

What Instances of Novels Are

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Abstract The consensus is that novels can be fully appreciated only through an experiential engagement with their well-formed instances. But what are the entities that serve as such instances? According to the orthodox view, these entities are primarily inscriptions—concrete texts written or printed on something or displayed on the screen of some electronic device. In this paper, I argue that this view is misguided, since (a) well-formed instances of a novel must manifest certain sonic properties, but (b) such properties cannot be manifested by inscriptions. As an alternative, I put forward the view that the entities that serve as well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements.

Keywords Instances of novels · Philosophy of literature · Ontology of literature · Metaphysics of art

Introduction

It is generally agreed that novels¹ can be fully appreciated only through an experiential engagement with their well-formed instances.^{2,3} But what sort of entities can play the role of such instances? According to the view accepted by an overwhelming majority of theorists, including Carroll (1998), Danto (1981), Davies (2010), Davies (2003), Goodman (1968), Howell (2002),

¹In this paper, by “novels,” I mean *readable* novels, or novels that can, in principle, be read aloud.

²The same can be said not just about novels but about artworks of any kind (paintings, sculptures, musical works, works of dance, etc.).

³Roughly, “a well-formed instance of an artwork” can be defined as “an entity that manifests all of the experienceable properties that must be experienced to properly appreciate this work.” A more accurate definition of “a well-formed instance of an artwork” is provided in Section 1.

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Lamarque (2009), Levinson (2011), Mag Uidhir (2013); Meskin and Robson (2010), Walters (2013), and Wollheim (1968), the paradigmatic, or most typical (though not the only), entities that play this role are *inscriptions*—concrete (usually physical) texts written or printed on something (say, paper, papyrus, or parchment) or displayed on the screen of some device (such as a computer or an e-reader).^{4,5}

My goal in this paper is to show that this view, which I will call “orthodox,” is misguided and provide an alternative. I begin, in Section 1, with a clarification of the notion of an instance of an artwork. Then, in Section 2, I explain why the orthodox view is unacceptable. In particular, I argue that if this view is correct, then inscriptions must be capable of manifesting certain sonic properties of novels; however, no inscription can manifest such properties. Next, in Section 3, I draw a distinction between non-visual novels, or novels that do not have any aesthetically relevant graphic elements, and visual novels, or novels that do have such elements, and argue that well-formed instances of non-visual novels are readings (i.e., sequences of particular external sounds generated as a result of reading the novels aloud), whereas well-formed instances of visual novels are sums of readings and graphic elements. In Section 4, I respond to possible objections. Finally, in Section 5, I discuss a number of implications of the view that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements, and suggest avenues for future research.

A remark concerning the scope of the new material presented in this essay. The core components of the essay are the thesis that the orthodox view is misguided, a particular argument in favor of this thesis, a particular account of what well-formed instances of novels are, and a particular argument in favor of this account. The thesis that the orthodox view is misguided has been defended before—expressly by Kivy (2006) and implicitly by Urmson (2004). However, no one, as far as I am aware, has advanced the essay’s argument in favor of this thesis. Also, to my knowledge, no one has ever put forward either of the other core components of the essay (the account of what well-formed instances of novels are and the argument in favor of this account).⁶ Given what has been said, the primary original contributions of the essay, I believe, are the

⁴ Although this view is accepted by an overwhelming majority of theorists, it is not accepted by all of them (thus, it is rejected by Kivy (2006) and Urmson (2004)).

⁵ Note that this view answers the question about the nature of *instances* of novels, not the question about the nature of novels themselves.

⁶ Accounts *similar* to the one presented in this paper have been put forward, however. According to one such account, advocated by Kivy (2006), well-formed instances of novels are readings and mental “voicings” (i.e., sequences of particular mental sounds, or sounds that are generated by means of imagination and can be “heard” “in one’s mind’s ear”). According to another account, implied by Urmson (2004)’s theory of literature *qua* a performing art, well-formed instances of novels are readings and certain experiences generated as a result of reading novels silently (unfortunately, Urmson does not clarify what exactly these experiences are). (It is worth noting that neither Kivy’s nor Urmson’s account can be accepted. First of all, according to both accounts, certain non-visual entities—readings and mental “voicings”/experiences generated as a result of reading novels silently—can be well-formed instances of all kinds of novels. However, as will be shown in Section 3, visual novels, or novels that involve aesthetically relevant graphic components, cannot be properly instanced by any non-visual entities. More importantly, both accounts imply that certain mental entities (mental “voicings” in the case of Kivy’s account and particular reading experiences in the case of Urmson’s account) can be well-formed instances of novels. However, as will be demonstrated in Section 3, there is good reason to consider this implication false.)

argument against the orthodox view, the account of what well-formed instances of novels are, and the argument in favor of this account.

Lastly, it is worth underlining that the main focus of this paper—the question “What sort of things are well-formed instances of novels?”—is not to be confused with the question “What sort of things are novels?” This latter question concerns the nature of novels. The former question, however, is concerned with the nature of *instances* of novels.

Defining a (Well-Formed) Instance of an Artwork

Before turning to the main questions of the paper—“Why is the orthodox view on the nature of well-formed instances of novels mistaken?” and “What view can be adopted instead?”—we first need to clarify what exactly is meant by “an instance of an artwork” and “a well-formed instance of an artwork.”

