers of a constructional role in the picture;

(2) moments that (independently of whether they participate in the presentificational function of the aspect or not) perform a 'decorative' function, that is, they are themselves aesthetically valuable moments or bear such moments in themselves, even though they may in themselves be of aesthetically neutral value.[324]

As similar with Ingarden's distinction between qualities that are aesthetically valuable and aesthetic quality values, a dualistic remark over structure is given. There is a separation of that which is immediate and essential for the work of art from that which is complementary (and as such may be affiliated with aesthetically valuable moments and the secondary order of intentionality). The first type of qualitative moment (functioning as presentification), on a related issue, explains how the state of affairs presented through a picture provides a sense of synchronicity for the observer. This is an immediate occurrence arising from the fact that one recognizes the situational context illustrated by the picture through the relational aspects embedded to the represented object(s).[325] By contrast, details within the picture, which although may be complementary to its broader context, are the particular elements that need

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322 Ingarden does admit both independent and dependent kinds of aesthetically valuable qualities, as they are relational. Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 163.

323 It is important to note as well that as regards aesthetics and value, these are matters independent of the objects (content) themselves. Ingarden claims, "solely the 'form' of the picture is artistically or aesthetically valuable or meaningful, whereas its 'content' is aesthetically neutral." Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 187.

324 Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 166.

325 In addition, as similar to the problem of objectual consistency, Ingarden posits that abstract paintings can be the result of a non-congruence between the two qualitative moments for the picture. Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 168.

not be recognized at first sight. What is noteworthy here is that this distinction is qualified by Ingarden as two separate kinds of moments in the picture. The reason for there being two separate moments (which may otherwise be qualified as atemporal or still) is the fact that the situational context shown is in fact referring to a time that is represented.[326] It seems akin to the represented time described by Ingarden in *The Literary Work of Art*. The reason for this is suggested by how Ingarden states, "the picture as a work of art is a polyphonic whole, analogous to the polyphony that is present in the literary work of art."[327] Returning to how Ingarden treats literary works of art as in the realm of intentional objects using an ontology of dependent (heteronomous) modes of existence to explain their reliance on cognition, time according to him as found in a story for instance "belong[s] to the represented quasi-real world [a]s only an analogue of real time[,]"[328] meaning there are correlates of time in the cognitive act of reading. Thus, in terms of representations, the essential and inessential elements of one and the same picture is also a matter of different moments. The moments serving a presentificational function are needed for the viewer to be immediately aware of the context showcased. The moments having a decorative function may or may not be immediately aesthetically valuable, but may be appreciated in finer details. When the presentificational function of the painting is achieved with greater congruence to its decorative elements, then the work of art represents an objectivity that is highly accurate and resembles nature so much so that there may arise qualities beyond colour. As Ingarden states:

> The smoothness, hardness, or stiffness of presented bodies as these qualities are given visually in the picture, or, on the other hand, the seen roughness or softness, depend on the way the painting is covered with colours. Among other things, the different kinds of drawing or painting techniques bring about different kinds of lighting effects and effects of luster or flatness. These different kinds of effects have two different results. On the one hand, they result in greater or smaller (to the point of vanishing) visibility of the surface of the painting itself, so that in an extreme case merely this surface, but no picture, is seen; at the opposite extreme, however, this surface disappears almost entirely (then a conscious effort is required to make the surface visible in its turn), and only the picture as a work of art attains to intuitive givenness.[329]

Therefore, when attending to the painting, depending on the level of congruence through presentificational and decorative functions (apropos how objects are represented and their aesthetic influence), the observer senses a corresponding level of immersion (either to the image or the natural environment). Drawing from this, it may be inferred that immersion is the result of a viewer's reconstruction of all relevant aspects of the picture. Ingarden writes,

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326 Whether Ingarden's use of the term "moments" is applicable to time here is contested given that the explication involves a qualitative metaphysical terminology that is a separate matter from chronology.

327 Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 195-196.

328 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art,* 236.

329 Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 170.

> There is required from the viewer a certain interpretive combination of several juxtaposed colour patches into one aspect of the thing in question. Only when this is done does the contrast with other multiplicities of colour, which also have been combined, take place. The viewer, even though remaining outside the picture, is, so to speak, a factor necessary for the construction of the unitary aspect. Only through this special interpretation of the experienced colour patches does there result the intuitive, itself-given, appearance of presented things and persons.[330]

The viewer's ability to synthesize all the different aspects depicted to then mark what sort of event and state of affairs is being represented is thus the means by which colour patches on a painting become "presented things and persons" in a picture. While the painting is "a real thing formed out of this or that material[,]"[331] the picture – being a "remarkable many-layered formation—is somehow, in a way still to be clarified, 'bound up' with the painting"[332] as a purely intentional object. The two are different as well in terms of their modes of presentation (givenness), "[t]he painting is given to us in simple, primarily visual perception, in the course of which it appears in a multiplicity of concretely experienced aspects. In the viewing of the picture, on the other hand, a relatively complex train of acts of consciousness is executed, which requires a separate special analysis."[333]

In seeking to comprehend how an object is determined as one such kind of artefact, Roman Ingarden's ontology involving an account of unique strata corresponding to and being constitutive of different entity sorts is applicable. First is noted that entities belong to a particular mode of being involving strata. Second, the web of ideas (as non-physical entities) may take many different modes of being, leading to the complexity of the heteronomous nature of intentional objects. Third, adopting Ingarden's ontological categories, we are to deduce what can be explained about the modes of existence of representations. While accounts of representationalism are highly qualitative, we are here interested in particular modes of representation such as, language, image, and sound, and how these differ from each other. Fourth, by focusing on image as a lens to view another state of affairs either on the planes of artificial construction or nature, as well as in terms of objects and their environments, we can set forth an introductory course to Ingarden's account of pictures. These include pictures with literary themes, historical themes (with depicting functions), portraits (involving both an object presented and a depicting function), pure pictures, the picture not having a presented object, non-presentational abstract pictures, and paintings. Moreover, as his account recognizes how there are both visual and non-visual properties depicted in pictures, there is the suggestion that

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330 Ibid, 173.
331 Ibid, 197.
332 Ibid, 197
333 Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 202.

a secondary order of intentionality is involved with the observer's concretization This means that externally associated properties of the object depicted may be considered, despite being outside the immediate exhibition of the picture at first sight. Finally, with concretization, the domain of aesthetics is worth considering, with Ingarden's distinction between qualities that are neutral aesthetically, those that are aesthetically valuable, and aesthetic value qualities. Through all of these modes of givenness from the picture, a unitary whole is completed.

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In this chapter we have investigated the conceptual background of Roman Ingarden's philosophy as a way to set the framework for building a phenomenological account of screens. In doing so, three general concepts have been drawn as significant. These are the heteronomy of being, intentional objects, and heterogeneous strata, First, the heteronomy of being explains how certain objects rely on other sources for composition, and in special cases explains why these objects may be able to produce an illustration. Second, the idea of intentional objects explains how there are objects that are composed by or are reliant on cognition. Important features of intentional objects are that they include content such as what is illustrated, but also places of indeterminacy with respect to what is not illustrated, and the imagining of what fills gaps between the two being the act of concretization. Intentional objects may be featured in other modes of representation such as the literary work and paintings.. Third, the concept of heterogeneous strata helps as a preliminary investigation of screens in identifying the set of features consistent in such mode of representation throughout. By incorporating these three general concepts we are then equipped with the framework to qualify screens.

Chapter IV
Ingardenian Solutions to Qualifying Screens

The aim of this chapter is to apply the main relevant concepts of Roman Ingarden's philosophy to screens. This is to show how Ingarden's philosophy provides a comprehensive framework to the missing component in the literature of screens which does not explain how screens uniformly carry the properties of being displays, filters, tools, and representations. This is achieved by analyzing Ingarden's concepts of the heteronomy of being, intentional objects, heterogeneous strata as well as the distinction between ontology and phenomenology to the object of investigation. Further, explanations as to how screens feature presented objects, reconstructed aspects, represented objectivities, and visual concretization and immersion are offered in seeking to understand how screens exist as special relative objects of mediation.

1. The Approaches of Phenomenology and Ontology

1.1. Object-Classification versus Experience-Classification

To explain differences regarding screens in their showing and viewing, a distinction between the object of ontology and phenomenology is helpful. In particular, the emergent field of object-oriented ontology (OOO) aims to clarify a set of misunderstandings developed in existential philosophy, serving to distinguish ontology from the phenomenological tradition. Edgaras Bolšakovas, writing on object-oriented ontology, claims that "[f]ilm theory should move away from attempts to define cinema and instead focus on the way in which films function as objects."[334] Graham Harman, a main proponent of the field, seeks to demonstrate the autonomous mode of existence of all objects, as well as the independence of human perception and intellection from them. This claim of independence is situated with the tendency to avoid critiques of anthropocentrism.[335] Moreover, Harman offers three biases arising from previous ontological investigations which seemingly have not aligned with a correct object-oriented formulation. These include overmining, undermining, and duomining. While undermining in our everyday language is similar to counteracting or subverting the composition of something, according to object-oriented ontology, it is a matter of "reducing

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334 Edgaras Bolšakovas, "The Possibility of Object-Oriented Film Philosophy," *Open Philosophy* 7 (2024): 9.
335 As Bolšakovas states, "the difference in ontology typically results in viewing non-human objects as less real. To escape this human deadlock, defined here as correlationism, OOO starts with flat ontology." Bolšakovas, "The Possibility of Object-Oriented Film Philosophy," *Open Philosophy* 7 (2024): 3.

various objects to their most basic constituents."[336] It is implied in the term's connotation that a reduction to basic constituents no longer treats objects themselves but rather parts, and for this reason ontological undermining is to be avoided. By contrast, overmining "views objects in light of their effects[,]"[337] which is to mean that claims about objects in terms of effect are not simply referring to objects themselves either, because, one may claim, effects are emanating properties that are external. In either case of overmining and undermining, it appears so that we are dealing with problems of externalism and internalism. However not with respect to epistemic rationale but ontology. These are not the only issues of previous ontologies. According to Harman, there is the problem of duomining. Edgaras Bolšakovas points out in Harman's work the case of duomining as seen in the example of Pythagorean reductionism of a kind that would claim that the primary quality of all objects is mathematizable, yet the numerical basis for being so remaining metaphysically unknown (or unknowable).[338] On the one hand, the undermining of objects can occur in the form of a reductionism to particular numbers. For example, stating that an official soccer team is simply eleven players. On the other hand, overmining occurs in the sense of numbers taking primacy above any other qualification. For example, stating, no important factors related to soccer matter for composing a team, other than having eleven players. With the two biases occurring at the same time we have duomining. Insofar as object-oriented ontology is concerned, we are to avoid structuring the entire identity of objects into narrowed parts (undermining), nor to err by supervenience and subsumption (overmining), and neither produce misclassifications by both (duomining). As a consequence, the ontology espoused by Harman does not position objects above or below others, but rather takes a flat and neutral stance due to each object's autonomy and, by that token, self-reflexive identity.

Another significant treatment within the field is Graham Harman's four part ontological distinction: (i) Real Object – Real Qualities; (ii) Real Object – Sensual Qualities; (iii) Sensual Object – Real Qualities; (iv) Sensual Object -Sensual Qualities. He relates these four modes of being to the philosophies of G.W. Leibniz, Edmund Husserl, and Martin Heidegger.[339] For real objects with real qualities, Bolšakovas states that these "highlight[…] the fundamental

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336 Bolšakovas. "The Possibility of Object-Oriented Film Philosophy," 2.
337 Bolšakovas, 2.
338 Bolšakovas, 5.
339 A further question concerns whether the tendencies of undermining, overmining, and duomining can be avoided through them, and ultimately whether at all these categories are indeed object-oriented

differences between objects, which differ not only from us but also from each other."[340] On real objects with sensual qualities, he claims that "[a] real, yet withdrawn, object is translated into sensual apprehension via an outer layer, accessed by human or non-human objects through a specific kind of causation, resulting in thought or action[,] [it is] the field where aesthetics 'happens[,]' Harman identifies this as space."[341] For sensual objects with real qualities, "the real qualities of the object provide the necessary conditions for its intellectual, eidetic apprehension."[342] Finally, for a sensual object with sensual qualities, this "refers to an object that is causal and inhabits a shifting list of qualities from one moment to the next, which Harman identifies as time."[343] Luka Arsenjuk offers Harman's four-part structured ontology as follows:
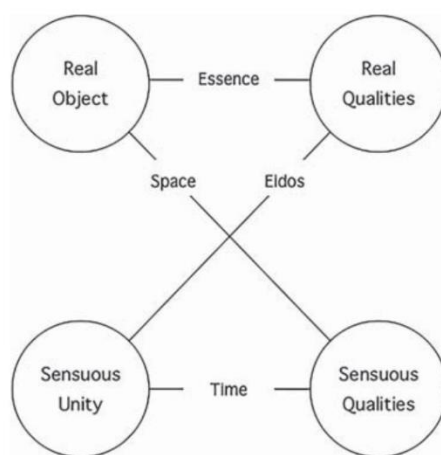
Figure 1. Harman's Fourfold.

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As illustrated, the internal relations in the diagram (i.e., essence, space, eidos, and time) are defined according to how objects and qualities are formulated. Time is a matter of sensation. Ideas (eidos) are matters of real qualities and sensation. Space is the relation of real objects to sensuous qualities. Essence is a matter of real qualities belonging to real objects.

While some may argue that object-oriented ontology helps clarify what is meant when saying that something exists with the aid of these categories, its particular usefulness is believed

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340 Bolšakovas, 3.
341 Bolšakovas, 3.
342 Ibid, 3.
343 Ibid, 3.
344 Luka Arsenjuk. "On the Impossibility of Object-Oriented Film Theory." *Discourse* 38 no. 2 (2016): 201.

to be demonstrable in relation to art. Edgaras Bolšakovas recalls that in accordance with the thought of Grant Harman, "aesthetics, for OOO, becomes the first philosophy[,]" as "all art is performative."[345] Moreover, in part due to the field's analytical approach, a new perspective is possible concerning art objects. Bolšakovas states, "the more context (discourse) we have about an object (cinema), the less forceful the object becomes."[346] By understanding artworks, and cinema in particular, through its way of being an autonomous object oriented by space (i.e., from real objects with sensuous qualities), we are to determine the "performative relationship" between art and human beings.[347] This performative relationship raises further questions on whether it is justified to claim that pictures and cinema are real at all. As Luka Arsenjuk aptly locates the issue, "the image has the strange property of participating in both reality and sensuousness, being and appearance, objecthood and relationality, and the cinematic image in particular bears the apparent capacity to make the two levels indiscernible, even as we might continue to distinguish them conceptually."[348] With being and appearance as indistinguishable in their application to image, object-oriented ontology brings to light the intuition that images as representations may not in fact exist (at least not in the sense that we qualify individual objects as real).

Although there are intriguing reasons to apply concepts of object-oriented ontology to cinema, on the grounds that by doing so we may then draw research findings for both the fields of aesthetics and ontology, there are challenges. First, applying object-oriented ontology to aesthetic theories without a structure or hierarchy to the ways we qualify objects (as a consequence of the field's proponents insisting on flat ontology and object-independence) would entail that we must also do away with any chance of there being any kind of aesthetic value – which in nature takes axiological hierarchy. With the previous findings of Roman Ingarden, aesthetic values cannot be rendered insignificant, as they concern the audience's participation with art through concretization, as well as significant qualities of the artwork itself. Second, there is a challenge of object-oriented ontology with respect to its discrediting mediation. Bolšakovas, states that,

> To theorise film within the OOO framework, while providing a negative answer to the existence of cinematic medium specificity, still provides an additional rationale for viewing cinema, emphasising the autonomy and "alienness" of objects from human understanding. In OOO terms, films are autonomous objects that produce "sensual qualities" through their interaction

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345 Bolšakovas, "The Possibility of Object-Oriented Film Philosophy," 5.
346 Bolšakovas, 1.
347 Bolšakovas, 6.
348 Arsenjuk, "On the Impossibility of Object-Oriented Film Theory," 204.

with viewers – performativity. The meaning and aesthetic impact of a film arise from this interaction, not from any inherent qualities of the medium of film itself.[349]

If understanding mediation (mediums) is insignificant for film philosophy then there would be no reason to qualify film as such. Instead there would be only individual films as individual objects without any explanation as to their modal givenness. Moreover, if films are "autonomous objects" with "sensual qualities," then on what grounds are we to understand sensation and performativity (without reference to subject-object mediatory relations),[350] and in what sense do films independently exist apart from interaction? The application of object-oriented ontology to film philosophy is therefore inconsistent with both its flat (non-hierarchical) ontology and principal claim that there only exist autonomous objects (rendering insignificant the entire historical discoveries of representationalism, intentionality, and mediation). As a result, Bolšakovas is justified in claiming that "[t[he enterprise of defining any art through OOO is unachievable but opens a field for future research on the ontology of cinema's performativity."[351] Object-oriented ontology does not account for screens as mediums.

With the challenges of object-oriented ontology in its application to screens and film, a better alternative shall include categories from phenomenology. Edmund Husserl's original contributions to proceeding phenomenological discourse were founded in the exploration of universal properties of human experience. Since we cannot escape an awareness of the perspectivism necessary for qualifying experiences, we cannot do without phenomenological categories. The benefit of adopting these categories lies in the discernment and organization of what appears as individually subjective into a division between what is necessary and accidental to an object or event's mode of givenness – thereby also marking what is potentially intersubjective and common. Thus, pictures and film cannot be reduced to objects of ontology but must also be analyzed with the tools of phenomenology. In addition, the benefit of applying Roman Ingarden's ideas to the discourse is especially notable through recognizing how his analysis of intentional objects reveals several findings on the nature of mediation and how representations are brought about.

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349 Bolšakovas, 9.

350 There is a related challenge of complexity in avoiding subject-object relations in an attempt to discern the object in itself, as has been demonstrated in literatures investigating differences between consciousness and the brain (as object), Patricia Churchland, for example, elaborates on differences in categories used for pain as felt with descriptions of C fiber-activation in the nervous system.

351 Bolšakovas, 9.

1.2.   Possible Modes of Being and Structures of Consciousness

A sign of conceptual depth to an ontology is its application and capacity to draw distinctions, and in that manner avoiding overgeneralizations. The ontology of Ingarden is thorough in this regard because of its descriptive and analytical approach to investigating the different modes of existence to different kinds of objects. Since Ingarden's philosophy should help us to qualify screens in detail, we see that the scope of analysis extends beyond understanding what it means to be object-oriented. Rather, by accounting for mediation within ontology, we are further equipped with the conceptual tools necessary for analysing how objects differ form one another and how they relate with ourselves.