According to Davies (2010), there are two distinct senses of “an instance of an artwork”: the purely epistemic and the proveniential. In the purely epistemic sense, an instance (hereafter: an instance_e) of an artwork is anything that “makes manifest to receivers certain properties that bear experientially upon the appreciation of the work” (Davies 2010: 415), namely those experienceable properties that must be experienced to properly appreciate this work. Put otherwise,

[Instance_e] For all x , x is an instance_e of some artwork A if and only if x manifests certain experienceable properties⁷ that must be experienced to fully appreciate A .

Note that the only thing that matters for x 's being an instance_e of A is x 's manifesting the relevant experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate A . As long as x manifests such properties, it is an instance_e of A . Thus, both the original canvas of *Black Square* and its indiscernible counterpart⁸ that was created by someone completely unfamiliar with Kazimir Malevich's works are instances_e of *Black Square*. Likewise, both a correct recitation of the poem “To Friends at Home” and its indiscernible counterpart produced by someone who has never encountered R. L. Stevenson's poetry are instances_e of this poem.⁹

In the proveniential sense, an instance (hereafter: instance_p) of an artwork is an instance_e that “stand[s] in [a particular] kind of historical-intentional relation to the work's history of making” (Davies 2010: 414). In other words,

[Instance_p] For all x , x is an instance_p of some artwork A if and only if x (a) manifests certain experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully

⁷ An object manifests a property iff this property can be apprehended by means of directly perceiving this object.

⁸ Following Fisher (1995), I define “an indiscernible counterpart” as follows:

For all x and for all y , x is an indiscernible counterpart of y if and only if x and y share all manifest properties.

⁹ It is assumed that the original canvas of *Black Square* and the recitation of the poem “To Friends at Home” manifest the relevant experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate the corresponding works.

appreciate A and (b) stands in an appropriate historical-intentional relation to A 's history of making.

It is worth pointing out that what matters for x 's being an instance_p of A is not just x 's manifesting certain experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate A but also the relation x bears to A 's history of making. Thus, an indiscernible counterpart of *Black Square* that was created by someone unfamiliar with Malevich's works is not an instance_p of *Black Square*, since this counterpart does not stand in any historical-intentional relation to Malevich's creative activity. Similarly, an indiscernible counterpart of a recitation of the poem "To Friends at Home" produced by someone who has never encountered Stevenson's poetry is not an instance_p of this poem because this counterpart does not stand in any kind of historical-intentional relation to Stevenson's creative activity.

Is Davies's account of "an instance of an artwork" satisfactory? The correctness of any account that is aimed at clarifying the existent sense(s) of an expression depends mainly on whether this account reflects the actual use of this expression. Davies's account attempts to explicate the existent senses of the expression "instance of an artwork"; so it is correct if and only if it reflects the actual use of this expression. Does it reflect this use?

Note that the expression "instance of an artwork" (as well as related expressions: "well-formed instance of an artwork," "genuine instance of an artwork," "instance of a novel," etc.) is technical: It is used primarily by philosophers and is normally absent from ordinary, non-philosophical discourse. Thus, if you go to a bookshop and ask the salesman for an instance of *War and Peace*, he most likely will have a hard time trying to figure out what exactly you want. Similarly, many of those who are not familiar with philosophy will be puzzled if they hear you say that you have never listened to a well-formed instance of *The Rite of Spring*. So the question of whether Davies's account accords with the actual use of the expression "instance of an artwork" essentially boils down to the question of whether this account accords with the actual use of this expression by philosophers. Now, this latter question, I think, should be answered in the affirmative. Most philosophers, including, Currie (1989), Danto (1981), Davies (2003), Levinson (1980); Nannicelli (2013), and Wollheim (1968), use "instance of an artwork" in the proventional sense with regard to all artworks. At the same time, some use this expression in the purely epistemic sense with regard to at least some artworks. For example, Dodd (2000) uses it in this sense when he talks about instances of musical works, and Goodman and Elgin (1987) use it in this sense with regard to instances of notational artworks (such as literary and musical works).¹⁰

Thus, there is good reason to think that Davies's account reflects the actual use of the expression "instance of an artwork." Therefore, this account, I believe, can be regarded as acceptable.

Now, Davies's account can be elaborated further. Note that it does not specify whether an instance_{p/e} of an artwork is capable of manifesting *all* of the experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate this work. Can such an

¹⁰ At the same time, according to Goodman and Elgin (1987), non-notational (analog) artworks, such as etchings and paintings, have instances_p, not instances_e.

instance_{p/e} (in principle) manifest all such properties? There seems to be no reason to think otherwise. Furthermore, the consensus is that for most (though not all) artworks, there, in fact, existed, exist now, or will exist instances_{p/e} that manifest all the experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate these works. Thus, we are justified in adding to Davies's account the definition of a *well-formed* instance_{p/e} of an artwork¹¹:

[Well-formed instance_{p/e}] For any x , x is a well-formed instance_{p/e} of some artwork A if and only if x (a) is an instance_{p/e} of A and (b) manifests all of the experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate A .