Solely incorporating ontological concepts to the analysis of screens, however, does not become the complete exhaustive means by which they are qualified. Phenomenology is a necessary resource as well to the investigation because of the involvement of the mind's disposition towards the screen in being both artefact and medium. In particular, while four strata serving to qualify the screen were drawn based on Ingarden's philosophy, the latter two (represented objectivities and visual concretization and immersion) are features best readable through the lens of phenomenology. Screens – being mediums that exhibit representations in the form of images – are individually rendered by the viewer. In this process, there is some other state of affairs being shown besides one's own natural environment – the objectivity represented, as well as a sense by which this other state of affairs becomes the focal point of the mind – by visual concretization and immersion. The two strata are therefore common occurrences related to the structures of one's consciousness in phenomenological terms.

1.3. Reductionisms: Transcendental Idealism versus Metaphysical Realism

While we shall aim to qualify screens using both the fields of phenomenology and ontology, there exist challenges to apply solely the extremities of either approach. The existential qualifier over the course of the history of philosophy culminates in questions on transcendental idealism, and its opposite, metaphysical realism. It is a problem beyond covering subject-object relations, reaching a point on whether either side of the formulation can of itself be supervenient (i.e., whether one is deterministic of the other). Proponents of transcendental idealism hold ontological primacy of the mind in its determining what objects are and how they exist. Proponents of metaphysical reism, claim, by contrast, that objects (things) are the final substances of reality – from which our recognition of them are to be discovered.

Paul Guyer and Rolf-Peter Horstmann present two formulations of transcendental idealism:

> 1. something mental (the mind, spirit, reason, will) is the ultimate foundation of all reality, or even exhaustive of reality, and

> 2. although the existence of something independent of the mind is conceded, everything that we can know about this mind-independent "reality" is held to be so permeated by the creative, formative, or constructive activities of the mind (of some kind or other) that all claims to knowledge must be considered, in some sense, to be a form of self-knowledge.[352]

The first formulation is a claim at the general level of reality being subsumed under the mind. The second formulation refers to particular objects of reality being defined insofar as the mind produces their meaning or qualification, although admitting of their selfsufficiency. It is in this second formulation, taking more nuanced variety, that the transcendental idealism of Immanuel Kant applies through a priori categories of intuition. As Kant originally wrote in 1781,

> If there did not lie in you a faculty for intuiting a priori; if this subjective condition were not at the same time the universal a priori condition under which alone the object of […] intuition is possible; if the object (the triangle) were something in itself without relation to your subject: then how could you say that what necessarily lies in your subjective conditions for constructing a triangle must also necessarily pertain to the triangle in itself.[353]

In Kant's formulation of the a priori as that which precedes empirical judgement, universal categories are presumed to exist, namely those of space and time. It is argued that since each qualifying judgement cannot escape the bounds of space and time, those two categories are universal subjective conditions under which knowledge of things are possible. As space and

352 Paul Guyer and Rolf-Peter Horstmann, "Idealism, "*The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2023 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2023/entries/idealism/.

353 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge University Press, 1998): p. A 48.

time are in the realm of things in themselves (*noumena*), all else concern secondary appearances (the represented). Likewise,

> everything intuited in space or in time, hence all objects of an experience possible for us, are nothing but appearances, i.e., mere representations, which, as they are represented, as extended beings or series of alterations, have outside our thoughts no existence grounded in itself. This doctrine I call transcendental idealism.[354]

From this we can deduce that Kant's metaphysical treatment of space and time being universal categories places representations of the world in the form of thought and intuition. As the two categories are taken to be the constructive means by which any and all objects are given qualification, it takes the second form of idealism illustrated by Guyer and Horstmann.

From a phenomenological standpoint, forming this intuitionist connection to a general metaphysics is limited. According to Maurice Merleau Ponty, contrary to Kant's presupposition, representations need not be strictly taken in terms of internal propositions. As Henry Sommers-Hall states, "Merleau-Ponty's key claim will be that in arguing that the 'I think' must be able to accompany all of our representations, Kant implicitly characterizes our perceptions of the world as something analogous to propositions which can all be simultaneously be held in the mind. A proper analysis of the nature of perception shows this assumption is illegitimate."[355] For this reason, a resort to transcendental idealism concerning the language of thought and propositions alone does not suffice in accounting for how representations function. Were all that exist taken to be constructs of the mind through a set of statements or propositions, there is inadequacy by not accounting for constructs through representations extending beyond thought and intuition, as Merleau-Ponty suggests, with the need for perception.

Another form of transcendental idealism has been ascribed to Edmund Husserl in his later works, particularly *Ideas*. Elsewhere, it is implied when he states that "[i]n order for [a natural object] to really exist, and thus in order for the assumption that it exists to be reasonable or justified not merely in a restricted but rather in an unrestricted way, i.e. to the fullest extent, there must be an actual ego in whose experiences [...] the being of the thing manifests itself [...]."[356] The claim that an actual ego manifests the being of an object on one reading may appear solipsist. However, it is not the case that Husserl's early philosophy is either solipsist

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354 Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, p. A b491.

355 Henry Sommers-Hall, "Merleau-Ponty's Reading Of Kant's Transcendental Idealism," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 57, no. 1 (2019): 118.
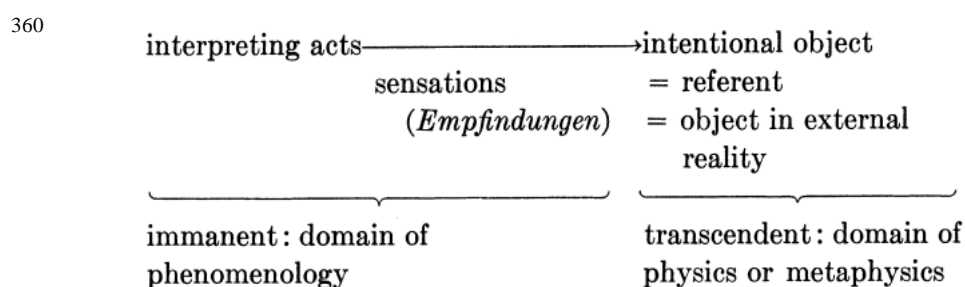
356 As cited from: Christian Beyer, "Edmund Husserl," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2022 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2022/entries/husserl. Found in the original: Edmund Husserl. *Husserliana*, vol XXXVI, p.76f.

or idealist. When investigating how objects are given categorial qualification either restrictively or unrestrictedly, it is not entirely disputed to claim that one's mind or ego is involved, and nor is such claim idealist (at least of the first type illustrated by Guyer and Horstmann).

Nonetheless, in an effort to explain the conscious structures behind forming propositions, Edmund Husserl's earlier work, *Logical Investigations,* marked different forms of expression and analyzed their components which bring to light further factors involved in representations beyond the Kantian paradigm.

> The manifold ambiguities in talk about what an expression expresses, or about an expressed content, may therefore be so ordered that one distinguishes between a content in a subjective, and a content in an objective sense. In the latter respect we must distinguish between: The content as intending sense, or as sense, meaning simpliciter, the content as fulfilling sense, and the content as object.[357]

While admitting of three types of content in expression (intending sense, fulfilling sense, and the object), Husserl draws a connection of propositions not only to their different senses but to their referents as well. With an admission of contents bearing an objective sense along with a treatment of the indexicality of words, wherein he states, "[t]he function of a word (or rather of an intuitive word-presentation) is to awaken a sense-conferring act in ourselves, to point to what is intended, or perhaps given intuitive fulfilment in this act, and to guide our interest exclusively in this direction"[358] the claim is warranted that at least his earlier stance before his 1907 Göttingen lectures is not of a transcendental idealism.[359] Moreover, Husserl developed an explanation on how propositions (designating objects) can be involved with the way representations are formed through perception. As Guido Küng illustrates Husserl's position in *Logical Investigations*,

[360]

interpreting acts——————————→intentional object
       sensations   = referent
       (*Empfindungen*)   = object in external reality

immanent: domain of phenomenology   transcendent: domain of physics or metaphysics

357 Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations vol. 1*, trans. JN Finlay (Routledge, 2001): 1.14, p. 200
358 Husserl, *Logical Investigations vol. 1*, 1.10, p. 193.
359 Richard Cobb-Stevens, *Husserl and Analytic Philosophy* (Kluwer, 1990): 165.
360 Guido Küng, "Husserl on Pictures and Intentional Objects," *Philosophy Education Society Inc. The Review of Metaphysics* 26, no. 4 (1973): 673.

Here Husserl's position is identified as admitting the actual existence of objects, which may be qualified through acts of intentionality and is characteristic of sensation. In this context Husserl wrote in the second volume of *Logical Investigations*,

> […] we call the whole perceptual assertion an expression of perception and, in a derivative sense, of whatever is intuited or itself presented in perception. […] The essential homogeneity of the function of fulfilment, as of all the ideal relationships necessarily bound up with it, obliges us to give the name 'perception' to each fulfilling act of confirmatory self-presentation, to each fulfilling act whatever the name of an 'intuition', and to its intentional correlate the name of 'object'.[361]

Therefore, while there is an appeal to intuition in expressing what we perceive, there is also the act of confirming the object which is its correlate. In other words, as Husserl also claims, "[e]ach expression not merely says something, but says it of something: it not only has a meaning, but refers to certain objects. This relation sometimes holds in the plural for one and the same expression. But the object never coincides with the meaning. Both, of course, only pertain to an expression in virtue of the mental acts which give it sense."[362] From here we may infer Husserl's attestation of the separateness of objects from their mental constructs formed by expressions within a language. The early Husserl is by no means an idealist.

The realist stance of Husserl in *Logical Investigations* is evidenced by his treatment of the separate object designated apart from their possible forms of expression along with an account of perceptual assertions. By contrast, his later work, *Ideas*, published over ten years later, has been reviewed as idealist. This is partly because in the work he introduces methods to the field of phenomenology that withdraw any supposition of the existence of an object in question to then abstract the object's essential qualities for a proper description (resulting in eidetic reduction, as earlier explained). This process he coins as the *epoché*. In such description we arrive at a noematic and noetic distinction concerning the modalities of being and the modalities of consciousness designating being, respectively.[363] By departing from considerations over the existence of an object (especially outside of the mind) one may infer that the method used results in idealism.

Roman Ingarden located the phenomenological reduction in Husserl's transcendental idealism alongside his treatment of pure consciousness. It was summarized in the notion that "those configurations of consciousness that lie within the purview of active and possible immanent perception, and which – after having eliminated any and every apprehension that is

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361 Edmund Husserl. *Logical Investigations* volume 2, trans. JN Finlay (Routledge, 2001): 6.45. p.280.
362 Husserl, *Logical Investigations* volume 1, 1.12. p.197.
363 Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 38

alien to and does not originate from such perception – must be taken exactly as they present themselves in this perception."[364] Taken in this sense as departing from the Kantian appeal to a priori intuitions (which were for Merleau-Ponty reliant on the language of propositions), Husserl's method of reduction appeals to the perceptual aspects of representations.

Were Husserl's later phenomenology treated as a methodological step rather than a metaphysical claim,[365] then the results produced concern the ways we qualify objects and how they are designated through sense, rather than a final existential position altogether. As Guido Küng states, "[t]he aim of phenomenology is not to prove the existence of the material world, but to clarify what we mean when we affirm that the material world exists."[366] It is nonetheless a widely contested issue over the cogency of argument within transcendental idealism.

Roman Ingarden himself committed to disproving the idealism of his predecessor, in large part by his comprehensive theory of aesthetics.[367] It is also demonstrated by his solutions to the idealism-realism debate in his work, *Controversy Over the Existence of the World.* Here Ingarden seeks not to deny the existence of mind-independent objects. Rather, he provides groups of options wherein the idealism/realism controversy[368] is made precise through the application of his existential categories. These consist of the possible arrangements between autonomy-heteronomy, originality-derivativeness, selfsufficiency-non-selfsufficiency, dependence-independence, and absolute being-relative being. The seventh solution – belonging to his first group of answers – he labels as "*Idealist Dependence Creationism.*"[369] Here Ingarden locates Husserl's transcendental idealism.[370] For Ingarden, idealist dependence creationism "would dictate that the real world be existentially heteronomous, derivative, separable, and dependent on pure consciousness."[371] In other words, Husserlian transcendental idealism would mean that the world is founded outside of itself, is produced by and relies on pure consciousness for its "continued subsistence", yet also is self-sufficient in terms of not requiring another entity to form a unity.[372] Therefore, Ingarden treats Husserl's transcendental

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364 Ingarden, *Controversy Over the Existence of the World*, 33.

365 On Roman Ingarden's account, Husserl's later claims, particularly in *Ideas*, were to be taken as metaphysical. Cfr. Ingarden, *Controversy Over the Existence of the World*, 187.

366 Guido Küng, "Husserl on Pictures and Intentional Objects," 678.

367 Hicham Jakha. "Ingarden's Aesthetic Argument against Husserl's transcendental Idealism turn." *Analiza i Egzystencja* 63 (2023): 89–108.

368 As marked between the apparent noncongruence of there ultimately being both the mind-independent real world and pure consciousness.

369 Ingarden, *Controversy Over the Existence of the World*, 180.

370 Ibid, 181.

371 Ibid, 180.

372 Ibid, 110-153.

idealism primarily as a matter of the world's being derivative[373] and not independent. However, questions remain over matters of the world's selfsufficiency. If selfsufficiency is defined mereologically – questions on the coexistence and interdependence of parts to compose wholes, then Ingarden's treatment of Husserl's transcendental idealism rests on the notion that either the real world or pure consciousness are isolated, as their own selfsufficiency demands that there be "no other entity which would have to coexist with it within the unity of some whole."[374] However, Ingarden ascribes the selfsufficiency of the world with the stance of Husserl's idealism in different terms than his original definition, positing that "what is transcendent is *eo ipso* separable vis-à-vis the acts of consciousness in which it is given."[375] In this sense, Ingarden's comparative use of his term selfsufficiency with Husserl's use of being transcendent concerning idealism amounts to the subsumption of the world by acts of consciousness through "a certain *decreeing and fixating into existence*."[376] However, Ingarden notes that this metaphysical stance is not the same as one which admits non-selfusfficiency because otherwise, the real world is taken to "comprise one whole with pure consciousness.[377]

Ingarden's response to questions on idealism and realism places emphasis on the need to reinvestigate how the nature of time functions as a special category for existence. This proposal concerns, for example, the retained identity of objects persisting through time,[378] questions over time's structure into processes and phases of succession,[379] and the rendering of the present into the past.[380] Most notable in his considerations for time is the human being's enduring through it, thereby marking a unique position between dependence and independence, and bringing preliminary insight to the nature of consciousness. Ingarden states,

> [t]he living individual's mode of being is characterized by partial persistence-independence, restricted in the manner indicated to its nature and its individual essence, and by partial dependence on its surrounding world, but at the same time partially by towering over time and [partially by] subjugation to time. Or to put it differently: the living being is a remarkable union of the persisting and of the passing away of its states and processes.[381]

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373 Ibid, 182.
374 Ibid, 147.
375 Ibid, 182.
376 Ibid, 181.
377 Ibid,191.
378 Ibid, 251.
379 Ibid, 235-237.
380 Ibid, 238-239.
381 Ibid, 272.

The bearing of time in relation to the individual creates an important case in seeking to discover separations between the subjective and the objective. Through an analysis of time's different ontological structures, we may then proceed to clarify on what grounds the claims of idealism and realism can be verified. On the one hand, time may involve extrinsic standards of measurement, which for this reason can help guarantee the real word's autonomy and independence. On the other hand, the intrinsic qualia by which time is sensible to and qualified from pure consciousness, may for this competing reason help guarantee the mind's ability to construct reality altogether.

2. How Screens Display through Heteronomy

2.1. Displayed Contents as Frames of Reference

Evidence for the relative nature of our perception is supported by principles in physics covering frames of reference. While frames of reference in the context of physics is a matter of how properties are measured, often for motion, in terms of inertia, velocity, and acceleration, frames of reference in the context of apprehending phenomena can also either be investigated linguistically or visually through immersion. Linguistically, we have seen how these play a role in literary works due to representations of states of affairs functioning as frames of reference. Interestingly, however, there is also a categorical overlap between this literary phenomenon with the experience of viewing displayed contents on screen. The overlap is noticeable through the notion of representations positing objects with their corresponding background or state of affairs, as well as through the notion that there are layers of facticity in the manner of representing objectivities. As a result, displayed contents serve as frames of reference, thus grounding the capacity for them to exist also as heteronomous beings.

Viewing objects as belonging to a state of affairs is similar in broad conceptual structure to reading narrative where items (especially characters) are located within a plot and setting. Once again, as Roman Ingarden claimed that "the state of affairs is at the same time something which belongs to the proper ontic range of the object (constituted within it)" proving to be "a *self*-representation[,]"[382] this goes to show that accuracies often do persist between things and the contexts within which they are represented, whether visually or through written words.

While there are differences in these two modes of presentations, they nonetheless capture unique moments belonging to a separated realm from the objectively standardized and

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382 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 190-191.

lived and experienced. The third realm, mentioned as a world unfolding or elapsing by itself, can either be fictional or virtual. And these occurrences reveal how products of consciousness – whether of authorship or film production – not only disseminate content, but what goes on further is the sharing of a unique frame of reference in disclosing phenomena, both in their intentional fixations (particularly towards objects) and associative or corresponding states of affairs (generally surrounding environments). Moreover, as it is the case that literary works create unique frames of reference through subtleties and variations in the planes of the material, formal, intentional, and existential, such is also the case for image and video.

Displayed contents on screen, in taking the forms of images or videos, present a concrete frame of reference by the same structures of material, formal, intentional, and existential sources of composition. The material components to a screen determines such qualities as frame rate, brightness, colouration and resolution. The formal components to a screen set the boundaries and structure of its content. The intentional aspect, meanwhile, is both a creative element to what is displayed but also a deliberate process over selecting what is to be shown. On the existential category, image and video are reducibly but still factually displaying pixels, but nonetheless experientially are showcasing symbols, persons, events, etc. Moreover, in this category, questions as to the evidence of there being existential characterization or existential position through screens is difficult to resolve given the separate ontological treatments of the two notions. For while, in the linguistic context, an equilateral triangle is a matter of existential characterization, and the capital of Poland is a matter of existential position, in a visual context, there is hardly such capacity to distinguish the two for they are both given some form of reductionism or generalization – were both to rely simply on eyesight.

Concreteness, which is to be aimed for through mediation, is more conceivably achieved through the screen than through fiction. At least insofar as what is perceived through it is equally recognizable, leaving less items to be subject to interpretation. Pictures and films display quite clearly what their producers intended. However, there are different levels of this concreteness given the nature of mediation. Questions arise both to the degree and manner of presenting this concreteness. Moreover, concreteness is to be assessed either in two ways, first with respect to a natural state of affairs, and second with respect to showing the original intentions or ideas of the producer. The former concerns the distinction between the real and the virtual – with respect to environments, while the latter concerns reliability with respect to the artist.

To further compare the variations in frames of reference between literary works and image and video, let us determine whether the previous findings concerning Ingarden's treatment of heteronomous beings apply also to screens. First, as briefly mentioned earlier, to the issue of time being demarcated into three fields being: first, conventional (e.g., clocks and watches) second, subjectively lived, and third, within a fictional world elapsing or unfolding by itself, it seems likely that the third category, of a created world elapsing or unfolding, is possible to be made both for books and films. For this reason, literary works and forms of content on screen contain this overlap. While there are differences in the manner of presenting this third category (namely differences based on language and vision), the fictional or virtual nature of it is enough for one to be immersed into it, leading to a subconscious loss of awareness of the natural environment one is actually in. The fact that objects presented within states of affairs are found either through seeing or reading indicates that a simulated depiction of the natural environment is possible.

Second, to the issue of dialectical encounters between objective aesthetic structures and either the author's composition or the audience's concretization of these structures, it is evident that these apply to art in general. Thus, while literary works were originally claimed to possess aesthetic structures, other forms of art such as cinema also contain them. However, there may be subtle differences in terms of the relations obtained between authors of fiction to their work and between filmmakers to their videography, given the materials required to compose these two as well as the expectations of valuation to be made on behalf of their different audiences. Moreover, the range of potential creative expressivity differs between authors and filmmakers given that authors are more so limited by means of language, while filmmakers are limited by both their equipment as well as the natural persons and settings in which their stories take place.

Third, to the issue of aesthetic structures taking different possible modes of representation, bearing a relation of dependence with a sense of consistency maintained through intentional direction, these apply for both film and fiction. The representation, to remain coherent, still must rely on senses of consistency on the part of the author or director and reading or viewing participants. Naturally, this cognitive trait tends to be more so for the objects being represented than the mode of representation itself. This is why there is lack of a difference between this occurrence, whether of fiction or film.

Fourth, there is the distinction between the ontic (imaginary or possible) range of existential characterization as opposed to the metaphysical (actual) range of existential position, originally found in literary works. The question of whether such distinction is present

on screen is potentially obscure. Given the differences in structure between a cinematic film and documentary for instance, and how this difference compares with fiction as opposed to non- fiction, there are such entangled relations among them that what may only be said is that there are different mediums to present either real or imagined states of affairs. As Ingarden writes, "the exhibiting can be performed to a greater or lesser extent by materially different states of affairs, depending on whether the latter are richer or poorer in directly perceptible elements of objects or whether they are so structured that there exists a greater or lesser clarity and transparency of their structure and the objects represented in them."[383] Therefore, the sense of there being a transparency within the medium showcasing contents (i.e., objects within states of affairs) is the main condition for there either being moments of existential characterization or existential position.

Finally, to the point of objects being represented in a manner characteristic of their corresponding states of affairs, this holds true for both literary works and pictures and film. Whether objects seemingly fit within their environments is not a question concerning the mode of representations depicting them. Rather, the sense of fittingness concerns the question of whether the categories attributable to an object and to be apparent through its environment are present. It is a question concerning coherence as well as the existence or non-existence of certain features, all within the realm of the contents being shown but not the manner of showing itself. For this reason, books and movies may both pose this issue in similar ways.

Despite the conceivable overlap between literary works and film, given these five points considered, the fact that the two are still two separate modes of representation explains why there are differences in the givenness of their appearing states of affairs.

Ingarden distinguishes three separate states of affairs merely on the level of propositions, as identified in section 2.1. of the third chapter, citing how there are:

(1) states of essence [Soseinverhalte],

(2) states of thus-appearance [Soaussehensverhalte],

(3) states of occurrence [Geschehensverhalte][384]

We therefore are able to note differences to what is being claimed on the grounds of differences in referring to and describing states of affairs. States of essence often claim properties of objects. States of thus-appearance refer to how certain properties exhibit themselves to the

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383 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 195-196.
384 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, 192.

persons witnessing them. While states of occurrence are closer to states of thus-appearance, they differ in that they more so describe events taking place rather than speaking of the qualities within which objects help subsume an experience.

These three ways of making propositions over states of affairs are unique to language itself, and thus, cannot have an equivalent formal structure to that which is simply visual. For this reason, the unique ways in which language brings to light certain qualities of our experience (in certain propositional formats) are distinct from the ways in which screens display states of affairs, although also serving as frames of reference. While words describe states of essence, thus-appearance, and states of occurrence, perhaps seeing is a more primitive way of being immersed into the world. Yet at a more general level, it is still the case that what is noticed through seeing depends on ideas or contents of our mind. It is our conceptual repertoire invoked by language that one can differentiate between seeing a forest as opposed to many trees. Therefore, that which almost equally applies for the literary work as well as image and video is the notion of conceptual categories being in line with what is perceived throughout various ranges of experience. As a result, the notion of ideas being captured into heteronomous modes of representation explains how screens provide frames of reference.

2.2.   Applications of Heteronomy to the Image

The image has its existential foundation outside of itself by virtue of heteronomy. Were we to exclude heteronomy from the image and presume, to the contrary, an autonomous mode of existence to screens as displays then we are left with an implausible form of reductionism. While heteronomy admits the reliance of cognizant observers for the image's determination, autonomy in the sense applied to displaying content reduces the image to such factors as lighting conditions and pixels – given the fact of the matter of the displayed content's constitutive material being independent from viewers in this sense of autonomy. Since an image is conceivable as a represented state of affairs, and since states of affairs often refer to objects and their environments, it is also easier to intuit why images are heteronomous and irreducible to their constitutive material such as pixels which in their individuation do not display or represent any such state of affairs. What this means is that the image is in the eye of the beholder. As Dario Cecchi writes,

> screens represent a general condition of the visual representation, even for these images being not – or having not been – actually projected on screens. In other words visual representations' beholders approach to images as if they are dealing with screens, whether screens are the effective media of images or not. The beholder, while reorganizing his (or her) visions in a way that makes evident that it is a representation, and not a real experience, is already projecting the

image on a virtual screen: the beholders 'screen' images, by grasping their representational sense.[385]

The virtual projection of an image on screen is inherently relational, and thereby also heteronomous. While Cecchi notes the beholder's grasping of the image on screen as involving representations, he more subtly remarks how this process is an already active cognitive faculty within perception, such that it is not only the screen that displays an image but the beholder who constructs its representation. The heteronomy of the image on screen is relationally constructed both from the screen to the viewer as well as from the viewer to the screen.

While images are heteronomous vis-à-vis perception it is not only vision that is involved, "another important feature of the new digital screens is that they ask the active and multisensory involvement not only of eyes and sight, but also of our entire body and senses. They are touch screens, relocated in various spaces and times of our lives."[386] Screen interactions by input and output are therefore further complexifying factors to the issue of heteronomy. As Vivian Sobchack notes,

> A function of technological (and televisual) pervasion and (World-Wide- Web) dispersion, this new electronic sense of presence is intimately bound up in a centerless, network-like structure of the *present*, of instant stimulation and impatient desire, rather than in photographic nostalgia for the past or cinematic anticipation of a future. Digital electronic technology atomizes and abstractly schematizes the analogic quality of the photographic and cinematic into discrete pixels and bits of information that are then transmitted serially, each bit discontinuous, discontiguous, and absolute—each bit 'being-in-itself' even as it is part of a system.[387]

Images displayed on screen are therefore characterized by an interconnectedness of forms. Time, while represented on it, is also subject to the forms of interactivity by viewers. Simultaneously, both material and immaterial factors shape one's screened experience.

Returning to our earlier remarks on images as photographic, we noted a dual feature. The image is unique in its spatiotemporal mode of existence given that it is a product of a determinate place and time (sourced externally) while the context in which it is shown has no determinate necessity. Cecchi likewise notes images on screen as "oscillating between the *transparency* of the re-presentation (the referential power of images) and the *opacity* of the self-presentation (the reflective quality of images)."[388] While images refer, screens reflect. The former pertains to the place and time depicted, the latter concerns the situation of the beholder. Given the two relations of the image on screen to the viewer and the viewer to the image on

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385 Dario Cecchi, "The Elusive Body: Abstract for a History of Screens," in *Rivista di estetica - Schermi* ed. Mauro Carbone and Anna Caterina Dalmasso (Rosenberg & Sellier, 2014): 2.

386 Cecchi. "The Elusive Body: Abstract for a History of Screens," 3.

387 Vivian Sobchack, "The Scene of the Screen," in *Post-Cinema: Theorizing 21st-Century Film* ed. Shane Denson and Julia Leyda (REFRAME Books, 2016): 109.

388 Cecchi, 7.

screen, there arises questions on comparisons between the image's presumed natural source from an original state of affairs as separate from the situation of the viewer's recognition of the image as representing something beyond pixels and colour. Discrepancies between the two indicates degrees of being virtual.

Further, while on a reductionist account the image on screen is two dimensional, on a holistic approach the three dimensional contents inferred from what is displayed indicates the active participation of the image's beholder. As Dario Cecchi suggests a congruence between the generally representational nature of visual perception both towards and outside of the screen, this congruence is equally demonstrated by the inference of a three dimensional foreground and background spatial awareness of objects and their environments. On these grounds, while screens display image contents, being able to qualify what it is that the image represents (as coherent with our general faculty of perception) is a matter dependent (heteronomous) on the beholder.

2.3. Applications of Heteronomy to Video

As videos are series of images transitioning at a set frame rate, we are reminded of the factor of timing in producing a novel experience from the picture into a spectacle. In addition, we clarify that while the image consists of presented objects and reconstructed aspects to illustrate a represented objectivity, fully immersive depth is only possible through video. The existential heteronomy (dependence) of the video is founded not only by the relational aspects of the beholder and the screen's constitutive material, as in the case with images, but also the factor of frame transitioning and the manner in which this occurs. Frame transitioning, or the succession of images, is a third element of timing to screen experiences. The first element of time pertains to the conditions of the observer and the second pertains to the determinate time (and place) of the content's origin. It is through this third element of shifting frames that the viewer receives a sense of synchronicity and immersion. For this reason, videos provide a more comprehensive perceptual experience than images. Vivian Sobchack describes videos being its own unique sort as follows,

> [a]lthough dependent on the photographic, the cinematic has something more to do with life and with the *accumulation of experience*—not its loss. Cinematic technology *animates* the photographic and reconstitutes its materiality, visibility, and perceptual verisimilitude in a difference not of degree but of kind. The *moving picture* is a visible representation not of activity finished or past but of activity coming into being and being. Furthermore, and even more

significant, the moving picture not only visibly represents moving objects but also—and simultaneously— presents *the very movement of vision itself*.[389]

Due to how videos are taken as moving pictures with greater animative qualities, we may also see how this occurs more naturally to perception than still images. The immersive depth of video also allows for greater ranges to the screen's form – whether intentionally creative or realistic.

With the general distinction of video from images in their form of heteronomy – by including a third element of timing through frame transitioning – there is also the uniqueness of its forms of content. A particularly helpful media form to understand the video's mode of existence is cinema as investigated by Roman Ingarden. Stefan Morawski details how Ingarden investigated cinema and the film arts between the years 1931-1947 in his book, *O dziele literackim* (The Literary Work of Art), as well as in an article *Kilka uwag o sztuce filmowej* (Some Remarks on the Art of Film). Originally in 1958, Morawski accounted for Ingarden's treatment of cinema in four main points. First was noted that "Cinema as an intentional creation presents various reconstructed visual aspects of objects or situations, while showing them in a processual manner as events. Cinema is thus a temporal construct."[390] Moreover, speaking of the uniqueness of cinema, Morawski states, how it is separate "from painting; and from literature[,] […] devoid of a verbal/sonic layer of words and meaning[,] [marking it finally as] a degenerate form of theatre (*ein entartetes Theaterstück*); it is degenerate because objects are not given here in reality, but by appearances, and because it is silent, which, in turn, makes it like pantomime."[391] Hence Ingarden was aware of the distinctiveness of cinema in its temporal and processual dimensions as well as in its mode of appearance as reconstructional. Second, Morawski pointed out how Ingarden recognized the film as distinct "not [by] the number of layers, but the dominant of these reconstructed appearances that determines the peculiarity of film art […] [giving] a starker appearance of reality."[392] In this sense, reconstructed aspects serve to illustrate a more convincing represented objectivity, in setting the conditions for immersion. The third point outlined by Morawski is that "film art […] simply shows other aspects of existence. Its specific elements are all tangible visual events (*sichtbare Geschehnisse*), whose meaning, owing to various perspectives, can be emphasised or diminished."[393] Thus, there is with the mode of vision different general strata for video, which

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389 Sobchack, "The Scene of the Screen: Envisioning Photographic, Cinematic, and Electronic 'Presence,'" 101.
390 Stefan Morawski, "Ingarden's Concept of Film Art," *Kwartalnik Filmowy* 126 (2024): 209.
391 Ibid.
392 Ibid.
393 Ibid.

in their instances of particular films bear unique cases of being actualized and rendered meaningful. As in the case with Ingarden's demonstration of the unique structures of different kinds of pictures and their different means of concretization,[394] the strata I have put forward have specific ways of being realized depending on the screen's contents. This is to say that presented objects, reconstructed aspects, represented objectivities, and visual concretization and immersion, achieve their signification uniquely in each case. The fourth point of Morawski in explaining Ingarden's theory of film speaks to the way strata such as reconstructed aspects and represented objectivities may be excessively salient, leading to the film becoming quasi-real or imaginary. Morawski explains,

> Abstract cinema ceases to be film art because, despite the dominance of the layer of appearances, a layer of depicted objects is also necessary here. Cinema is only art if the objects depicted are quasi-real, or, in other words, intentional. This means that they only play the 'part' of real people, things, events. By contrast, in a science film or a newsreel, the objects are not presented as real, they are simply real.[395]

Here we see how the spectrum from the real to the imaginary is a matter of conscious deliberations of intentionality. While scientific films, chronicles, documentaries and the like are comparatively more realistic than artistic film, Ingarden suggests their distinction on the basis that the former is intended to showcase what is to be known about the world, and the latter is intended for aesthetic experiences. From here Morawski summarizes Ingarden's account:

> A) Cinema is first and foremost an art of visibility with a dynamic structure.

> B) Cinema creates a greater semblance of the reality of the world depicted than any other representational art. This is due, among other things, to the fact that it uses so-called images with a literary theme and shows human beings in concrete space-time situations.

> C) Cinema's feature, both in terms of content and form, is the co-occurrence of elements belonging to many other arts. This borderline of arts appearing in the film makes it particularly polyphonic.[396]

From this we may deduce that, consistent with Ingarden's ontology, cinema has a special mode of existence in that it involves the domains of the real and imaginary with sets of strata which create polyphonic qualities. As different components are involved, factoring in the sequencing of images, videos are more collectively heteronomous.

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394 As we recall these including: literary themes, historical themes (with depicting functions), portraits (involving both an object presented and a depicting function), pure pictures, the picture not having a presented object, non-presentational abstract pictures, and paintings.
395 Ibid.
396 Ibid, 211.

2.4. Applications of Heteronomy to Data

While we may conceive of screens as devices comprised of images and videos, another sense in which we qualify them is by data. It is a necessary way to understand displayed content in being both informative and having a specific means of distribution. Thus, whereas images and videos are categories of vision, data as a way to categorize the displayed content is not only so. Rather, data functions as the informational grounds from which words, sounds, symbols, and references to worldly affairs are interpreted, all through networks of programmed syntax. Moreover, the capacity for data to function this way means that a virtually endless stream of new updates may reach the viewer. The significance of data in serving to inform viewers through what is displayed on screen is that it creates an unprecedented means of instant access to what was never seen before. This was also possible owing to the connection between coding, language and visual representations, which all receive the explanatory benefit of Roman Ingarden's formal ontology.[397] Speaking of data in the digital space, with the term electronic, Vivian Sobchack states, "[…] the primary value of electronic temporality is the discrete temporal bit of *instant present*—that (thanks to television, videotape, digital disc, and computer memory and software) can be selected, combined, and instantly replayed and rerun by the spectator/user to such a degree that the previously irreversible direction and stream of objective time seems not only overcome but also recast as the creation of a *recursive temporal network*."[398] Moreover, Dario Cecchi claims that "representations – all representations – recreate the possibilities of vision more or less significantly […] images always express some power, both according to the history of the visual representation they refer to, and to the historical context they are created or viewed[,]" creating "the overall frame of reference of vision, which is then both linguistic (or para- linguistic) and experiential."[399] As a result, as data connects language with vision, the contours of what is known about the world through representations is siphoned to a specific digitized form. This form situates information by its own timing processes to a combined semantic, spatial, visual, and linguistic representational product. Wanda Strauven states that, "the new screenic image is an invisible image, since it

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397 Roman Ingarden's formal ontology of objects has been applied to the field of data analysis, specifically, enterprise ontology, involving the knowledge-based system classification of enterprises in terms of competence potentials, competence gaps, and factoring in their trajectories. Cfr. Jan Andreasik, "*Enterprise Ontology According to Roman Ingarden Formal Ontology,*" in Cyran, K.A., Kozielski, S., Peters, J.F., Stańczyk, U., Wakulicz-Deja, A. (eds) *Man-Machine Interactions. Advances in Intelligent and Soft Computing* 59 (Springer, 2009). Accessed March 28, 2025.

398 Vivian Sobchack. "The Scene of the Screen: Envisioning Photographic, Cinematic, and Electronic 'Presence,'" 112.

399 Dario Cecchi. "The Elusive Body: Abstract for a History of Screens," 4.

only truly exists as data, or as code. By clicking icons on the screen we might have the illusion of making the invisible image visible again; at the same time, it also tells us that the image (as image+) is just a gate to something else, away from that particular image (as image)."[400] In this sense, information networks while reduced to data still includes their referential function beyond syntax. As the form of data allows for information to be a "gate to something else," it serves to characterize screen contents as heteronomous. Francesco Casetti describes,

> The same goes—and above all—for visual media. Contrary to a long tradition of "realism," the image is no longer engendered by facts; rather, it is born of an amalgamation of elements that are concretized according to the circumstances. And even when the image is the product of a live recording, it remains part of an information flow that makes it available for new combinations and new circumstances. The image is an aggregate of provisory data and an entity in continual movement, responsive to momentary needs, ongoing discourses, and up-to-the-minute rhetoric. It is not important from whence the image comes, but rather that it circulates and that it can pause somewhere to then take off again.[401]

Qualifying what is on screen as data allows us to see the screen's connectivity not only with us but with the content's intrinsic relations with other content and their background structures. These structures are the causal links of media dissemination. What is displayed is dependent on vast networks of data.