As can be noticed, the only difference between well-formed instances_{p/e} of an artwork and instances_{p/e} of an artwork is that well-formed instances_{p/e} manifest *all* of the experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate the work, whereas instances_{p/e} manifest *certain* experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate the work. In light of this, the natural question arises: Are the class of instances_{p/e} and the class of well-formed instances_{p/e} coextensive? Put otherwise, are all instances_{p/e} well-formed? Consider a slightly damaged print of a photograph or a musical performance that contains one incorrect note. Clearly, neither the performance nor the print provide access to *all* of those manifest properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate the corresponding works. But, at the same time, both the print and the performance provide access to a significant set of such properties. As a result, it seems reasonable to think that both of them can be (a) non-well-formed instances_e and—assuming that each of them can stand in an appropriate historical-intentional relation to the history of making of the corresponding work—(b) non-well-formed instances_p. And, in fact, most philosophers of art do think so. Given this, we can, I think, answer the above question in the negative: The class of instances_{p/e} is not exhausted by well-formed instances_{p/e}. (The argument to be formulated in the following sections does not depend on the possibility of non-well-formed instances_{p/e}. If, for some reason, the reader does not accept the view that non-well-formed instances_{p/e} are possible, she may well adopt the opposite view.)

Against the Orthodox View

Having clarified the expressions “instance of an artwork” and “well-formed instance of an artwork,” let us now address the question of why the orthodox view on the nature of well-formed instances of novels is mistaken. As is clear from the previous section, manifesting all the experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate an artwork is a necessary condition for being a well-formed instance¹² of this work. Recall now that according to the orthodox view, inscriptions are well-formed instances of novels. So if this view is correct, inscriptions must be able to manifest all of

¹¹ This kind of instance_{p/e} can also be characterized as “strict,” or “genuine,” or “perfect,” or “ideal.”

¹² *Terminological note:* If it is not specified whether the expression “instance” is used in the purely epistemic or the proveniential sense, then this expression can be used in either of these senses. Also, it is assumed that, regardless of whether “instance” is used in the purely epistemic or the proveniential sense, it is used in *one and the same* sense throughout the relevant passage.

the experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate the corresponding novels. In reality, however, no inscription is capable of manifesting *all* such properties. The reason for this is that there is (at least) one kind of experiential property that must be experienced to fully appreciate a novel but, at the same time, cannot be made manifest by any inscription: the sonic properties of the novel, or, in other words, the properties related to how the novel sounds.¹³ Clearly, the thesis that the sonic properties of a novel must be experienced to fully appreciate this novel but cannot be manifested by inscriptions is far from obvious and, therefore, requires substantiation. To substantiate it, we must show (a) that the sonic properties of a novel cannot be manifested by inscriptions and (b) that such properties must be experienced to fully appreciate this novel.

Let us first show that the sonic properties of a novel cannot be manifested by inscriptions. An entity x manifests some property P if and only if P is apprehensible by directly perceiving x . So if sonic properties can be manifested by an inscription, then they must be apprehensible by directly perceiving it. But can they, in fact, be apprehended in such a way? For a property to be apprehensible by directly perceiving an inscription, this property must be apprehensible by applying *some* sensory faculty to this inscription. What is this faculty, in the case of sonic properties? Presumably, it can be only the faculty of hearing, for no other faculty can be used to adequately grasp sonic properties when it is directly applied to an inscription. So sonic properties can be apprehended by directly perceiving an inscription only if they can be apprehended through *hearing* it. However, an inscription (as opposed to a reading of it) cannot be heard. The reason for this is that (a) (strictly speaking) only sounds can be heard, but (b) an inscription is not a sound (according to our definition, it is a concrete text usually written or printed on something or exhibited on the screen of some electronic device).¹⁴ Thus, sonic properties cannot be apprehended by directly perceiving an inscription and so cannot be manifested by it.

One might object as follows: “The foregoing argument assumes that the only faculty that can be used to adequately grasp sonic properties by means of a direct application of this faculty to an inscription is the faculty of hearing. But this assumption is false, since, in fact, there is another faculty that can be used this way, namely a particular subspecies of the faculty of imagination—the faculty of mental ‘hearing.’”¹⁵ However, this objection does not work. It states that the faculty of mental “hearing” can be directly applied to inscriptions. But, in fact, this faculty is not directly applicable to them. Recall that inscriptions are, by definition, concrete. So, since any concrete entity is either physical (spatiotemporal) or mental, every inscription is either physical or mental.¹⁶ Can the faculty of mental “hearing” be directly applied to a physical inscription? No. In order for this faculty to be directly applicable to a physical inscription, it must be possible to mentally “hear” such an inscription. However, (strictly speaking) no

¹³ Examples of sonic properties are “being sonorous,” “being mellifluous,” “having such and such rhythm,” and “sounding a particular way.”

¹⁴ Surely we can meaningfully say that we hear an inscription (for example, a printed copy of *Pride and Prejudice*). But when we say this, we do not mean that we literally hear *it*; what we mean is that we hear a *reading* of it.

¹⁵ Thanks to an anonymous referee for pressing this objection.

¹⁶ It is safe to assume that all existent inscriptions of novels are physical. The argument, however, does not depend on this assumption.

physical object (as opposed to a mental object—such as an imaginary sound or a sequence of imaginary sounds) can be *mentally* “heard.” Can the faculty of mental “hearing” be directly applied to a mental inscription? Again, the answer is “No.” The faculty of mental “hearing” is directly applicable to a mental inscription only if the latter can be mentally “heard.” However, a mental inscription cannot be mentally “heard,” since (a) such an inscription cannot be a mental *sound* (according to our definition, it can only be a mental *text*—a sequence of written or printed symbols), but (b) (strictly speaking) only mental sounds can be mentally “heard.” Thus, the faculty of mental “hearing” cannot be directly applied to physical inscriptions; nor can it be directly applied to those inscriptions that are mental. But then, given that any inscription is either physical or mental, this faculty cannot be directly applied to any inscriptions whatsoever.

A proponent of the objection being discussed could respond as follows: “The foregoing critique implies that inscriptions of novels do not involve any mental sounds. But this implication is false. As noted by Margolis (1977), among others, an inscription *embodies* the novel. Meanwhile, the novel is at least partly constituted by mental sounds. Thus, inscriptions do, in fact, involve mental sounds.”¹⁷ This response does not work for two reasons. First, it is invalid. It assumes that the fact that the relevant mental sounds, being part of the novel, are embodied by the inscription entails that these sounds are part of this inscription. However, this assumption is incorrect. In order for it to be correct, being embodied by *x* must imply being part of *x*. But according to the notion of embodiment (as it is understood by Margolis), an object can be embodied by *x* without being part of *x*.^{18,19}

Second, the response is based on the claim that inscriptions can involve mental sounds. However, this claim cannot be true—simply by virtue of the fact that it violates our definition of “an inscription.” According to this definition, inscriptions are texts, and texts—at least, as they are understood in this paper—are strings of (written or printed) symbols, not strings of sounds.²⁰

So we have established that the sonic properties of a novel cannot be manifested by inscriptions. Before proceeding further, it is worth emphasizing two things. First, although an inscription does not manifest sonic properties, it can be characterized as having such properties in some non-manifesting way, for example, as *encoding* them—similar to how a musical score encodes the sonic properties of a musical work. Second, although sonic properties are not manifestable by inscriptions, some other properties are. Consider, for instance, visual properties. For these properties to be apprehensible by directly perceiving an inscription, they must be apprehensible by

¹⁷ Thanks to an anonymous referee for suggesting this potential reply by a proponent of the objection being discussed.

¹⁸ For Margolis’s definition of the concept of embodiment, see Margolis 1977: 47.

¹⁹ Note that this objection to the response does not imply that inscriptions cannot *embody* objects (such as novels). In fact, an inscription—as it is understood in this paper—is capable of embodiment, as long as the notion of embodiment does not presuppose that *x*’s being embodied by *y* entails that *x* is part of *y* or *y* is part of *x*.

²⁰ One might ask whether a mereological sum of an inscription and a particular mental sound sequence can be a well-formed instance of a novel. The answer to this question, I think, is “No.” As will be demonstrated in this section, an inscription *simpliciter* cannot be a well-formed instance of a novel. And in the following section, it will be explained why a mental sound sequence cannot be a well-formed instance of a novel. Meanwhile, if neither an inscription nor a mental sound sequence can be a well-formed instance of a novel, then clearly a mereological sum of them cannot be such an instance either.

seeing it. And they, doubtless, can be apprehended in this latter manner. So, since they are apprehensible by directly perceiving an inscription, they can be manifested by it.

Let us now show that the sonic properties of a novel must be experienced to fully appreciate it. Clearly, among the factors that determine the aesthetic value of a novel, the factor of how the novel sounds is not the most important. (Presumably, the most important factors pertain to the novel's content and structure.) But this should not lead us to think that the sonic dimension is completely irrelevant to the aesthetic value of a novel. Although this dimension is not the main determinant of the novel's aesthetic significance, it is, nevertheless, a determinant. One reason to think so comes from an observation of our professional literary community. Consider novelists. Many of them use sound techniques—such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhythm, etc.—in their writing, and presumably intentionally. Here are some examples of such use:

- **Alliteration:** “So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past” (F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*); “You may say that dear diligent Dexter gets carried away in his job...” (Jeff Lindsay, *Darkly Dreaming Dexter*); “... neither of these can feel *stranger* and *stronger* emotions than the man does, who for the first time finds himself pulling into the *charmed*, *churned* circle of the hunted sperm whale” (Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*).
- **Assonance:** “Lolita, light of my life, fire of my loins” (Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*); “And stepping softly with her air of blooded ruin about the glade in a frail agony of grace she trailed her rags through dust and ashes, circling the dead fire, the charred billets and chalk bones, the little calcined ribcage” (Cormac McCarthy, *Outer Dark*); “Perhaps tonight—after a month of waiting—would be the *night*” (J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*).
- **Consonance:** “An oblong puddle inset in the coarse asphalt...” (Vladimir Nabokov, *Bend Sinister*); “When he woke in the woods in the dark and the cold of the night...” (Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*); “A loud, echoing crack broke the sleepy silence like a gunshot...” (J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*).
- **Rhythm:** “Becky was always good to him, always amused, never angry” (William Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*); “With the first gray light he rose and left the boy sleeping and walked out to the road and squatted and studied the country to the south. Barren, silent, godless. He thought the month was October but he wasn't sure. He hadn't kept a calendar for years. They were moving south. There'd be no surviving another winter here” (Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*); “Then she took off the hank and looked me straight in the face, and very pleasant, and says, ‘Come on, now, what's your real name?’ ” (Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*).