2.5. Applications of Heteronomy to Virtual Reality

The fourth sense by which we may qualify screens displaying is as virtual reality. It includes the combination of images, video, and data, with changes to what is displayed according to user interaction. As a result, it is the most complex form of heteronomy for displayed contents as modulations are based on the deliberations of the user. At the same time, it is also the nearest form of representing the natural state of the world as it simulates space and time with an active participation of intentionality. While treating screens as displays, it was mentioned that the agency through the screen is virtual because of how one's actions are both representational and set by the parameters of what immersive screens allow, while also being extended with components required to demonstrate this. Thus, the representational function of virtual reality is such that both immersion and agency is achieved by simulation.

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400 Wanda Strauven, "The Screenic Image: Between Verticality and Horizontality, Viewing and Touching, Displaying and Playing," in *Screens* ed. Dominique Chateau and José Moure (Amsterdam University Press, 2019): 150.

401 Francesco Casetti, *The Lumière Galaxy: Seven Key Words for the Cinema to Come* (Columbia University Press, 2015): 171.

Presented objects on virtual reality screens are typically kinds which the user has in purview, and may be interacted with. These include characters or artefacts for instance. Reconstructed aspects on virtual reality screens include replicated features and styles of things usually sourced naturally. The represented objectivity is a feature where the presented objects and reconstructed aspects produce an environment that appears to be real, and, compounded with frame transitioning, leads to the qualities of visual concretization and immersion. The concretization and immersion experienced, however, is of a more advanced kind than through simple video, as the interaction by the user plays a significant role in determining the displayed contents. Interaction therefore, as an extended form of agency, is simulated in addition to the moving pictures representing a state of affairs in virtual reality. By matching objects of a world and disclosing a certain level of familiarity to the user's lifeworld, the immersive qualities are not of a passive reception of sense data, but rather the active sense of being in a simulation.

3. How Screens Filter through Intentional Objects

3.1. The Represented Object

In contrast to the notion of screens as displays, screens as filters implies greater emphasis on either concealment or the bracketed and skewed perspective shown of a natural external source. While still typically included in this perspective is a represented scene where an object is shown to fit a given state of affairs, as filters what is signified is that it is only one focal point through the screen. Ingarden's theory of intentional objects explains how the perspectivism issued through representational spaces such as the screen is actually filtered with places of indeterminacy. Therefore, through an awareness that the objects shown on screen are intentional, we also recognize how there are filtering processes involved in the illustration.

A question remains over how videos contain places of indeterminacy. Given that they may be extended overtime through the shifting of frames, this leaves less to be imagined concerning what it would be like to experience their original setting. Moreover, if videos, unlike pictures, do not contain places of indeterminacy, would this mean that they are not intentional objects either? To follow this line of thought would be to assume that the temporal dimension of depicting objects is entirely determinative for their recognition. Since we naturally experience events through time, and because we can be aware of their duration, it seems that the scope of what can be known about the world in front of us is extended by time as well. Thus, the fact of introducing time to the mode of presenting a state of affairs (from pictures to videos), may seem to be a way to fill out these places of indeterminacy.

Of course, the picture is still distinct from the video, in that videos may be seen as the succession of pictures in such a cohesive way that we interpret them as events instead of singular instances or moments. However, there are seemingly limitless ways to view the same event not only in pictured snapshots of reality but with film as well, taking for instance the switching of live cameras during a racing Grand Prix. If frame transitions is what transforms a picture into a video, with the result of this factor extending the scope of what can be seen, this may resolve some issues over places of indeterminacy, but still many other important issues surrounding indeterminacy remain. Videography as a mode of depicting states of affairs is nonetheless perspectival, and as such, it cannot inform viewing audiences of all the elements belonging to the original scene. Consequently, while the extension of time is absent in a picture in relation to its origins, despite videos having them in their origins, videos may still bear places of indeterminacy in the sense of possible alternative perspectives, just as in the picture or in the rolling of dice.

Another consideration is indeterminacy with respect to the author or creator. Insofar as videography is artistic, the careful selection of editing means that what appears in the final cut is only a small fragment of the whole process. The alternative ways to show something may be understood as places where the viewers are left with an indeterminate point of view. To the extent that the final cut of a video is an artistic choice, it is aesthetically and thus intentionally determined, with places of indeterminacy that have been, often on purpose, left out.

Intentional objects may have places of indeterminacy as a consequence of having aesthetic qualities. However, understanding that intentional objects are composed through modes of representation may also indicate that the nature of representations (or mediums) serve to reveal and conceal elements which may be otherwise depicted. The mode of representation does not only show an intentionally reconstructed state of affairs, but at the same time, decides the limiting conditions and extent of which possible alternatives are left behind. Similarly, one may question the reliability of certain modes of representation in regard to their center of orientation or frame of reference. Speaking of orientation and spaces being represented, Ingarden claims,

> orientational spaces must thus be used which belong to the represented psychic subjects 'perceiving,' this represented space. If this is the case, the question arises where the center of orientation ('the zero point of orientation' as Husserl calls it) is to be found. That it is always to be found within the *represented world* is indubitable, but it must be observed that different instances are still possible. [...] It is as if an invisible and never determinately represented person were wandering through the represented world and showing us the objects as they may occur, however. [...] We have to forget to a certain extent our own center of orientation, which

belongs to our perceived world and wanders everywhere with us, and assume a certain distancing attitude toward the world.[402]

While Ingarden is here claiming that spaces in a literary work are represented in tandem with the narrator's point of view as the reference point,[403] we have also seen how other kinds of heteronomous entities possess frames of reference. Whereas, on the one hand, references or zero points were first understood as presenting or displaying contents to be shown, in a more holistic understanding of the ontology of objects, these points of view on the other hand are at the same time concealing alternative perspectives, and thus in this sense contain places of indeterminacy.

As we recall that intentional objects are things created by acts of consciousness, we also recognize that these rely on external sources for their composition. We have investigated three main ways in which objects are qualified as intentional by being derivative, contingent, and heteronomous. What this means is that intentional objects are formed by external relations in terms of their initial composition, recognition, and expression (signification).

While these are all relations of dependence for intentional objects (and thus point to the existence of other things), there is a postulate with Ingarden's account, that the formation of objects being intentional involves questions of non-existence through ontological gaps. These gaps is what he refers to as places of indeterminacy. For being derivative, indeterminacy concerns gaps relative to the mind in composing the intentional object. In being contingent, indeterminacy is about the conscious deliberations of the object's witnesses in being able to be aware of the object's qualities. In being heteronomous, places of indeterminacy are present among intentional objects by being double-sided and limited along material, formal, intentional, and existential fields.

As intentional objects are derivative, contingent, and heteronomous, there are different ways to qualify these dependent modes of existence with corresponding modes of representation. While screens are more intricate among other modes of representation such as literary works, paintings, and theater, there are points of comparison to understand how their dependent modes of existence are analogous to processes of filtering. Intentional objects are filtered through screens in a derivative sense wherein for example, a film producer or game developer decides the limiting conditions of what's shown in the final product. Such objects are filtered contingently on screen in the sense that "the viewer believes that he sees the

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402 Ingarden. *The Literary Work of Art*, 230-231.
403 As mostly the case for poetry, but occasionally also for fiction. Although Ingarden does mention the possibility of multiple persons narrating events in the latter.

complete thing, determined on all sides, although he neither explicitly ponders the matter, nor possess any sort of agreement on it during the apprehension of the picture itself."[404] Finally, intentional objects are filtered heteronomously on screen in the sense that the forms by which we determine and recognize what is presented through it is subject to the various external factors both dependent on and independent of viewership (e.g., light, colours, technical equipment, data, time and place of recording, etc.).

Moreover, the heteronomy of intentional objects on screen is conceivable with four strata, being presented objects, reconstructed aspects, represented objectivities, and visual concretization and immersion. While on the one hand we may view these strata as qualities for displaying, they are also conceived as qualities of filtering in the sense that by producing intentional objects through them there is also the discarding of alternative perspectives and other possible sources for composition. The strata of presented objects and reconstructed aspects are intentional kinds of objects by virtue of their derivation from content producers e.g., filmmakers, digital artists, etc. By bearing relations of dependence, there are also places of indeterminacy with respect to what else could have been presented by the artist. For the strata of represented objectivities and visual concretization and immersion, dependence is with respect to viewers – ascribable to the contingency of intentional objects - and thereby contains places of indeterminacy in terms of the audience's ability to comprehend the illustration. Finally, by taking all these relations of dependence for screens in forming intentional objects they are characteristically heteronomous.

3.2. The Represented State of Affairs

We may define states of affairs as conditions under which objects are presented. The representation of states of affairs concerns the mode in which we come to discover them. Although the general situation depicted on screen as a represented state of affairs is in accordance with our natural way of perceiving things – with both often having items in the foreground and a background context suggested in the periphery, the screen's way of showcasing this is distinct from natural perception. Differences between natural perception and the screen in this regard arise from differences in the means by which content is filtered. Moreover, as natural perception is prior to and already contains screen-viewing, we may claim that the represented state of affairs through the screen involves a secondary order of vision.

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404 Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 226.

Whereas, on the one hand, one's immediate perceptual awareness is variable in a general first order of vision, on the other hand, screens offer a fixed secondary perspective concerning the state of affairs represented. The fixed view of the state of affairs represented through the screen therefore indicates that screens do not only display content vis-à-vis issuing a perspective distinct from the viewer (showing something new), but also filter content in the sense that this perspective is fixed and not fully disclosed relative to the source.

That which is fixed suggests a prior possibility of alternatives (variables). By screens filtering in a fixed perspective of a represented state of affairs, it is conceivable that other ways of showcasing were possible. It is here where we may draw places of indeterminacy for screens. A question arises on the nature of places of indeterminacy in the representation of states of affairs. While the representation is analogous to the mind's construction of images and events, we may question whether places of indeterminacy concern the content of the state of affairs as illustrated or else concern that which lies outside of the illustration altogether.

The difference between places of indeterminacy in terms of the content of the represented state of affairs as opposed to the borderlines of the mode of representation altogether is analogous to the matter of presented objects and reconstructed aspects as demarcated from represented objectivity and concretization. This is because, content is related to what may be said of objects (as to what is presented and reconstructed), while the borders of the illustration is related to fixating on what is viewable (the represented objectivity and concretization). In either case we have places of indeterminacy because more features of the object could have been alternatively illustrated in the representation while also the extension of the state of affairs from the screen's perspective could have been altered by focal points, time, and scale.

3.3. Digitization

We may find that intentional objects presented on screen contain places of indeterminacy through the processes of digitization. As intentional objects on screen are merely digital representations of original states of affairs, the parts left behind from these states of affairs can be thought of as places of indeterminacy. In this light, the mode of representing states of affairs not only serves to offer a digitally copied and windowed view of phenomena, but in effect functions as replacing natural activities. The notable part of this fact is that by getting rid of naturally sourced activities, we lose sight of the sense in which things are being filtered, and by that token, we also lose the awareness of there actually being places of indeterminacy in

digital spaces. Bringing attention to the effects of digitalization culture, Vivian Sobchack claims,

> At this time in the United States, whether or not we go to the movies; watch television or music videos; own camcorders, videotapes, or digital video disc recorder/players; allow our children to engage video and computer games; write our academic papers on personal computers; do our banking and shopping online—we are all part of a moving-image culture, and we live cinematic and electronic lives. [...] these objective encounters transform us as embodied subjects.[405]

It is noticeable that screens have served as a substitute over historically prevalent ways to interact with the world. Before the technological shift, these activities were tangible and compartmentalized. As theater, writing, music, news, literature, education, gaming, maps, notetaking, purchasing, and social interaction have all been delegated to screen activity, these were carried through by digitization. Shifts to the general discourse also arose since normal daily activities of the individual were replaced with screen activity. By influencing the nature of perception and offering a data network to pass information, screens also changed people's activities. The changes made are noticeable by taking into account how digitization is a filtering process in a specific mode of representation. Since screen contents are representational and fixed in their perspective of objects and states of affairs, they also possess places of indeterminacy with respect to qualities of natural salience. These, I argue, are the result of digitization. In social interaction, the traditional ways of forming self-identity were subverted with the growing allure of smartphones and social media. Whereas before the Internet people usually planned and met in person, and in doing so learned about themselves and each other in natural discourse, messaging services and online profiles have reconfigured what it is like to communicate and form an identity. Discovering identity may involve taking into consideration what it is that we value from our view. In a similar vein, Vivian Sobchack posits the question, "[w]hat happens when our expressive technologies also become perceptive technologies—expressing and extending us in ways we never thought possible, radically transforming not merely our comprehension of the world but also our apprehension of ourselves?"[406] Similarly, Mauro Carbone describes,

> Digital social networks have decisively contributed to spreading, namely, 'the desire of individualization and expressive singularization, which makes each person's identity increasingly depend on the signs of acknowledgement received from others.' In this sense, such social networks have decisively contributed also to 'magnifying'--meant both as 'praising' and

405 Sobchack."The Scene of the Screen: Envisioning Photographic, Cinematic, and Electronic 'Presence,'" 89.
406 Sobchack, 88.

as 'highlighting as never before' -- the function of the screens understood as surfaces instituting relations.[407]

The digitization of communication - which was generally before a natural human activity, has led to a shift in social discourse wherein such features as "praising" and "highlighting" are immediately shareable in a form specific to the screen by a number of "likes," "shares," and "followers." Values are thus presented through screens in the digital sphere in a way that is measurable by user input.

It is however important to be aware of these identities being the emergent product of digitization. As online profiles are much like intentional objects in that their mode of existence is through the screen and in the mind of the viewer, there are various places of indeterminacy not presented by the medium. In a manner comparable to image and video, the mode of presentation of online profiles bear places of indeterminacy also to the object and state of affairs depicted. Also what is indeterminate concerns attributable associations to the order of secondary intentionality. One may sense a closer and more vibrant perspective of social discourse in person by qualities simply being more naturally salient than on the screen. So for while the digitization of communication provided far greater means of accessibility and immediacy, all else not saliently presentable through the screen were either removed or left indeterminate.

Another such way in which forms of digitization as filtering processes differ from their natural counterparts is found in reading. According to Ellen Rose, reading for postsecondary students is markedly distinct depending on whether the form is printed text or online reading material.[408] By focusing on how new qualities arise by changing the reading mode, we are able to draw comparisons and discover unique sense perceptions screens elicit. The first quality Rose lists is "the disappearing page" where the simple act of turning pages from left to right in material text disappears for digitized text. Rose explains how this is a sign of typographic space as text on screen is immaterial and also designed in such way that text read prior can be easily forgotten – by not bearing the physical remnants of once having read parts of a text.[409] The digitized text, she claims, is thereby distinct from printed text as "[h]ere, in 'screen space', the advancement from page to page becomes immaterial, almost unnoticeable, and the page as a

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407 Mauro Carbone, *Philosophy-Screens: From Cinema to the Digital Revolution*, trans. Marta Nijhuis(SUNY Press, 2019), 94.

408 Ellen Rose, "The phenomenology of on-screen reading: University students' lived experience of digitised text," *British Journal of Educational Technology* 42 (2011): 515-526.

409 Rose. "The phenomenology of on-screen reading: University students' lived experience of digitised text." *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 42 (2011): 518.

content structure tends to disappear. Sometimes, it is merely represented by a fraction (eg, 2/21), in which case, it becomes a temporal rather than a spatial construct, indicating how long I can expect to take perusing the text."[410] The second quality of Rose's analysis is "to have but not to hold."[411] Here with digitized text what is sensed is that there is less of a physical ownership of the material. This feature also leads to an impaired sense of interactivity given how "personalising or amending [the material] in any way"[412] is lacking. Or, at least what seems apparent is the quality of being unnatural. The third quality is "the ever present screen" where, "[i]n screen space, [...] my reading takes place on a surface cluttered with endless fascinating distractions, giving rise to the phenomenon of continuous partial attention."[413] Thus, for while a printed book bears only material relevant for itself and thereby calls for focused reading, digitized text is a tiny fragment of innumerable online material which may substantially lower the barrier threshold of being distracted, making experiences transient and ephemeral. However, conversely, the fourth point of Rose is that digitized text contains the feature of "finding what I need."[414] She explains that, "[r]eading the printed page, I might be drawn by interesting tangents; I might linger to appreciate a thought-provoking insight or a striking turn of phrase, even one that bears no immediate relationship to my research. However, in screen space, my reading is very goal-directed and strategic."[415] In this sense, the disposition of finding what is necessary is easier to fulfill in screen space as software for search queries is designed to be so. Thus, taken together, Rose's analysis shows that there are various means by which the screen alters our perceptual dispositions by simply being a distinct mode under the process of digitization, substituting previous ones.

While digitization is conceivable as being in tandem with data, digitization understood as a process reveals how what is presented on screen may serve as a substitute for previous areas of activity. Social interaction and reading – serving as brief examples of areas being digitized – indicate that ordinary activity may be replaced with mere representation. However, it is not to claim that these digitized areas are ineffective. Rather, it is that there are comparisons to be drawn. On the one hand, certain features may be enhanced such as accessibility. On the

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410 Rose, "The phenomenology of on-screen reading: University students' lived experience of digitised text," 518.
411 Rose, 519-520.
412 Ibid, 520.
413 Ibid, 522.
414 Ibid, 523.
415 Ibid, 523.

other, some may be inhibited, such as naturally salient qualities including tangibility and breadth.

Moreover, there is an interconnectedness of the processes involved in digitization. These are not only in terms of scales such as locality and globality, but also through the material and immaterial, and the limits of mediation. Treating the effects of digitization in this light, Vivian Sobchack accounts that,

> As the material and operational connectivity (direct and indirect) of these digitized screens soon followed, so did their ubiquity. Thus, screens increasingly mediated but also increasingly refracted and occluded our relations with the physical environment, transforming what had been their occasional, if significant, presence in that environment into the encompassing boundaries of a topological domain, within which the already extant components and processes of digitization (both hardware and software) became circumscribed.[416]

As Sobchack refers to how the screen altered reality both materially and immaterially through digitization, she then points to their intrinsic and extrinsic relations, "these externally-generated components and processes became […] mediated outward in relation to viewers and users and also inward in operative and systemic interrelation […]."[417] Thus, we see the effects of digitization becoming more prominent as the forms of mediation concerning them involve not only users but also the perpetuating connections made between digital networks themselves.