Consider next literary critics. Although their primary focus is usually the plot of a novel, they sometimes attend to how the novel sounds. Here are a few quotes that illustrate the point:

- “[Stevenson's] writing... remains true to its musical principles. It is the result of trained ear and recognition of language as a conscious instrument...” (Swinerton 1915: 87).
- “In Twain's own terms, Cooper actually *is* a word-musician; he does create a sound in his prose that we cannot ignore...” (Kowalewski 1993: 72).

- "...the opening pages of *A Farewell to Arms* do merge a realist aesthetic with a valorization of form and the musical aspects of language that one might expect of a Mallarmé prose poem" (Eby 2013: 177).
- "All readers have been affected by Fitzgerald's style, for Fitzgerald was marvelously sensitive to the sounds and cadences of language" (Eble 1985: 89).
- "From youth, Truman Capote was a master of literary style, writing with a true sense of the sound, rhythm and texture of language, with a feel for trenchant detail and metaphor" (Hicks 2009: 94).

Finally, it is not uncommon for literary theorists to stress the importance of sonic elements in prose. Thus, according to Aristotle, "the form of a prose composition" should not be "destitute of rhythm" (Aristotle 2010: 139) Gustave Flaubert notes that "a good prose sentence must be like a good line of verse, unchangeable, as rhythmic, as sonorous" (Llosa 1987: 219) And according to R. L. Stevenson:

In all ideal and material points, literature, being a representative art, must look for analogies to painting and the like; but in what is technical and executive, being a temporal art, it must seek for them in music. Each phrase of each sentence, like an air or a recitative in music, should be so artfully compounded out of long and short, out of accented and unaccented, as to gratify the sensual ear. And of this the ear is the sole judge. (Stevenson 2011: 9–10)

So our professional literary community emphasizes the sonic aspect of novels: Novelists endow their texts with certain sonic properties; literary critics take into account the sound of novels in their aesthetic evaluations; finally, literary theorists stress the importance of sound in literary prose. But why would our professional literary community emphasize this aspect if the latter were irrelevant to the aesthetic value of novels? The very fact of such an emphasis suggests that the aesthetic value of a novel depends, in part, on how the novel sounds.

Here, one might object that there is an analogous reason against the view that the sound of a novel is aesthetically important, namely this: Most ordinary readers do not, in fact, pay attention to the sonic aspect of the novels they read. This reason, however, has much less credibility than the above-mentioned reason in favor of the foregoing view. As is generally agreed, what is done/said by specialists is a lot more likely to be correct than what is done/said by non-specialists.²¹ Novelists, literary critics, and theorists are professionally involved in literary practices and, hence, can be considered specialists in literature. At the same time, it is clear that ordinary readers are non-specialists in literature. So if the aforementioned view is correct—and there seems to be nothing to suggest the opposite—novelists, as well as literary critics and theorists, are, most likely, right in stressing the importance of the sonic properties of a novel, whereas ordinary readers are, most likely, wrong in disregarding these properties.

Thus, that the professional literary community emphasizes the sonic aspect of novels provides a significant reason to believe that the sound of a novel is a determinant of this novel's aesthetic value. This is, however, not the only reason to believe so. Another reason can be presented, in its most general form, as follows. Take any standard

²¹ I assume here that the specialists and non-specialists are trustworthy.

novel—a novel that has a (meaningful) text and perhaps some graphic elements. It seems plausible to suppose that this novel contains a sentence/set of sentences S_1 with aesthetic value V_1 and that there is a paraphrase of S_1 — S_2 —such that:

- a. From a competent speaker's perspective, S_2 seems as natural (or “normal”) as S_1 .²² (Put otherwise, when S_2 is encountered by a competent speaker, the latter does not have thoughts like “While we say S_1 , we do not normally say S_2 ” or “It would be odd to say S_2 , as opposed to S_1 .”)
- b. S_2 means the same or almost the same as S_1 .
- c. S_2 does not differ from S_1 with regard to the structure-based difficulty of comprehension.²³
- d. S_2 has an aesthetic value, V_2 , that is noticeably different from V_1 .

Now, the question arises: How can (d) be explained? That is, what is responsible for the fact that S_1 and S_2 have different aesthetic values (V_1 and V_2 , respectively)? It is not the difference in how natural S_1 and S_2 appear to a competent speaker, for, by assumption, they both appear to her equally natural. It is not the difference in the meanings of S_1 and S_2 , since, by assumption, both S_1 and S_2 mean the same or almost the same. It is not the difference between the structure-based difficulty of comprehending S_1 and the structure-based difficulty of comprehending S_2 because, by assumption, comprehending S_1 and S_2 is equally difficult/easy. And, surely, it is not the difference in how S_1 and S_2 look.²⁴ What is responsible for the aesthetic difference between S_1 and S_2 is the difference in their sound. In other words, the reason why S_1 and S_2 have different aesthetic values is that S_1 and S_2 have different sonic properties. But then the sonic properties of S_1 are relevant to its aesthetic value (for, otherwise, the aesthetic value of S_1 would be independent of the sonic properties of S_1 , and, hence, no difference in sonic properties would explain why S_1 is aesthetically different from S_2 or some other set of sentences). Meanwhile, if this is so, then, since S_1 is an essential part of the novel being discussed, these properties are also relevant to the aesthetic value of this novel. Call this “the Paraphrasability Argument.”

Let us consider some possible applications of the Paraphrasability Argument. Take, for example, Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*. This novel begins with the sentence:

S_1 : “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of

²² Here is an example of sentences, one of which (S_k) seems less natural, from a competent speaker's viewpoint, than the other (S_j):

S_j : John picked up his wallet.