While user input first comes from a natural environment, the received data collected into digital spaces becomes stored to a network already established. It is this network that structures the data into forms processable and accessible to the program's designed purpose. The data, however, may be restructured or reconfigured according to changes in the program and network partially with and without the original user's input. It is therefore both the information received by user input as well as the internal functions of the program that determines that which is presentable on screen.

A consequence of the internal and external connections involved in digitization processes is that there may arise gaps or "black boxes" over knowing the sources of information being shown. Moreover, biases may arise as "search engine algorithms are providers of testimony."[418] Given how digitization often serves to replace activities in natural life – such as reading and communication, the quality of information that the user may receive is susceptible

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416 Vivian Sobchack, "Comprehending Screens: A Meditation *in Media Res*," in *Rivista di estetica - Schermi*. ed. Mauro Carbone and Anna Caterina Dalmasso (Rosenberg & Sellier, 2014): 20.

417 Sobchack, "Comprehending Screens: A Meditation *in Media Res*," 20.

418 Devesh Narayanan and David De Cremer, "'Google Told Me So!' On the bent testimony of search engine algorithms," *Philosophy & Technology* 35, no. 22 (2022): 2.

to the biases of not knowing the internal digital processes involved, and thereby may lead to the interactive yet highly mediatory experience being disorienting.

3.4. Changes to the Epistemic Role of Perception

The alluring yet disorienting experience of using screens as a substitute for natural activities is a consequence of digitization being a process of filtering. While screens are reducible to the category of vision, the contents presented on them are relationally embedded to a vast number of fields that have been funneled through digital networks. Since the fields and networks are often opaque to the viewer, from his point of view there are various places of indeterminacy. In activities of natural life, by comparison, there are more salient experiential qualities as well as the chance to learn about what was not known before (or filling in these places of indeterminacy). With the transformation of digital technologies and spaces, these mediums reshaped our ways of knowing and agency through the substitution of the traditional epistemic role of perception. Hanna Gunn and Michael Patrick Lynch demonstrate the Internet's growing capacity to change people's epistemic agency, "[…] we are learning about the ways that instant communication, social media, and ready access to massive databases like Wikipedia are changing how we interact with one another epistemically."[419] For while the collection of information in digital spaces may involve hyperlinks, search engines and the like, being able to know the sum total of relations involved, including all factors contributing to the origins of user input, the functions of hardware components, as well as the network's internal processes for relaying information is futile. It is only possible to be selective with the information shown on screen, while it is easier to be familiar with and passive to its contents. Under these constraints, grounds for a more thorough epistemic affectivity pose a challenge.

Because of the change in the mode of accessing information there has also been a shift in the sense by which people come to know something. From this change arose research on the epistemology of the Internet, focusing on the growing susceptibility of biases and misinformation through this mode. Challenges facing the Internet as a new way of knowing are present in not being aware of missing pieces of information (in a form conceivable as places of indeterminacy). As F. Gizem Karaoğlan Yılmaz and Ebru Kılıç Çakmak state, "[w]hile internet users guide the process of search while making search in online environments according to such factors as accessibility, ease of use, being familiar and the fact that it requires

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419 Hanna Gunn and Michael P. Lynch, "The Internet and Epistemic Agency," in *Applied Epistemology* ed. Jennifer Lackey (Oxford University Press, 2021): 391.

less time and effort, they might ignore such other factors as whether the accessed information is true and reliable, whether it fits their purpose and whether it is objective or not."[420] In this sense, the information one obtains through screens more effectively conceals other matters of relevance to be known. Truth, reliability, purpose, and objectivity may all be qualities viewers seek on screen, yet due to their independence from the medium, remain indeterminate at the frame of reference of what is being immediately shown.

Aside from concerns of factual matters relating to propositional knowledge claims and relaying information to others, there has also been epistemic places of indeterminacy with respect to such natural experiences as interaction. Considering Canadian healthcare and social work being carried out in digital spaces over the course of the Coronavirus pandemic, Catherine Phillips and Anita Aenishaenslin make the case of how new forms of interaction to be applied as a substitute for natural encounters, such as Zoom, created an "epistemological rupture[,]" tantamount to the irregularities of knowledge discourses posited by Gaston Bachelard.[421]

Screens in their capacity to inform viewers reshaped the way people believe in what is presented, reoriented ways of making knowledge claims, and reconfigured interaction altogether. These changes were a process of the digitization of natural phenomena which in turn set the grounds for various places of indeterminacy with respect to all sourced material contributing to what is merely displayed. We may conceive how it was possible for digital screens to serve as a substitute for various natural activities, despite these indeterminacies, by looking into how similar features can be carried over from natural to digital space, with the role of analogy.

4. How Screens are Tools with Heterogeneous Strata

4.1. Strata in the *Ontology of the Work of Art*

While Ingarden does not account for screens in such a comprehensive way as he does literary works of art, he does lead us to imagine two elements which would be necessary for their composition with the following analysis of "film-plays," where we may find items:

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420 Yilmaz Karaoğlan, F.Gizem, and Ebru Kılıç Çakmak, "Internet-Specific Epistemological Beliefs and Online Information Searching Strategies of Pre-Service Teachers: Gender and Department Differences," *Participatory Educational Research* 3, no. 2 (August 1, 2016): 64. Accessed March 28, 2025.

421 Catherine Phillips and Anita Aenishaenslin, "Epistemological ruptures: Digital presence and group work," *Groupwork* 30, no. 2 (2023): 38-53.

(a) in the stratum of presented objects [where] something constantly happens with the persons and things, and even the processes taking place in their course;

(b) in the stratum of reconstructed aspects, [where] the contents of these aspects and their succession change continually; some appear while others pass by and vanish.[422]

Under these two aspects, we can better understand the occurrence of mediation. The quality of screens as presenting frames of reference to real objects, environments, and events, (or more generally to states of affairs), is owed to their function of mediation. Given that mediation works as an in-between, a matter of processing inputs to produce outputs, it is heteronomous in nature. As a result, screens display not only pixelated images and shifting video but also aesthetic objects (like creative pictures and films), with aspects which are presented and with aspects which are reconstructed.

We may defend the distinction between the material object (e.g., painting), its representation (e.g., picture), and its concretization (e.g., comprehension and recognition), on the basis that this how we may better understand immersion. The material elements are composed through natural sources that themselves are presentable. The represented elements concern the way how objects appear in a given state of affairs by mediation and signification. Finally, concretization involves both witnessing and filling in the places of indeterminacy not yet depicted in this representation to then establish both its meaning and context. While the material elements are presented, the represented and concretized elements are only secondary and thus are reconstructed. Thus, there are two mediatory aspects: the presented material on the one hand, and the reconstructed elements by concretization on the other.

These two mediatory aspects that are featured on screen tend to fluctuate between their real and virtual appearances. This is insofar as what is presented comes from a natural source while what is reconstructed is artificial. Yet with both features, immersive experiences become more readily possible. Through perception the mind recognizes objects both as they naturally are and as how they are intentionally given. The blending of the natural and intentional states of objects is what allows us to be presented with a coherent and immersive experience. For example, how is it possible to recognize certain sounds as music rather than noise by not pointing to both the natural elements (e.g., sounds from wooded, and stringed instruments) plus the intentional elements (e.g., lyrics and intonated melodies as the unique expression of the artist), in unison and complementing one another? This is how we experience immersion.

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422 Roman Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art*,, 324.

Insofar as screens are able to similarly exhibit both dimensions (i.e., the naturally presented and intentionally reconstructed), we are captivated just as well.

Immersive experiences through the screen have become more accessible. This has led to a danger where what is typically understood as being more realistic (e.g., documentaries), is in fact more deceiving. Ingarden states,

> The news film shows the spectator certain real things and the events and processes taking place through the participation of those things. This happens, of course, by means of the projection of certain 'pictures' upon the screen. Consequently, the spectator does not deal directly with persons, things, and processes, but merely with their 'likenesses.' However, when the spectator apprehends these likenesses, he involuntarily directs his attention to the originals of these likenesses. He sees in the pictures the persons and things themselves, without explicitly being aware that these objects are not, strictly speaking, present themselves to him. He forgets, so to say, that he has before him mere likenesses, and it seems to him that he is seeing, for example, the participants in the Yalta Conference and the happenings that once really took place there. This state of affairs is fundamentally different from the situation in the case of an 'artistic' film, even if one disregards for the time being the artistic or aesthetic value of the latter.[423]

So finally, we arrive at the core of the problem recognized by Ingarden, where "[t]he illusion brought about by the film then is then so perfect that one forgets that in actuality the merely represented objectivities are not at all that which they only pretend to be."[424] So long as we are immersed to screens, we become less aware of the natural environment to which we are situated in, and potentially believe more in what is only presented in front of us.

The strata of the presented and reconstructed aspects for screens while necessary, may be found in other phenomena, such as experiencing music. So, the two themselves are insufficient for marking the screen's uniqueness. Therefore, I will place two further sets of strata to help distinguish them.

(c) the stratum of represented objectivities;

(d) the stratum of visual concretization and immersion

Represented objectivity is an idea of Ingarden's that helps explain how mediation is more than a relation between an input and output. Instead, through mediation there can be a represented objectivity in the sense that there is a novel way to view a state of affairs. Ingarden attaches represented objectivities with "the intentionally projected states of affairs,"[425] meaning that persons such as authors, artists, and producers set the environmental conditions and perspectives under which events take place. While this stratum is present in the literary work,

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423 Roman Ingarden. *Ontology of the work of art: the musical work, the picture, the architectural work, the film*, 317-318.
424 Ibid, 318.
425 Ingarden. *The Literary Work of Art*, 190.

it is also there in screen experiences, with filmmaking as a clear example. Meanwhile, after noting the strata of that which is presented and reconstructed all through a represented objectivity, we are left with another stratum which uniquely qualifies a screen as such. This is the stratum of visual concretization and immersion which is to be understood as the product of the first three elements working in unison for the screen. A special feature of this last stratum is its relativity. Between displayed contents and momentary witnessing are derivation and existential dependence, which in turn, are relative aspects that are in this case sensory. In the context of Ingarden suggesting evidence for the possible relativity of objects on sensory grounds, Piotr K. Szałek defines the Ingardenian position of this form as "such features would be sensual qualities that 'belong' to an object, but only because of a relation to certain perceivers" so that, "[i]n order to talk about them there has to exist a situation, in which they are perceived by properly equipped (cognitively, physiologically) individuals."[426] Along these four strata, screens operate by perceptual mediation.

4.2. The Provisional Strata for Screens

From our investigations in the previous section we are reminded of the strata of "presented objects," [427] "reconstructed aspects,"[428] represented objectivities, and visual concretization and immersion. We shall return to these four strata after first considering Ingarden's understanding of film as being in a certain "habitus of reality."[429] The question arises of what sort of reality screens are capable of showcasing, and how so.

When considering film, Ingarden first draws out a distinction between journalistic (i.e. reportative) film, scientific (e.g., documentary) film, silent film, sound film, and artistic film. He emphasizes artistic film as markedly distinct from others given its special bearing between reality and fiction. Documentaries and news reports are meant to broadcast information of real world events, unlike movies.

Among artistic films, silent films differ from sound films as the former are essentially "a multiplicity of photographically reconstructed visual aspects" akin to "a pictorial process, in which ever new reconstructed aspects succeed one another and bring about the illusion of a

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426 Piotr K. Szałek, "Roman Ingarden's Ontological Theory of Relation," *Studies in Logic and Theory of Knowledge* 7 (2011): 165.
427 Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 324.
428 Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 324..
429 Ibid, 317.

transformation to the presented objects."[430] Silent films are therefore strictly part of the first two strata (a): presented objects and (b): reconstructed aspects. Moreover, they are abstractions from reality in that they "exhibit[…] only what can be constituted by means of purely visual, photographically reconstructed aspects, while it 'abstracts' from all non-visual, concrete, quasi-perceptual aspects."[431] They are capable of expressing similar qualities as in natural life, despite being silent. Sound films, by contrast, are relationally intertwined within their mode of existence between reality and fiction as most areas of sense-perception (besides actual depth and being tactile) are covered. As Ingarden states, "the film play belongs to the works of temporal art, but […] contains essential moments of spatial art. […] It is an extraordinarily rich and complex formation, a polyphonic work in which very different qualitative moments cooperate and lead to harmonies and disharmonies of various kinds."[432] In my view, it is a curious feature of the film arts that various qualities which we perceive as common or attributable to specific kinds of events are repeatable merely through a screen.

One may question why Roman Ingarden specifically considered film as a work of art. While he drew distinctions between film as an art, and scientific and journalistic film, his greater elaboration on the arts indeed was not an accident. A convincing reason his treatment of film is thoughtfully considered in *Ontology of the Work of Art* is that film as an art brings us insight to how we view and structure the world relationally to ourselves, independent of what there is to know or find out externally. This relationality is so pertinent that the film's synchronous depicting function lures us to the world represented.[433] As Ingarden states, "[w]hen we view the objectivities presented in the film play we can sometimes forget that they are merely fictional objectivities belonging to the world of fantasy, which only pretend to be

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430 Ibid, 321.

431 Ibid, 322.

432 Ibid, 322-323.

433 Moreover, it is suggested that the world represented through film (and its appreciation) is a consequence of a broader structure, related to further domains including aesthetics. As Ingarden originally wrote in 1928, "The aesthetic value is not dependent on the viewer's assessment, but on the aesthetically valuable qualities on which it is based. The assessment of the same aesthetic value of an aesthetic object can turn out one time one way and another time another way, because the carrying out of this valuation depends not on the aesthetic object to be assessed, but rather above all on the apprehension of the latter by the viewer. Furthermore, however, it depends on the different circumstances under which this apprehension takes place, such as, for example, the social relationships, the dominant cultural currents, the inclination of the viewer toward certain ways of looking at the world, political tendencies, and so forth." Roman Ingarden, *Ontology of the work of art: the musical work, the picture, the architectural work, the film*, trans. Raymond Meyer and John T. Goldthwait (Ohio University Press, 1989): 232.

real."[434] We may then infer here that fiction and art are produced as so to reconstruct elements of our memory, perception, and worldview, convincing us to be immersed.

Conversely, however, Ingarden does point out how the opposite effect is possible when the right conditions are satisfied.

> Nevertheless, none of us, as spectators of a film play, really believes that we are dealing with real persons and real happenings. Nor are they such; they are only fictions, fantasy figures, and phantoms, that only give the illusion of being real. If the degree and the kind of suggestion that they exercise on the spectator oversteps a certain limit, if the illusion of reality loses the character of illusion and the character of reality becomes absolutely predominant, then the film play ceases to be a work of art, and changes into a news report, as is the case, for example, in the weekly 'newsreel.'[435]

A wall obscuring the actors from the audience is lifted. In literary terms, this occurrence is akin to "breaking the fourth wall," wherein we lose the sense by which characters participate in their own fictional reality and recognize the actual persons representing them. It is through this realization that works of art are no longer such, but rather are understood as natural events taking place which so happen to be depicted by some medium. Ingarden illustrates this with an example of a surgery taking place within a movie,

> a hero of the story presented was supposed to undergo a surgical operation. […] An unforeseen complication, a strong and dangerous hemorrhage, occurred and for a time appeared to greatly endanger the patient […] [I]t was believed that the film would make a strong, perturbing impression on the spectators, and would thereby achieve a great aesthetic success. […] The spectators simply protested. They were so deeply disturbed by experiencing a human being in real danger of death that they no longer wanted to look at the film. What happened? There came a moment when the unexpected consternation coming clearly to expression in the behaviour of the physicians and the grisly details of the operation translated the spectators into the attitude of real, serious belief in the reality of what was happening.[436]

Several implications about the relations between one's watching film and sensing an implicit reality given through an ongoing state of affairs (although being artificially reconstructed) can be made here. For one, it is the qualities of empathy and pain together which not only can be sensed through a screen (when characters undergo a botched surgery for instance), but can also form a shared sense of reality through the basic function of intersubjectivity. That is, the fact that one can empathize with another through a screen concerning a quality that is only known when personally felt, suggests evidence for there being more than merely presented objects and reconstructed aspects for screens alone.

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434 Ingarden, *Ontology of the work of art: the musical work, the picture, the architectural work, the film*, 318.
435 Ibid, 319.
436 Ingarden, *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 319.

While Roman Ingarden rightly posed the question: "by what means does the cinematographic art produce that illusion of reality without showing a 'true' reality?"[437] and was correct in his point that "what is important here is merely that we be aware of the difference between the world presented in the film and the real world[,]"[438] what could be further detailed explicitly is the relational component to screen experiences, insofar as two elements are pertinent: there being represented objectivities and the qualities of concretization and immersion.

While represented objectivity and concretization are especially part of Ingarden's explication of the literary work of art, an analogous sense by which these two qualities are demonstrable through screens is also intriguing. The treatment of screen contents (such as, films and TV series) as examples of intentional objects requires an understanding of their heteronomous (dependent) mode of existence. Without the perspectivism offered by screen spectators, the content ceases to be an intentional object nor a work of art. It would perhaps then be reducible to presented objects and reconstructed aspects according to frame transitioning and colouration. To understand the film and other such works of art on screen, in the sense which we ordinarily speak of, means to recognize how both sides – the screen's projection (i.e., presented objects and reconstructed aspects), as well as the audience's recognition (i.e., the forming of represented objectivities, visual concretization and immersion), are necessary. The conglomeration of the four strata operating in two directions therefore sparks further questions on what can be said of the way these items exist.

What is presented and reconstructed on the screen comes from the side of the digital creator. From the side of the viewing participants are the strata of represented objectivities and visual concretization and immersion. The natural state of affairs to which a setting is presented acts as the base for what is displayed. The dimension of expressivity then allows an artist to reconstruct these natural states of affairs to transform a series of events into a story, for instance. Afterwards, from the side of the viewing audience, a sense of objectivity being represented - through the intentional projection of a state of affairs – is given, allowing them to be concretized and immersed into the screened experience. As a result, these four strata function as progressing stages from which we distinguish less the separation between the real and the virtual, so that our fundamental ordering of separate modes of existence guaranteed by perception vanishes.

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437 Ingarden, 320.
438 Ibid, 320.