S_k : John picked up John's wallet. [It is assumed that all of the occurrences of “John” refer to the same individual.]

²³ Here is an example of sentences that can be said to differ with regard to the structure-based difficulty of comprehension:

G_j : “My first kiss will always be recalled by me as how my romance with Shayna was begun” (King 2000: 117).

G_k : “My romance with Shayna began with our first kiss. I'll never forget it” (ibid.).

Surely G_k is easier to comprehend than G_j . And this is, most likely, due to the fact that the structural complexity of G_k differs from the structural complexity of G_j .

²⁴ I assume that any paraphrase is typeset with the same font as the original sentence.

incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...” (Dickens 1902: 3).

Compare this sentence with its possible paraphrase:

P_t : It was the best of times, the worst of times, the age of wisdom, the age of foolishness, the epoch of belief, the epoch of incredulity, the season of Light, the season of Darkness, the spring of hope, the winter of despair....

From an intuitive viewpoint, P_t differs aesthetically from S_t . How can we account for this difference? Obviously, we cannot explain it by saying that the sentences just look different. And we cannot explain it by saying that S_t and P_t are different in meaning, for the meaning of both S_t and P_t is the same. Can we explain the aesthetic difference between S_t and P_t by saying that the structure-based difficulty of comprehending S_t and the structure-based difficulty of comprehending P_t are different? No. Although S_t and P_t have different structural complexity, the difficulty of comprehending each of them is similar: comprehending S_t is not more difficult than comprehending P_t , and comprehending P_t is not more difficult than comprehending S_t . Finally, we cannot explain the aesthetic difference between S_t and P_t by saying that from a competent speaker’s viewpoint, P_t/S_t seems less natural than S_t/P_t , since from this viewpoint, P_t and S_t are equally natural. As a result, it appears that the best way to explain the aesthetic difference between S_t and P_t is by appealing to the difference in their sonic properties. Indeed, because of the lack of a particular rhythm, P_t does not sound as good as S_t ; P_t , one might say, is less gratifying to the ear than S_t . But if this is so, if the aesthetic difference between S_t and P_t is to be explained in terms of their sonic properties, then the aesthetic value of S_t and, hence, of *A Tale of Two Cities* depends on these properties.

Here is another application of the Paraphrasability Argument. J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* contains the following set of sentences:

S_h : “Mr. Dursley stopped dead. Fear flooded him. He looked back at the whisperers as if he wanted to say something to them...” (Rowling 2004: 9).

Compare this with the following paraphrase:

P_h : Mr. Dursley stopped dead, and fear flooded him, and he looked back at the whisperers as if he wanted to say something to the whisperers....

Intuitively, there is an aesthetic difference between S_h and P_h .²⁵ As in the previous case, this difference does not arise from the difference in the meanings of S_h and P_h (they, doubtless, express the same thought), or from the difference in how natural S_h and P_h appear to a competent speaker, or from the difference in how difficult it is to comprehend S_h and P_h , due to their structural complexity, or from the difference in their visual properties; it arises from the difference in how S_h and P_h sound. But if S_h is aesthetically different from P_h by virtue of having certain sonic properties, then these

²⁵ In this case, unlike the previous case, it may be less clear which of the sentences is preferable, from an aesthetic viewpoint.

properties are important for the aesthetic value of S_h and, therefore, for the aesthetic value of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*.

Similarly, the Paraphrasability Argument can be applied to any other standard novel (i.e., a novel that contains a (meaningful) text and perhaps some graphic elements). This, of course, requires us to assume that *any* such novel contains a sentence or set of sentences for which there is a paraphrase that (a) seems equally natural, from a competent speaker's perspective, (b) has a similar structure-based difficulty of understanding, (c) means the same or almost the same, but (d) possesses a different aesthetic value. But this assumption does not strike me as implausible. On the contrary, I think it is correct. I am not aware of any novel that does not contain a sentence or set of sentences for which there could be no such paraphrase.

Thus, the thesis that the sonic aspect of novels is relevant to their aesthetic value is supported by the Paraphrasability Argument and the fact that our professional literary community emphasizes this aspect. This, I believe, is sufficient to show that this thesis is true. But if this is so, then a complete appreciation of a novel is impossible without an experiential engagement with at least some of the sonic properties of this novel. For, since the sonic aspect of novels is relevant to their aesthetic value, the aesthetic value of a novel is, in part, constituted by the novel's sonic properties. But then we cannot fully appreciate the aesthetic value of a novel without appreciating the novel's sonic properties. Meanwhile, to fully appreciate a novel, we must fully appreciate its aesthetic value. Thus, we cannot fully appreciate a novel without appreciating its sonic properties. But to correctly appreciate the sonic properties of a novel, we must experience them (clearly, appreciating them solely by means of a description cannot enable us to correctly appreciate them—similar to how appreciating the sonic properties of a musical work through a mere description is insufficient for a correct appreciation). As a result, we cannot fully appreciate a novel without experiencing its sonic properties.²⁶

So we have established that the sonic properties of a novel (a) must be experienced to fully appreciate this novel but (b) cannot be manifested by any inscription. Meanwhile, as mentioned earlier, to be a well-formed instance of a novel, an inscription must be capable of manifesting *all* of the experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate this novel. So inscriptions cannot be well-formed instances of novels. The orthodox view fails.

The Nature of Instances of Novels

But what is then the correct view? What are the entities that serve as well-formed instances of novels?

²⁶ Note that this, by itself, does not entail that those who do not hear the physical sound of a novel—such as those who read silently—cannot experience the novel's sonic properties and, hence, cannot fully appreciate this novel. Suppose that to fully appreciate a novel, it is necessary to appreciate the novel's sonic properties. Suppose also that these properties can be manifested not only by physical sound but also by mental sound, or sound generated by means of imagination. In this case, those who do not hear the physical sound of the novel may well experience the novel's sonic properties by imagining and attending to the novel's "sounding" and, hence, can fully appreciate this novel. (That the thesis that we must experience the sonic properties of a novel to fully appreciate this novel does not, by itself, *entail* that we cannot fully appreciate this novel without hearing certain physical sounds does not mean that we can fully appreciate a novel without hearing such sounds. In fact, in Section 3, I argue that a full appreciation of a novel requires listening to the physical sound of this novel.)

Let us first clarify what manifest properties must be experienced to fully appreciate a novel. There is no doubt that to fully appreciate it, we must experience the properties that enable us to grasp its semantic content. Furthermore, as demonstrated in the previous section, a novel cannot be fully appreciated without an experiential engagement with its sonic properties. Now, what about visual properties? Is it necessary to experience any such properties to correctly appreciate a novel? An answer to this question depends on what kind of novel we have in mind. Some novels—such as Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, Leo Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*, Honoré de Balzac’s *Illusions perdues*, and John Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath*—do not contain any aesthetically relevant graphic elements (drawings, diagrams, maps, photographs, etc.). As a result, experiencing any visual properties is not necessary to correctly appreciate such novels.²⁷ At the same time, there are novels that have visual components relevant from an aesthetic viewpoint. Such novels are, for example, Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code*, which involves pictures of certain unreadable symbols; Mark Z. Danielewski’s *House of Leaves*, which includes words printed in blue and purple; Kurt Vonnegut’s *Breakfast of Champions*, which contains numerous drawings of things like the yin-yang symbol, female underpants, and Eliot Rosewater’s handwriting; R. L. Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*, which includes a map of Treasure Island drawn by the author; and W. G. Sebald’s *Schwindel. Gefühl*, which incorporates photographs, maps, and drawings.²⁸ Clearly, to fully appreciate novels of this kind, we must experientially engage with certain visual properties.

Taking into account what has been said, we can divide all novels into two kinds:

- **Non-visual novels**, or novels that can be correctly appreciated only through an experiential engagement with entities capable of manifesting certain sonic properties and properties that enable the grasping of semantic content; and
- **Visual novels**, or novels that can be correctly appreciated only through an experiential engagement with entities capable of manifesting certain sonic properties, properties that enable the grasping of semantic content, and certain visual properties.

Let us now consider what entities serve as well-formed instances of *non-visual* novels. In my view, the best candidates for the role of such entities are *readings*—sequences of particular external sounds generated as a result of reading aloud.²⁹ Surely readings, thus understood, are capable of manifesting the sonic properties and the properties that enable to grasp the semantic content. Meanwhile, only these properties

²⁷ One might object that to fully appreciate a novel that does not have aesthetically relevant graphic elements, we must experience certain visual properties, since we must *see* its text. However, this objection does not work. Seeing the text of a novel that does not have aesthetically relevant graphic elements is not necessary to fully appreciate this novel. Suppose, for instance, that we do not have visual access to the text of some such novel, say, *Pride and Prejudice*. In this case, we can still fully appreciate this novel—for example, by means of listening to a reading of it.

²⁸ If the so-called “graphic novels”—such as Arnold Drake’s and Leslie Waller’s *It Rhymes with Lust*, Gil Kane’s *Blackmark*, and Art Spiegelman’s *Maus*—are genuine novels, then they are also examples of novels with aesthetically relevant visual components. (Note, however, the question of whether “graphic novels”—which are, essentially, long comics—are, in fact, novels or even a form of literature is controversial.)

²⁹ Note that the sense of “a reading” specified here differs from the two common senses of this word: the sense according to which a reading is an act of extracting meanings from syntactic sequences and the sense according to which “a reading” is synonymous with “an interpretation.” (In the latter sense, “reading” is used, for example, in the sentence “Two literary critics have different readings of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*.”)

must be experienced to fully appreciate a non-visual novel. As a result, readings are capable of manifesting all the experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate such a novel. Furthermore, readings can stand in appropriate historical-intentional relations to the compositional activity of the authors of the corresponding non-visual novels. Thus, on both the purely epistemic and the proveniential accounts of the expression “well-formed instance of an artwork,” readings can be regarded as well-formed instances of non-visual novels.