4.3. Screen Modes of Existence

While Ingarden analyzed the heterogeneous stratifications of pictures and film, we have seen how they are given such qualification by the spectator in transcending presented objects and reconstructed aspects, to then involve represented objectivities, concretization, and immersion. This set of processes involving subject-object relations means that screens as such are heteronomous (dependent) on the observer. Presuming heteronomy for screens, among eight possible modes of being set out by Ingarden, two options remain:

vii) *heteronomy; derivativeness; selfsufficiency; dependence* and

viii) *heteronomy; derivativeness; non-selfsufficiency.*

Let us briefly analyze each component to these modes of being. Representations through pictures and film are heteronomous in that they have their "existential foundation outside of"[439] themselves. In our application, this means that whatever content is projected from a screen is granted the form of being representational by the viewer. This process lies outside of the material constituents of the phenomenon in question. Moreover, with these two modes of being, pictures and film are derivative as they can "be produced by any other entity."[440] This would be consistent with the fact that pictures and film (or images and video) are reducible to stored coded data which can be repeatedly copied and displayed.

Next marking the two possible heteronomous modes of existence as distinct from one another is the notion of selfsufficiency or lack thereof. As this matter concerns whether or not there obtains a "necessary coexistence with some other entity within the unity of a whole[,]"[441] we are left with a general question over how this applies for screens. Insofar as pictures and film are intentional objects cast on screen, in terms of functioning by a relation between representations and artefacts, the two sides of this relation do in fact involve a necessary coexistence to form a unity. Non-selfsufficiency is suggested because in the relation of a representation to the artefact (i.e., picture/video and monitor/device), intentional objects projected cannot exist without the device casting them.

Claiming non-selfsufficiency is not the same as claiming dependence. In the dependence relation, selfsufficiency still obtains, but requires the continued subsistence of two

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439 Ingarden, *Controversy Over the Existence of the World*, 110.
440 Ingarden, *Controversy Over the Existence of the World*, 118.
441 Ibid, 147.

separate entities.[442] Were we to argue for a relation of dependence (in the strict sense) taking place in the mode of existence for screens, then as a consequence every factor serving to issue representations would be presumed as self-sufficient. Under this interpretation, it is easier to intuit both the observer and screening device as self-sufficient entities (at least with respect to each other), and that the phenomenon of screen-viewing produces a specific form of representationalism which of itself takes part in this dependence relation. However, as a secondary consequence, the representation in taking this seventh mode of being ceases to be something actually existing, but instead is entirely (or purely) intentional. This is not a credible finding in our analysis given that generally the same representation is agreed on when different people watch a film or view a picture. To further clarify what exactly is occurring when immanent representations are displayed on screen, foundational differences between phenomenology (i.e., the experiential) and ontology (i.e., forms of the existential) shall be investigated.

4.4.   Definitions by Analogy and Comparisons of Artefacts

In section 4.2. of the first chapter, I developed analogies of screens with lenses, doors, hanging pictures, tablets, and toys, for such analogies are present in literature. However, interpreting screens by comparisons to other artefacts involves drawing consistent features throughout different kinds of objects. Screens are conceived in this sense as tools to the extent that they function in similar ways to others. Here Roman Ingarden's concept of heterogeneous strata is applicable as, with this, he locates the set of consistent features found in certain kinds of intentional objects such as works of literature, paintings, and film. That which is drawn as consistent in one artefact or tool may be compared with features of another. In addition, screens are found to function like these other tools and artefacts by way of analogy. Defined as a "unity of relations in something composite, a fitting relation, a proportion; a similarity to something that is fundamentally different[,]"[443] analogies serve to help determine what kind of artefact an

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442 Ingarden, *Controversy Over the Existence of the World*, 153.

443 Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec, "Analogy," *Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu*. https://www.ptta.pl/pef/haslaen/a/analogy.pdf *Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu*: 1. Accessed January 8, 2025.

object is by means of comparison. Therefore, to understand screens as tools, analogies are required for the basis of common measure among different tools.

It is useful to mark different forms of analogy to then identify screens by this method. Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec distinguishes between the analogy of being, analogy within being, analogy among beings, the analogy of knowledge and metaphor, the analogy of predication, the analogy of inference, and their historical aspects.[444] According to his works, while the analogy of being suggests the plurality of objects, the analogy among beings concerns parts or attributes belonging to each object as they form a composite. This means that when determining screens through their heterogeneous strata, the structures and relations of the strata themselves may be compared to the strata and attributes of other objects. So, for example, writing or notetaking features on tablet devices had been designed in such way to be analogous to writing with pen and paper. However, it is still possible to draw comparisons between objects (taken as composites) at the general level, as there are also general forms of analogy among beings. Here Krąpiec explains that this creates "an analogical unity, the universe of contingent beings […] based on the analogical structure (a structure joined together by relations) of every being and at the same time that of all beings related to their single reason of being."[445] So in this case, Roman Ingarden's concept of intentional objects functions as an analogical unity between different artefacts such as screens and paintings. Krąpiec's other forms of analogy however appear to suggest that the sense by which we qualify objects using analogies may also rely on the speaker. Formulating the analogy of knowledge as another type, he states,

> The analogical mode of being (analogy within being and among beings) may also be known and expressed. Human knowledge may focus upon certain features of real being while leaving others aside, and it may express these features in one clear concept—then we obtain knowledge that is conceptual, univocal, and abstract. This type of nature separates us from reality since it leaves out the real features of being.[446]

Thus, to the extent that one may argue how every object treated in analogy is determined as such by language or concepts alone, there is a sense by which the features ascribed through comparisons is a matter of mind-dependence, or heteronomy. We may determine what is given to us as an image whether it is on screen or on a painting by our ability to conceptualize and qualify it through concepts and language. Metaphor as a specific type of analogy treats the linguistic and conceptual aspects of objects as "we encounter a transfer of a name which in the strict sense means one event, process or thing, to other objects to which the name does not

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444 Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec, "Analogy," 1-14. Accessed January 8, 2025.
445 Krąpiec. "Analogy," 2.
446 Krąpiec, 4.

properly belong."[447] What this means is that there may be a carried meaning from one thing to another, despite the separate terms for them. In addition to naming, included in this linguistic and conceptual factor to analogies is making claims in the form of propositions. As Krąpiec states, "analogical predicates, even when names such as 'good', 'healthy', 'being', or 'smile' have univocal meanings, have a basically different meaning in each case of predication and such a name remains the same only in certain respects."[448] Therefore, the qualitative aspects of predications may be similar in form between objects, yet different in their realization. Applied to screens, the image casted on them may be said to have qualities of certain aesthetic value which are conceived as analogical predicates (e.g., beauty, vibrance, depth) that may also be featured in other works of art, but nonetheless contain their own unique realization in particular instances. Claiming the beauty, vibrance, and depth to an image on screen may involve separate connotations than with a painting (e.g., as the latter may be ascribed to the artist's talent, and the former to the screen's technical specifications). Therefore, there is variability in the use of analogies by means of language both on naming objects or phenomena and making statements of them.

Despite potential challenges in the variability of analogies as involving relations between objects, their parts as well as naming and making claims of them, this is the way comparisons are able to be drawn. Moreover, alongside comparisons, inferences are possible owing to how in "sciences analogy plays a role in exploratory or heuristic thinking."[449] To discover the relations involved when qualifying special objects such as screens, the basis for comparison includes the use of these forms of analogy.

The naming of an object by its function is a matter of forming an analogy among beings. It is also a way to qualify an object in terms of effect. Shared functions are found when screens are compared with other tools or artefacts like windows, paintings, doors, inscribed tablets, lenses, and theater auditoriums. Functions also serve as relations attributable to each object yet still generalizable beyond them. Windows are analogous to screens by offering a viewpoint. Paintings can be compared with screens in terms of showing an image of an artist's work in the planes of realism and imagination. Doors are comparable with screens in serving as entry points of reference to other domains. Inscribed tablets are comparable with screens in terms of being marks of the human intellect and expression. Lenses are comparable with screens in the

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447 Ibid, 5.
448 Ibid, 8.
449 Ibid, 10.

sense of serving as a secondary order of vision itself. Theaters are comparable with screens by being the boundary conditions within which creative and artistic performances are set. As a result, through these shared functions, screens bear these relations of similarity with several other artefacts

Although we see that the relations common among these are generalizable, they may be narrowed further to make precise the distinctiveness of each artefact-kind. Thus, for while the still image of a painting and the image on screen may both be realized on the planes of realism and imagination, their more particular features marks them as separate. Both paintings and screens may show the presented objects and reconstructed aspects of an image. However, further heterogeneous strata such as represented objectivity and visual concretization and immersion reach their own qualitative significance through the screen, marking its witnessing as a different experience than with the painting. Further, within the presented objects, reconstructed aspects, represented objectivity, and visual concretization and immersion achieved on screen, each stratum is made possible by constitutive material different from other artefacts. Of course, this is known by how an image cast on screen is shown through light and pixels, whereas an image on paintings is materially constituted by paint, canvas, and brush. Nonetheless, their particular significance is determined by the features of the images represented on them.

Beyond intended purpose and function, Roman Ingarden's investigation of heterogeneous strata allows for means to compare different artefacts by drawing on consistencies. The strata which are featured on different artefact-kinds help to qualify the nature of the artefact itself. However, some strata in one artefact kind may be found in another, with the admission of their different realizations. For this reason, while heterogeneous strata are necessary for the qualifying of an object as such – as they also serve to distinguish between different kinds of artefacts, a sufficient account of an object requires also its establishment within possible modes of existence, along the planes of intentionality, autonomy-heteronomy, and independence-dependence.

We recall that Ingarden's concept of heterogeneous strata concerns a set of consistent elements featured, which in their individuation differ from each other, in their "characteristic material" and in their role.[450] Ingarden's account of literary works as having word sounds, meaning units, schematized aspects, and also represented objectivities[451] each fall under special

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450 Ingarden. *The Literary Work of Art*. 29.
451 Ingarden. *The Literary Work of Art*, 30-31.

modes of existence. It seems that word sounds, phonetic formations, and meaning units reach their signification as special strata for literary works specifically through the connection between language, writing, and comprehension through legibility. Each word being spelled out, grouped with sentences, forming sentence clusters and sentence composites carries a phonetic pronunciation, with similarities in them, helping to refer and draw meaning. However, it appears that the strata of schematized aspects, aspect continua, and series, as well as represented objectivities and their vicissitudes need not be realized through literary works alone. Under the reading that represented objectivities are illustrations of contextual settings bearing objects within states of affairs, and that there is more than one way to make an illustration – such as by sculptures, paintings, and photographs, this stratum is not only to be realized in literary works. Moreover, schematized aspects, aspect continua, and series, may be treated as general patterns found within the represented objectivity such that they belong to screens as well as literary works.

Therefore, since some strata in one mode of representation may be featured in another mode, there is a way to draw comparisons of sharing a general framework with specific content realizations and constitutive material being distinguished.

Strata when discovered and compared between artefacts are ways of forming analogies among beings. In this sense, strata belonging to different artefact-kinds are found to be similar in form. Since analogies among beings concern what is common among artefacts in both their extrinsic and intrinsic relations (between beings and between parts within them), extrapolations of specific qualities are made. Yet these extrapolations are limited insofar as the specific qualities are uniquely realized in each artefact-kind as well as each actual object by being context sensitive. While the strata belonging to literary works and the strata of screens both generally include types of aspects, represented objectivities, and concretization,[452] the specific realization of each of these strata are unique to themselves.

Aspects of intentional objects are found throughout ranges of experience. Presented objects – being an aspect concerning the exhibition of persons, things, and processes, are found in different modes such as the literary work , the painting, as well as film. We may be reminded that for film, Ingarden treats presented objects as consistent, while reconstructed aspects concern fluctuations, or how "the contents of these aspects and their succession change

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452 In application to literary works, Ingarden names this stratum as meaning units. However, in terms of a general comprehension of the process involved, I take the use of his term concretization as more broadly applicable.

continually; some appear while others pass by and vanish."[453] In addition, as artistic film is a type of video, and video is conceived as a succession of images, it may be argued that the presented objects are consistent throughout the succession while the reconstructed aspects concern what changes through this succession. For example, the protagonist in an adventure film may remain present throughout, while the scenes often switch in places and ambiences. Or conversely, while a fixed place may be featured such as a town square or monument, weather conditions, tourists, and vehicles may appear and disappear.

Despite paintings also serving as intentional objects through images, paintings as having presented objects with stylistic features on them do not bear reconstructed aspects in the same way videos do. The reconstructed aspects of a painting instead may be positioned with reference to the original object and state of affairs the image represents. This means, for example, that Emanuel Leutze's 1851 paintings, titled *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, reconstructs the significant aspects of the American revolutionary leader's conquest in 1776, and the measure for the work's accuracy is based on how these aspects were reconstructed using paintbrush. Thus, by comparison, paintings and film both may feature presented objects, and reconstructed aspects, although the two kinds of artefact achieve these differently.

The represented objectivities featured by intentional objects can also be found in literature, painting, and film. As we recall that represented objectivities are not natural states of affairs in themselves but are depictions of such, we may question how these depictions are achieved separately between these three fields. In literature, the represented objectivity is simply achieved by language. In paintings, the represented objectivity relies on the depicting function of the image (picture) going beyond constitutive material, allowing for another state of affairs to be inferred. While for screens, especially with video, represented objectivity presupposes the strata of presented objects and reconstructed aspects as setting the conditions for an environment, and when the two strata are coherently bound and realized saliently, grounds for the viewer's possible visual concretization and immersion are then set.

Concretization may be available to both readers of literary works and screen viewers as in either case an illustrated state of affairs is unveiled for comprehension. The means to this, however, are markedly different as language and vision are two different modes of processing information. A writer's thoughts and descriptions are given through words with ideas behind them – marking the intentionality of a single person, while the contents shown on screen are

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453 Ingarden. *Ontology of the Work of Art*, 324.

the result of a vast and intricate web of relations both material and immaterial – having far less directly ascribable origins.

The shared features of paintings, literary works, and films, as involving certain aspects, represented objectivities, and concretization indicates that each kind of artefact is a special intentional object in that they mediate reality and fiction through illustrations. Still, the limits of qualifying them through these strata is to be admitted since each artefact kind as a medium achieves the illustration in its own specific way. Moreover, when comparing the parts featured in paintings, literary works, and film, it is notable that not all strata are uniformly necessary between them, and also that they bear distinct modes of existence especially by having distinct constitutive material. The strata belonging to literary works when compared with the strata of screens are therefore limited as they take different modes of existence, while also being fundamentally different modes of representation.

5. How Screens are Representations

5.1. Dual-Aspect Theory for Screens

Analogous to questions of whether the mind constructs reality through pure consciousness, or if the mind is a simple product of reality altogether, one may inquire whether screens are reducible to intentional contents or else reducible to mind-independent constitutive material. For reasons we shall consider, neither stance is entirely reducible, so that an alternative approach can be posed as a dual aspect theory.[454]

The general formulations of idealism and realism not only pertain to unities such as the world and pure consciousness, but to particulars as well. Admitting the real world's separate existence is in similar line of argument to admitting there being mind-independent objects. This is because the sense by which transcendental idealism is taken as an opposite view rests on the notion of every object being mind-dependent. In other words, a claim to the real world's foundation in being a mental construct is akin to the claim that every particular feature by which the world forms a unity is mind-dependent and intentional. By such token these categories aid

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454 The term being "dual aspect" is inspired from a solution to debates in the philosophy of mind concerning whether the mental supervenes the physical or vice-versa. Cfr. Jiri Benovsky, "Dual-Apect Monism," *Philosophical Investigations* 39, no. 4 (2015): 335-352.

our investigation of screens. Through considering the arguments of idealism and realism, we draw further insight to how individual screens can be qualified under phenomenology and ontology, and through heteronomous mind-dependence and autonomy, respectively.

As we recall, screens involve presented objects, reconstructed aspects, represented objectivities, and visual concretization and immersion. Presented objects as the first stratum from section 4.1. of this chapter have their mode of being in partial mind-independence, with respect to viewers. Presented objects, when relationally embedded to the processes of filmmaking and photography, are partially mind-independent from viewers since their constitutive material are sourced in a natural state of affairs. That is to say their existential foundations are not bound to the screen. Partial independence and partial dependence are meant to refer to the fact of contents being displayed remaining independent of the intended viewer's sensory deliberations, while being first derived from (and hence dependent on) a digital content producer. From the standpoint of processes, this independence arises after the fact of all elements pertaining to constitutive material for screens being already realized. Constitutive material for screens here refers to any such components necessary to perform a depicting function, such as, pixels, light and colour, monitor devices, data storage, processors, among others.

Objects on screen designed through software and digital art, by contrast, while serving a depicting function, are in fact a set of reconstructed aspects[455] pertaining to the intentional object of which there may be some distal natural correlate. Although we may still distinguish these objects as things we can reference separate from their environments illustrated, their mode of existence is not the same as those objects which are naturally sourced, and processed through a camera. In relational terms, it is only the presented object captured through a lens that bears first-order partial mind-independence. Digital art objects are the intentional composites of reconstructed aspects taking a secondary order. While the former objects presented are autonomous in the sense that while their mode of representation may vary, they have their existential foundation bounded to natural states of affairs and not screens, the latter both depend their existence and manner of presentation on conscious acts and the applied

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455 Reconstructed aspects pertain to the creation and editorial work of digital art objects, and serve a vital role for screen contents altogether. The reconstructions taking place concern, for instance, timing of video being continuous or with intervals (marking separate emphasis on qualitative moments and the fixation or dissolution of objects depicted), defining the contours of spatial environments, as well as other functions of aesthetic curation.

technologies. As a result, presented objects are autonomous vis-à-vis viewers, and reconstructed aspects are heteronomous, requiring intrinsic and extrinsic elements.

Aside from the first two strata being presented objects and reconstructed aspects bearing partial mind-independence from screen viewers – fitting ontology, the next two strata (represented objectivity, and visual concretization and immersion) are mind-dependent – fitting phenomenology. From here there are reasons to support the claim that screen theory requires both the analyses of ontology and phenomenology, as the first two strata belong to the former and the second two belong to the latter. Presented objects have their final origin in natural states of affairs. Reconstructed aspects, meanwhile, though only partially mind-independent vis-à-vis screen viewing, also are ontologically conceivable in terms of analyses defining which aspects (or properties) are necessary and which are accidental to the presented objects. By means of difference, the concepts of represented objectivities and concretization and immersion belong to the scope of phenomenology. This is because, insofar as these two strata are mind-dependent, they are to be treated as heteronomous.

There are a number of factors involved to create a represented objectivity on screen. First is that presented objects and reconstructed aspects appear in a manner that depict a situational context within which a worldly domain is implicitly assumed. The presented objects, while themselves often being from a natural domain (in the case of recorded picture and video), contribute to a sense of comparison for viewers wherein what is perceived resembles all else experienced or otherwise resembles what is commonly imaginable. The reconstructed aspects, especially when designed to appeal to intuitions – either those natural or fictional – further serves to create a worldly domain, by forming relational congruences between the objects depicted and such objects' situational context and environment. It is important to note that through the contributions of presented objects and reconstructed aspects, especially in terms of object-environment congruences, there is an appeal to forms of intuition with respect to both our imagination and perceptions of reality. This is the feature of coherence. The sense by which we draw coherence from what we think and what we see through the screen on the basis of presented objects and reconstructed aspects results in the final formation of a picture, which of itself is a represented objectivity.

It is not the picture alone, however, that produces the final stratum of visual concretization and immersion, but rather their succession. The succession of pictures as a timely factor determines one's sense of continuity of the state of affairs illustrated. Moreover, continuity sets the conditions for concretization and immersion because there involves such

synchronicity between what is shown from the screen's focal point to the viewer's own, that in fact the viewer implicitly cognizes that they are one and the same. However, since the mind's stock of ideas and their relations are necessary for a congruence of what is being perceived, represented objectivity[456] and visual concretization and immersion[457] are inseparable from it. To represent an objectivity and be immersive are activities from the mind.

In light of this, both ontological and phenomenological categories are necessary. Several auxiliary items may be referred to when qualifying what a screen is, such as in pointing to technological function. However, this is one of many possible approaches. Ontology is a great resource not only for addressing what a screen is but especially for explaining modes of existence. Specifically, the form of screen mediation takes its own mode of existence. Roman Ingarden's ontology so far suggests that these items are heteronomous, derivative, and non-self-sufficient. These three qualities are in sharp contrast with the stance of object-oriented ontology, which would inversely result in the claim that objects can only be autonomous, original and self-sufficient, without any existentially qualifying connection to other objects. While there are reasons to question whether images on screen can be said to exist at all – as suggested by object-oriented ontology's attestations – there are more compelling reasons to draw distinctions within the existential qualifier itself in the form of distinguishing between separate modes of existence.

As a result of these considerations, we find that presented objects and reconstructed aspects are the constitutive material of screen contents – with partial mind-independence, while represented objectivities and visual concretization and immersion are mind-dependent by being involved with processes related to forming intentional objects of perception. By acknowledging that constitutive material as well as relations of intentionality are involved, we may admit the use of both ontological and phenomenological categories for screens. With the two kinds of category for the same object of investigation, we qualify screens through a dualistic-monism.

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456 Which here applies mainly to pictures.
457 Which here apply mainly to videos.

5.2.   The Ontology of Screens

While screens are commonly treated in varying literatures related to the notion of displays, filters, and tools, the fourth way of qualifying them as representations draws on two important philosophical backgrounds. These are phenomenology and ontology. While Ingarden is said to be an ontological-phenomenologist, authors also reveal how he distinguished between the two. His training in phenomenology is linked with Edmund Husserl who founded the tradition as a discourse generally associated with a universal and descriptive account of experience. In this light, the common scope of phenomenological accounts generally do not exclude the witnessing subject. Ontology, on the other hand, takes a more general scope. Marek Rosiak cites how Ingarden considered ontology as "an intuitive (*anschaulich)* and a priori analysis of the content of the relevant ideas (*rein apriorische Analyse der Ideengehalte*)[,]"[458] divided into the "existential, formal, and material."[459] In addition, while metaphysics is another field which concerns actual beings, ontology considers all possible modes of existence. Considering that screens bear a special mode of existence in serving as a unique kind of representation with specific mediatory qualities, analyses undertaken for screens in this light are attributable to ontology. Phenomenology, on the other hand, in its application analyses the human subject's participation and observations of screens as representations. The two fields are nonetheless required for a thorough account of screens. Were we to conceive of screens by ideas such as representations or by reference to artefacts such as windows and mirrors, then as a result a distinct mode of being is assumed in each case.

According to Ingarden's ontology, entities may be either real, ideal, or possible. Further relations are embedded to these under the following: modes of being and existential moments, autonomy-heteronomy,   originality-derivativeness,   selfsufficiency-nonselfsufficiency, existential dependence-existential independence, and absolute being-relative being. Screens are relative by being heteronomous, derivative, and nonselfsufficient. They are heteronomous by having an existential foundation outside the object itself. They are derivative by bearing content reproducible by other entities in identical digital copies. And they are non-separable by necessarily coexisting as representation and artefact.

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458 Marek Rosiak, "Existential Analysis in Roman Ingarden's Ontology," *Forum Philosophicum* 12, no. 1 (2007): 119.
459 Rosiak, "Existential Analysis in Roman Ingarden's Ontology," 119.

In serving as representations, screens illustrate objects within states of affairs in a manner unique to them only. The representation recognized by the viewer is achieved through presented objects, reconstructed aspects, represented objectivities, and visual concretization and immersion. The presented objects are cast on screen independently of viewership by the screen's constitutive material. However, the fact of the objects being presented differs from their being depicted in that the latter relies on the concretization of the viewer – as demonstrated with Ingarden's analyses of portraits. The reconstructed aspects on screen pertain to the way an object and its environment bear curated and designed features. When there is a coherence between the presented objects and reconstructed aspects such that the object fittingly coincides with its environment with qualities that are accurate to the natural world, a sense of realism may emerge for the viewer, garnering the next quality of represented objectivity. The represented objectivity is an illustrated state of affairs wherein similarities and differences between it and the natural world may be drawn.

Moreover, screens display content through images (frames) and videos. While the image is partially projected from the screen to the viewer and partially constructed from the viewer to the screen, these reflexive processes, indicating non-selfsufficiency, occur primarily in the strata of presented objects and reconstructed aspects, with comparisons that can be made with paintings. Videos, by contrast, while reducible to the succession of images, disclose far more features by setting the conditions for issuing represented objectivities more easily. Witold Płotka explains how Ingarden

> held that this manifold [of images] is discontinuous, but one does not perceive this discontinuity and instead it is 'concealed.' In this vein, [Ingarden states] each image is 'a reconstruction by photographic means of a visual aspect of a determinate object or objective situation' (1973: 323). Ingarden is clear that these 'images' are apprehended as 'visual aspects' (or appearances) of an object represented in a film. As he put it, the 'visual aspects' (or appearances) determine the objects seen in a film by providing the viewer with the appearance of corresponding objectivities. From an ontological viewpoint, the stratum of 'visual aspects' (or appearances) is a distinct stratum that is different from the objects represented in the movie or the phantoms displayed on the cinema screen.[460]

Thus, when qualifying screens by the framework of Ingarden's ontology, visual aspects are qualitative moments treated in another way than through the traditional discourse of arts. When the represented objectivity – in tandem with the presented objects and reconstructed aspects of what is cast on screen – forms a coherent temporal unity by the uninterrupted succession of

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460 Witold Płotka. "Ingarden and Blaustein on Image Consciousness." *Studia Phaenomenologica* 23 (2023), 92-93.

images, the viewer's ability to concretize and be immersed to the artificial world depicted is set more easily, such that the actual world outside of the screen is bracketed.

Under Ingarden's ontological analyses, objects may bear existential moments. According to Rosiak, material, formal, and existential ontological treatments correspond to distinct "constitutive moments of an object."[461] Moreover, he explains how matter is conceived as what is qualitative to the object, form is – though non-qualitative – an organized mutual relation of matter, while modes of existence are defined as "the possible positive or negative determination of certain external conditions of the object's existence."[462] In Rosiak's illustration, the material fits to "nonrelational moments"[463] as "qualitative components of an object."[464] The formal belongs "inside the object"[465] as "relational moments."[466] While the existential is understood as "transcending the object"[467] also as "relational moments."[468] In distinguishing between these ontological categories, we may then note how they apply to screens.

The screen is transcendent in that its mode of existence casts intentional objects of perception, while relying on the double-sidedness of its presentation. An example of double-sidedness is given with Ingarden's account of existential moments of colour, "[t]he colour orange, for example, is certainly not composed out of redness and yellowness; it is something unique onto itself, and yet it is possible to distinguish within it the two moments in virtue of which it is similar to the colour red on the one hand, and to the colour yellow on the other."[469] Thus, two features may be simultaneously present in an object, either taken as a single property dependent on an observer or otherwise separable with respect to itself. We recall how, for Genki Uemura, the double-sidedness of intentional objects is akin to two ways of qualifying property-instantiations. Those being standard and non-standard[470] - the first in relation to the object in question, and the second to the subject's relation to such object. Witold Płotka considers how Ingarden treated cinema with two opposite traits in the sense that, "(1) there are

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461 Rosiak, "Existential Analysis in Roman Ingarden's Ontology," 119.
462 Rosiak, 119.
463 Ibid, 119.
464 Ibid, 119.
465 Ibid, 119.
466 Ibid, 119.
467 Ibid, 119.
468 Ibid, 119.
469 Ingarden. *Controversy Over the Existence of the World*, 96.
470 Genki Uemura, "Demystifying Roman Ingarden's Purely Intentional Objects of Perception," in *New Phenomenological Studies in Japan - Contributions to Phenomenology* ed. Nicolas de Warren and Shigeru Taguchi (Springer, 2019).

colourful light reflections displayed on the cinema screen which are ontically autonomous and they exist as real entities, regardless of subjective operations; this layer is the physical basis of the cinematographic work of art [and] (2) the reflections are interpreted by relevant subjective operations and apprehended as appearances which are experienced as 'images.'" [471] While the screen's standard property instantiation is independent of its witnessing, and its non-standard instantiation is through an observer, its way of being an intentional object is double-sided, as well as indeterminate.

In addition, Uemura demonstrates how there may be purely intentional objects of perception with content that is representational yet non-veridical. This is to suggest that representations need not rely on a one-to-one truth correspondence with facts of the actual world. Consequently, this account would be congruent with Ingarden's claim of films and cinematic arts as being capable of presenting illusions of reality which are both captivating and deceiving.

Videos and images may be viewed through the heteronomous mode of being given that there are complex relations of intentionality within them. While in general, material, formal, existential, and intentional categories of ontology may be used to describe them, a set of four strata has been put forward to further understand their processes of becoming so. Presented, reconstructed, represented, and concretized (immersive) features are all elements wherein a video on screen depicts a new sort of reality. Although, while the first two are based on their material and formal components, the latter two are viewer-dependent, and in this sense intentional. The nature of this viewer dependence is then further understood through the fact of the representational grounds of sensory perception which need not include veridical or propositional contents. Therefore, before the fact of judgement over screen contents, there is the occurrence of tending to the general representation which is possible thanks to the sensory basis of perception.

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471 Płotka. "Ingarden and Blaustein on Image Consciousness," 93.

5.3. The Phenomenology of Screens

Aside from the general ways of qualifying objects through their modes of existence with categories of ontology, the discourse of the phenomenological tradition allows for ways to figure and make precise the object's relation to individual witnesses. On the one hand, the screen's mode of existence is ontologically structured as heteronomous, derivative, and non-separable. On the other hand, closer to terms of phenomenology, the strata featured on them – as casting intentional objects of perception – consist of presented objects, reconstructed aspects, represented objectivities, and visual concretization and immersion. These are all discovered when encountering screens as a unique mode of representation.

Screens may be said to involve two occurrences. Płotka explains how Ingarden treats cinematic images as "lying in colourful light reflections on the one hand and in conscious operations on the other."[472] One may immediately notice the fact of a screen presenting an image simply by its rays of light. From certain points of observation, the colourful light already appears as non-natural. However, it is the space intervening from the light to the comprehension of what is being represented by the image that is the subject of various cognitive acts.

In the first steps to witnessing the images cast on screen, one recognizes there being presented objects and reconstructed aspects. Presented objects are fixated on, and are easily noticeable as featured within a background. As we recall, Ingarden provides examples of presented objects being persons, things, and processes.[473] Reconstructed aspects meanwhile, involve the change of contents and their successions (or image sequences). We may conceive of these for example with the post-production editing of a film.

Along with the presented objects and reconstructed aspects, the next feature brought from the screen is represented objectivity. Płotka attributes the notion of represented objectivity with the example of cinematic film arts. As he states, "there is the stratum of represented objects which arise in apprehending 'images': for example, if one watches a movie, then the actors 'play' their roles and they are photographed as playing such roles."[474] What this means is that the movie shown on screen is not only artificially representational with respect to being a visual

472 Płotka. "Ingarden and Blaustein on Image Consciousness," 93.

473 Witold Płotka notes how "Ingarden held that objects presented in image consciousness are founded on appearances of things on the basis of the likeness of things and presented objects; Ingarden's position consists in an attempt to hold that objects in image consciousness are founded in visual parts of perceived objects, but they are irreducible to visual objects as such." In Płotka. "Ingarden and Blaustein on Image Consciousness.", 109

474 Płotka, "Ingarden and Blaustein on Image Consciousness," 93.

reproduction of an original state of affairs. Another sense by which forms of content like movies can serve as a represented objectivity is the fact of the separated marks of intentionality behind them. Movies are works of creative fiction in that actors serve to represent a story in the mind of the artist.

While clarifying images as specific intentional objects by placing them against paintings, Witold Płotka reminds us that based on Ingarden's theory,

> (1) an image is not made of real material, (2) it is indetermined in its properties and thus it has so-called spots of indeterminacy (e.g., one cannot see the other side of an object presented 'in' a painting, as this object does not have one), (3) it has a multi-layered structure, and (4) it can function as a representation of other objects, i.e., images presented 'in' a painting. [475]

To the extent that we can extrapolate qualities of the image from the painting to the image cast on screen, we may infer that, despite their different constitutive material – i.e. paint and canvas versus coloured light pixels, images on screen are also intentional objects with multi-layered structures. On Płotka's reading of Ingarden, the layers of the image from a painting include "painterly reconstructed aspects of things[,] […] the presented objects coming to appearance[,] [and] the topic of the image or story."[476] These features may hold true also for images on screen, apart from their different constitutive material and having different means to achieve the three layers. Moreover, the image's general sense of being an intentional object – whether on the painting or on screen – means that their structure also consists of a double-sidedness with places or spots of indeterminacy.

Useful examples of images with places of indeterminacy concern historical events. William Orpen's 1919 painting illustrating the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, titled *The Signing of Peace in the Hall of Mirrors*, serves to represent the ending terms of the First World War. Some aspects left indeterminate would concern the related series of historical events before and after, such as interactions before and after the signing, the armistice of November 11 in 1918, and conditions set by the victory of the allied powers. In another sense, the image of a painting may be indeterminate with respect to the mind and work of the artist. Benjamin West's 1783 painting of the Treaty of Paris, otherwise known as the *American Commissioners of the Preliminary Peace Agreement with Great Britain,* features a delegation of American founding fathers, with nearly a third of the painting remaining a blank canvas. The indeterminate space left on the painting is alleged to be due to the artist being unable to

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475 Płotka, 94.
476 Płotka, 94-95.

complete the work, as the British delegation did not sit for its production.[477] In either case, sensing what is missing coincides with being familiar with the item in question altogether.

Likewise, with the first example, a photo displayed on screen may be said to capture a still moment that is not identical to other moments before and after. Similarly, with the second example, an image on screen could have been rendered otherwise depending on the possible deliberations of its creator. In either scenario there are places of indeterminacy which often call for the viewer's assuming of what may serve to complete it. As a result, images while casting represented objectivities also at the same time bear places of indeterminacy.

Płotka explains how, "[t]he process of successive encounters which serves to fill in the spots of indeterminacy is called a concretization by Ingarden."[478] Imagining or positing what would cohesively fit to what is missing to an intentional object is part of understanding what is meant to be represented. Not everything is disclosed regarding what intentional objects feature, as well as with regard to missing properties caused by the limits of the mode of representation. These concern, for example, other geometric and spatiotemporal perspectives, character traits not immediately affirmed or denied, and questions left unanswered with regard to author intentions as well as plot and setting. These missing features are left for the audience as witness to make sense of through concretizing what is given.

While concretization is a common feature present along with spots of indeterminacy, its realization is distinct to its mode of representation. Thus, while literary works of art include both features, they are within the confines of language descriptions. By contrast, images and videos (as successions of images) are limited to the extent that vision may serve to reveal features of a situation, or objects and states of affairs. For screens, there is a particular mode of concretization being visual given that the places of indeterminacy are filled in through natural mechanisms of perception. When a situation is shown on screen by a spatiotemporal succession of images[479] featuring a coherence between presented objects within environments and their reconstructed aspects serving to enhance a sense of realism, immersion for the viewer is possible.

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477 William Kloss. "The American Commissioners of the Preliminary Peace Negotiations with Great Britain Object Essay." Excerpted from Clement E. Conger, et al. *Treasures of State: Fine and Decorative Arts in the Diplomatic Reception Rooms of the U.S. Department of State*. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1991. https://www.diplomaticrooms.state.gov/objects/the-american-commissioners/ Accessed January 17, 2025.

478 Płotka. "Ingarden and Blaustein on Image Consciousness." , 96.

479 However, audio is to be admitted as well in this case, since the silent film for Ingarden is more similarly comparable with pantomime.

In sum, presented objects, reconstructed aspects, represented objectivities, and visual concretization and immersion are all features of screen experiences that allow for qualifying what precisely occurs when encountering them. While at a more general level of abstraction we find that these features are also similarly present in other modes of representation which cast images as intentional objects – such as paintings, at a more specific level we find that their realization is unique to each kind of artefact. This uniqueness arises by having different constitutive material, separate modes of existence, as well in the distinct dispositions of their audiences.

5.4. The Epistemology of Screens

Apart from identifying how screens exist and how they are experienced, we may also question their being as forms of knowledge transfer and retrieval, as well as, arbiters of belief. Insofar as epistemology relates to how a referential system of information is obtained, and that screens serve as mediums between subjects and facts to be discovered, there are further means of analysis beyond existence and experience. In particular, with screens there is a specific means of accessing information which differs from other outlets. It is as though the information obtained on screen serves as its own testimony, irrespective of the individuals participating with its input and reception. The question arises of how so.

First we may recognize that how we witness events through selective perception plays a role in knowledge by testimony and experience. This holds true in natural lived experiences, such as with seeing and thus claiming that the chair in front of me is red. Likewise, with a picture of the same chair being displayed on the screen of my smartphone, I may also come to recognize its redness. However, the mechanisms involved to display such picture are materially distinct from the same processes of my seeing the chair naturally, suggesting also a non-identical redness between them. While the natural and representational processes of colour are distinct, there nonetheless remains a level of generality that satisfies the given level of inquiry. Instead of differences in particular colour hues, I may still admit the same general colour. What is important to be known yet remains often neglected however, is the ways in which these two processes differ, as the frame of inquiry may tend to neglect the complex web of relations involved in mediation. Ingarden likewise explains the separate existential layers of originals to their image reproductions,

> For, as Husserl once rightly observed, the fact that an object is similar to another, such as two pine trees to each other, does not make the first an image of the second. In order for something to be an image of something else (to reproduce it), it is necessary above all that the object

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presented in the image is not by its nature a double of the object reproduced, that is, the model. It is precisely in itself, in its mode of existence, in a way essentially different from the object reproduced, insofar as the latter is real. It does not reach its reality, its unequivocal and comprehensive full definition and immanence, the embodiment of its definitions in it; it is only the appearance itself or, better, a kind of reflection of the model. It merely 'imitates' it, but does not embody in itself the same definitions as those that belong to the model. The object presented in the picture, as we shall see, is only intentionally designated by a certain specific appearance reconstructed in the picture.[480]

The image on screen may cast presented objects that originate from a natural state of affairs, yet the presented objects within the image are only inferred by mechanisms of perception. Otherwise, without the inference, what is displayed may be reduced to pixels. In addition, the reconstructed aspects of the object in the image (such as the way the object's features are displayed) does not correspond one-to-one with the actual qualities of its origin. For this reason, what is to be known about an object via the screen is already at a secondary order of perception.

While the suggestion above applies first to still images, videos being the succession of images produces further epistemic features. With videos, there arises a perspectival mode of givenness for the screen viewer more closely resembling natural eyesight. In this sense, a recorded video may adequately produce a first person lens perspective. This means that the represented objectivity achieved through the screen becomes highly convincing, since its mode of givenness becomes further indistinguishable from what one sees naturally. A consequence of this alluring feature is that it becomes more difficult to question the relation between how the screen's representing function differs from facticity.

Beyond what is known through direct ways of perceiving, the information presented on screens created a historical shift to how one may come to seek, acquire, and believe in facts of the world. Online searches, having results accessible with unprecedented immediacy, reconfigured the ranges and limitations of what there is to be possibly known. As Lawrence Hinman claims, "search engines are not just providing access to knowledge, but are

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480 As translated from the original Polish: „Albowiem - jak Husserl niegdyś słusznie zauważył fakt, że pewien przedmiot jest podobny do innego, jak np. dwie sosny do siebie, nie sprawia, że pierwszy jest obrazem drugiego. Do tego, by coś było obrazem czegoś drugiego (odtwarzało je), należy przede wszystkim to, żeby przedmiot przedstawiony w obrazie z istoty swej nie był sobowtórem przedmiotu odtworzonego, czyli modelu. Jest on właśnie sam w sobie, w swoim sposobie istnienia, w sposób istotny odmienny od przedmiotu odtworzonego, o ile ten ostatni jest realny. Nie dosięga on jego realności, jego jednoznacznego i wszechstronnego pełnego określenia i immanencji, ucieleśnienia w nim jego określeń; jest tylko samym pozorem lub, lepiej, pewnego rodzaju odbiciem modelu,„naśladuje" go jedynie, nie ucieleśniając jednak w sobie określeń takich samych jak te, które przysługują modelowi. Przedmiot przedstawiony w obrazie jak jeszcze zobaczymy jest jedynie intencjonalnie wyznaczony przez pewien określony, w obrazie zrekonstruowany wygląd." Roman Ingarden,. *Studia z Estetyki Tom Drugi*, (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1958): 25.

increasingly paying a central role in the constitution of knowledge itself."[481] Rather than the traditional means of consulting with epistemic source materials such as encyclopedic books, newspapers, journals, consultations with experts, lectures and tutorials, online search engines have often been treated as though they are agents providing *bent* testimony,[482] taken as legitimate. Devesh Narayanan and David De Cremer convincingly explain how

> The testimony of these algorithms is bent because:
>
> (1)   We trust that search engine algorithms reliably order relevant and useful content at the top of a search results page. Consequently, we only engage with a few pieces of content, and therefore only encounter one or two unique claims per search. In so doing, we treat search engine algorithms as if they are 'recommending' the content featured at the top.
>
> (2)   Disputed norms exist about whether the recommendation of a piece of content counts as an assertion of its claims.[483]

By this account, search engines are unlike other epistemic resources in that they are not merely containing information which is available. Rather, it is as though the search engines are their own witness to facts themselves which one may refer to. It is as if the accumulation of information is organized in such way as though there are not merely truth-bearers of content to be discovered, but truth-makers (by testimony) to be believed in as well. For this reason, the digitization process of filtering information through screens not only functions by the mediation of content, but also functions by implicating the distinct epistemic role of testimony.

The ways in which we qualify screens as representational therefore indicates, in addition to ontology and phenomenology, a unique epistemological role. The information obtained through screens is not a neutral process, as they can be thought to serve as independent testimony, thereby also suggesting being value-laden. Moreover, the ways in which screens cast representations can often be neglected. Thus, when the colour used to depict a natural object is not recognized as being a mere imitation or copy, one may ascribe its specific properties shown on screen as being the exact same as in natural life. In addition, videos as casting representations on screen further offer testimony likened to first-person witnessing, since a lens to a situation is given in a way properly analogous to the eye.

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481 Lawrence M. Hinman, "Searching Ethics: The Role of Search Engines in the Construction and Distribution of Knowledge," in *Web Search: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* ed. Amanda Spink and Michael Zimmer (Springer, 2008): 67.
482 Narayanan and De Cremer, ""Google Told Me So!" On the bent testimony of search engine algorithms," 2.
483 Narayanan and De Cremer, 21.

5.5. Individual Strata and Features of Perception

The presented objects, reconstructed aspects, represented objectivities, and visual concretization and immersion reach their own modal givenness between intentional objects casting representations in general, as well as in specific ways to screens. Each strata functioning as the structures behind this modal givenness serves to qualify screens as such.

Presented objects in general, as featured in all modes of representation, involve the assumption of individuation. In being individual, the object is taken as bearing properties with a retained identity through time. With the features of the presented object, some appear necessary while others are supplementary. Materially speaking, a presented object featured in a mode of representation is assumed as bearing certain qualities, alongside formal structures. These qualities and their organization serve to define the presented object as such. In this sense, the image of a tree may be shown (or also described) as having green leaves, branches, red apples, and a tree trunk, while each of these serve to form the object as complete.

The ways in which features of the presented object are shown in the mode of representation functions as the object's reconstructed aspects. The reconstructed aspects concern, for example, the scope of what may be changed regarding the object's properties, the likenesses between the presented objects to their natural correlate, and the relations obtaining between presented objects to their environment. However, the salience of these reconstructed aspects varies depending on each mode of representation. In literary works, the reconstructed aspects are limited by the contours of description. That is, the apple tree may be said to be tall, and may be given a stated height, but its referential designation by these measures whether real or imagined is not directly accessible. One cannot exactly see a tree's height with words so to speak. Likewise, with screens, the reconstructed aspects of objects in the image are shown as having similar general colours to the object referenced, although in fact what is displayed is a certain hue or mixture of red, green, and blue light, marking the original qualities as not identical nor purely accessible. The colours projected themselves are not strictly identical with the object referenced. While the actual tree's colours are conditions to itself, the colours of the tree's image are rays of light. Moreover, with the sense by which we have qualified screens as filters through processes of digitization, comparisons between natural areas of activity with their digitized substitutes can be drawn in terms of reconstructed aspects.

In qualifying presented objects and reconstructed aspects as the first two strata featured generally in different modes of representation, with slight differences between each mode, the strata of represented objectivities and immersion are discovered to be featured on screens uniquely. The represented objectivity of the literary work relies on statements of essence, thus-

appearance, and occurrence as three ways of propositions to illustrate a scenario by narration, for example. Whereas, images strictly speaking do not make claims. There nonetheless remains a represented objectivity on images by invoking sense impressions of the natural world. Ingarden explains the concept as "the intentionally projected states of affairs."[484] On this reading, what may be inferred is that the degree to which screens may cast a represented objectivity depends on how relations between natural states of affairs to their intentional reproduction can be obtained. In casting represented objectivities, especially for film, the first person perspective offered by a camera lens – for instance, come with a perspectival framing of the state of affairs assumed. This is what easily leads a viewer to be immersed to the represented objectivity on screen and neglect the naturally situated environment. To the degree that a viewer's understanding of the situation depicted on screen is both dependent on the content as well as in a concretizing (filling in) of places of indeterminacy, the viewer may be immersed to the world represented. Immersion occurs simultaneously with the process of concretization, as sensing a non-obstructed access to a world requires a comprehension (which is knowing what coincides to form a coherent unity) reached by filling in places of indeterminacy, so that a correspondence between the projected representation and the representations constructed by the perceiver are one and the same.

Through these occurrences on screen, the presented objects, reconstructed aspects, represented objectivities, and visual concretization and immersion each serve to identify screens as special relative objects of mediation with modes of existence characterized as heteronomous, derivative, and non-selfsufficient in what they display, intentional in what they filter, heterogeneous in their similarities to other artefacts, as well as representational on both ontological and phenomenological grounds.

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484 Ingarden. *The Literary Work of Art*, 190.

In concluding the fourth chapter, we find how Roman Ingarden's philosophy offers preliminary conceptual resources to explain in detail what things are by how they exist. To identify what screens are therefore becomes an investigation in the framework of his ontological-phenomenology. In particular, his concepts of the heteronomy of being, intentional objects, heterogeneous strata, and relations between ontology and phenomenology helps us in understanding how screens are displays, filters, tools, and representations, respectively. In seeking to determine exactly what screens are theoretical challenges arise owing to their unique nature. Screens are not simply reducible to single items such as computer monitors or smartphones, as various other artefacts have been referenced by the term's etymological origins. Screens are neither so easily conceived by their qualities. While some have noted first and foremost their quality of displaying, others have pointed to a counterpart, which is that of filtering. Meanwhile, some have pointed to the screen's similarities with other artefacts in the sense of their being tools. In these accounts there remain problems of identifying them as such. As an alternative solution, we may admit the screen's qualification in terms of the object's witnessing. This task has been set forth using the resources of phenomenology. The findings of my investigation suggest that the phenomenological and ontological works of Roman Ingarden serve to conceptually unify the screen. By reframing the line of inquiry into how screens exist rather than estimating claims of what they are and describing what is presented on them, we come to understand what is unique. In this endeavor, we arrive at the finding that screens are special objects of mediation. Specifically, screens participate in the strata of presented objects, reconstructed aspects, represented objectivities, and visual concretization and immersion through the modes of being of heteronomy, derivation, and non-selfsufficiency. There appears no other object quite the same.

CONCLUSION

The object of research presented in the dissertation was the screen *sui generis*. To figure how screens are identified as distinct, it was first necessary in Chapter I to locate the existing accounts of screens in varying literatures. Theories of screens were found to be non-uniform, ranging from what is their form of being, how they affect individuals and impact society, and what sort of technology they are. While philosophers of technology have produced works accounting for screen technologies (e.g., in film, cinema, video games, personal computers, mobile phones, etc.), there was found to be a lack of consensus in their approaches. A standing reason for this was that varied approaches in the literature treated screen contents rather than the screen itself. In my research, I discovered that there are different ways to treat screens with distinct qualities: as displays, as filters, or as tools serving various functions. I also argued that these ways are necessary to consider if screens as such are to be understood. First, accounts from which screens were considered displays included four aspects in which we may qualify them in this reading. These consisted of visual content, spatiotemporal content, propositional content as well as virtual and augmented content. These were otherwise compatible with readings of how screens display content in the forms of the photographic, the cinematic, the informative, and the immersive. While it was concluded that each aspect is necessary for the identification of screens, they are not sufficient as complete and final accounts, given another capacity for screens left excluded, being that of concealment. It was therefore the second treatment of screens as filters which served to fill in gaps left open by the previous account of displays. Here, screens as filters were investigated in their capacity to frame environments, serve as specific visual mediums, participate in distinct modal relations as well as be the relational products of digitization. While in both accounts of displays and filters, necessary elements to identify screens were discovered, there was still another way of qualifying them rendered important. This third account treated screens as tools. Screens were found conceivable as tools given the various means by which we may compare their functions, like displaying and filtering, to other artefacts through metaphors and analogies. These included comparisons of screens to windows, doors, mirrors, among other items. Yet, given how in these accounts there is an assumed basis for comparison, there still remained the difficulty of screens being identified as distinct from any and all other artefacts. For this reason, I argued that the correct means of qualifying what screens are required an analysis extending to the witnessing subject. This was the reason I turned to phenomenology.

In Chapter II, I introduced the phenomenology of screens with a Heideggerian-inspired project put forward by Lucas Introna and Fernando Ilharco. This approach seeks to explore how screens exist in the world using concepts from Martin Heidegger. While there were benefits to the authors' methods and application of phenomenology, I located shortcomings regarding concepts borrowed from Heidegger's philosophy. These gaps concerned further areas to account for the screen's mode of existence. It was found that Heidegger's approach to treating mediation as interaction set limits for screens as the object of research. While Heidegger's notion of mediation is more immediately linked with more tangible tools such as hammers, screens being intangible objects of mediation that nonetheless issue representations were found to be different. This challenge however, was put forward as resolvable by accounting for layers of representation using Roman Ingarden's philosophy. Another gap was found in the application of Heidegger's concept of being ready-to-hand to screens, since the concept was used for explaining physical tools, while screens are intangible items of the intellect and perception. Moreover, while Introna and Ilharco located two essential features to screens being "already-there-agreement" and "calling-to-attention," it was questioned whether these ultimately qualify screens as distinct, as we may tentatively reconsider these features being on items such as posters. Nonetheless, the authors' admission that there are various other means to incorporate phenomenological concepts to screen theory suggested the benefit of further research. My hypothesis was that it is the philosophy of Roman Ingarden that could remedy the indicated gaps of Introna and Ilharco's conception and at the same time give justice to the witnessing subject. This was the reason to put forward conceptual resources from Roman Ingarden's philosophy in Chapter III.

In Chapter III as a preliminary step to address screens holistically I discussed three Ingardenian concepts: heteronomy of being, intentional objects and heterogeneous strata. Ingarden's concept of the heteronomy of being was investigated as it explains how objects rely on other entities to produce content considered meaningful to the audience. Moreover, it is through the understanding of how objects may be qualified as heteronomous that we may come to know how a world and state of affairs may be illustrated or represented through dependence on various sources. The concept of intentional objects was considered as it explains how artefacts may be produced from various cognitive operations and thereby belong to separate modes of existence by being double-sided (i.e., relative to the mind on one side, and independent of the mind on the other) and indeterminate (i.e., not fully presented or presentable). The features of double-sidedness and indeterminacy were then explained as necessary for an object's being intentional. Here we were equipped with a prerequisite to see

how screens produce intentional objects such as a picture. The concept of heterogeneous strata was investigated, as it helps in identifying that which is uniform to specific kinds of intentional objects. While we specifically investigated the heterogeneous strata of literary works of art, we found that these strata are basic elements used to create an illustration for such work. As a result, the notion of heterogeneous strata for literary works served as a point of comparison with the strata for screens.

In Chapter IV, I investigated how conceptual resources from Roman Ingarden's philosophy answers the research question of identifying screens as such. I discovered that the four ways of qualifying screens as displays, as filters, as tools, and as representations, can be explained through Ingarden's concepts of the heteronomy of being, intentional objects, heterogeneous strata, and the relation between ontology and phenomenology, respectively. Relations of dependence or heteronomy for screens was attributed specifically with capacities for imagination in cognitive acts, comparable with reading and understanding fictions in literary works of art. From this concept, screens were conceived as displays on the grounds of being heteronomous entities presenting frames of reference other than the viewer's immediate own, while relying on cognitive acts. From the heteronomy of being to Ingarden's treatment of intentional objects, an investigation into how specific objects themselves may be qualified as intentional or otherwise purely intentional was considered with the sense of screens as filters taking an extended scope. Here it was discovered how both heteronomous and intentional objects, of the sort ascribable to literary works of art and film, bear places of indeterminacy with respect to what is not presented as regards content and form. This feature was then identified as being concurrent with the feature of concretization – which is the means by which one imagines how places of indeterminacy may be filled in. Moreover, concretization is attributed with the capacity to understand the nature of the contents presented since positing that which would fit to a given state of affairs or story requires a preliminary understanding of the content's unitary whole. It was then examined how concretization is a process that does not have to be solely linguistic (apropos reading fiction, for instance) but can also be perceptual (e.g., through vision), as evidenced by Genki Uemura's account of how perception can produce intentional objects of the Ingardenian sort through property instantiations – similar to concretization. After the initial steps of investigating Ingarden's account of distinct objects being heteronomous and intentional, a method of structuring such objects to locate their unique mode of existence was considered through Ingarden's concept of heterogeneous strata. While Ingarden ascribes four particular strata to literary works of art, he also briefly identified two strata for cinematic film being: presented objects and reconstructed aspects. However, in

admitting that presented objects and reconstructed aspects may be necessary for qualifying screens altogether, I found that further strata consisting of represented objectivities and visual concretization and immersion were needed to further specify the uniqueness of screens as such. In taking these four strata altogether as necessary and sufficient properties to identify screens, I also posited how screens are objects of mediation bearing the modes of existence of heteronomy, derivation, and non-selfsufficiency.

In accounting for experiences, the nature of perception plays a vital role. Screens being momentous instruments redefining perception itself have marked new paths for philosophy in considering how one's views are shaped. As there seems no other artefact with which we so easily have access to a world beyond where we are situated, the question becomes how and why this can be so. Screens in their capacity to appeal to the natural senses function as vanishing mediators between projected imagery and one's distinct perspective. Insofar as one may not be made aware of the means by which this occurrence is achieved, it may become more difficult to decipher how something is real or otherwise imaginary.

After considering areas for future research of my dissertation, some have exceeded the work's scope or posed limitations. Research areas open for investigation include, for example, how the empirical sciences may measure the recognition of objects in states of affairs on screen as opposed to in natural encounter. Or, for instance, there may be possible comparative studies to be made between human input to screen technologies and generative artificial intelligence using both fields of phenomenology and computer science, as relations of the two intersect with questions on whether appearances are sufficient to demonstrate and understand consciousness. In addition, the primary literature incorporated for the dissertation has been confined, for the most part, to what is available from Roman Ingarden's philosophy as published in the English language. Moreover, the extensive range of secondary sources drawing research on the topic of screen theory has been observed as unique to each field in both terminology and writing style. In light of these questions for further research, I contend that the object of investigation as crossing disciplines and languages suggests its universal need for inquiry.

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