One might suggest that, besides readings, there is another class of entities that can serve as well-formed instances of novels—namely, *mental “voicings,”* or sequences of particular mental sounds (i.e., sounds produced “in one’s mind” with the help of imagination or some other cognitive faculty). Is this suggestion acceptable? To be well-formed instances of novels, mental “voicings” must be capable of manifesting the sonic properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate these novels. There is little doubt that such “voicings” can manifest *some* properties. (Arguably, at least some properties of a mental “voicing” can be apprehended by directly perceiving it. Meanwhile, according to the definition provided in Section 2, if a property is apprehensible by directly perceiving x , then x manifests this property.) However, it is questionable whether mental “voicings” can manifest *the sonic properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate the corresponding novels.* An essential characteristic of these properties is the possession of a particular degree of intensity or “vividness”—the degree similar to the one possessed by sonic properties that are manifested by means of reading aloud. However, properties manifested through mental “voicings” seem to lack this characteristic. The degree of “vividness” of these properties is generally much lower than the degree of “vividness” of sonic properties manifested through reading aloud. As a result, there is reason to regard mental “voicings” as incapable of manifesting the sonic properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate novels. Meanwhile, if such “voicings” are incapable of that, then, clearly, they cannot serve as well-formed instances of novels.³⁰

Before proceeding further, it is worth pointing out that treating readings as well-formed instances of non-visual novels does not give us reason to think that “the lookings at a picture and the listenings to a performance” (Goodman 1968: 114) are well-formed instances of painting and music, respectively. To explain why this is so, we first need to clarify what is meant by “a looking” and “a listening.” Both of these expressions can be used in either of the two senses. In one of these senses, “a looking” and “a listening” refer to particular acts: the act of looking and the act of listening, respectively; in the other sense, they refer to particular kinds of experience: the experience of looking at something and the experience of listening to something, respectively. Suppose that “a looking” and “a listening” are used in the first sense. Then the lookings at a painting and the listenings to a performance are particular acts. However, such acts, obviously, do not manifest the experienceable properties bearing on the appreciation of the corresponding works and, hence, the experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate these works. So, understood in this sense, neither the lookings nor the hearings can be well-formed instances of paintings and musical works, respectively. Suppose next that “a looking” and “a listening” are

³⁰ Thanks to an anonymous referee for suggesting this objection to the view that mental “voicings” can be well-formed instances of novels.

used in the second sense. In this case, the lookings at a painting and the listenings to a performance are particular perceptual or quasi-perceptual (imaginary) experiences, namely the experiences of looking at a painting and of listening to a performance, respectively. However, such experiences do not manifest the properties of the objects of which they are experiences. Thus, when you are looking at a black painting, the experience that you get—the experience of this painting—is not itself black and, hence, does not manifest the property of blackness (what manifests this property is the painting). Similarly, when you hear a particular sound, the experience that you get—the experience of this sound—does not emit any sound and so does not manifest the property of sounding a particular way (it is the sound that manifests this property). Thus, understood as experiences, neither the lookings at a painting nor the listenings to a performance manifest the experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate the corresponding works, and so neither the lookings nor the listenings can be well-formed instances of paintings and musical works, respectively.

Let us now clarify what entities serve as well-formed instances of *visual* novels. Clearly, readings *simpliciter* cannot be such entities. The manifest properties relevant to the aesthetic value of visual novels include certain visual properties. But readings, being essentially non-visual, cannot manifest such properties. What are then the entities that serve as well-formed instances of such novels? I believe that the best candidates for the role of these entities are (mereological) *sums of readings and all those graphic elements that are relevant to the aesthetic value of visual novels*—for example, pictures of certain unreadable singular symbols and sequences of symbols, in the case of *The Da Vinci Code*; words printed in blue and purple, in the case of *House of Leaves*; a drawing of the map of Treasure Island, in the case of *Treasure Island*; pictures of things like the yin-yang symbol, female underpants, Eliot Rosewater’s handwriting, in the case of *Breakfast of Champions*; and photographs, maps, and drawings, in the case of *Schwindel. Gefühl*. There is no doubt that such sums can manifest all of the experiential properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate visual novels, namely the properties that enable to grasp the semantic content, the sonic properties, and certain visual properties. Since these sums contain readings, they can manifest both the sonic properties and the properties that enable to apprehend the semantic content. And because these sums have certain graphic elements, they can manifest the aesthetically relevant visual properties. Furthermore, sums of readings and graphic elements can stand in appropriate historical-intentional relations to the creative activity of the authors of novels. As a result, regardless of whether we use the expression “well-formed instance of an artwork” in the purely epistemic or proveniential sense, sums of readings and graphic elements can be viewed as well-formed instances of visual novels.

Before concluding this section, it is worth making two remarks concerning the view that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements. First, although this view has a rather limited scope (it applies only to novels), it can be extended to include other textual entities with aesthetically important sonic elements. The most obvious candidates for such inclusion are poems and short stories. Other possible candidates are speeches (for example, Cicero’s Catilinarian Orations and Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream”), newspaper and magazine articles, pamphlets, letters, and any other textual entities that are subject to aesthetic appreciation. Furthermore, assuming that the term “reading” denotes any verbal “soundings,” the view being

discussed can also be extended to cover purely vocal songs (i.e., songs that do not involve music).^{31,32}

Second, the view that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements naturally invites the question: What makes a reading *a reading of a given novel*? This question is, doubtless, important. Despite this, however, I will not address it—for two reasons. First, a satisfactory answer to it would require an investigation that, given space limitations, is beyond the scope of this paper. Second, answering this question here is unnecessary, since the truth of the theses put forward in this paper—including the thesis that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements—does not depend on whether we know what makes a reading a reading of a given novel.³³ Before proceeding further, however, I would like to mention three important constraints on any satisfactory answer to the question posed above. First, any such answer must be such that according to it, to be a reading of a given novel, a reading must manifest the text of this novel without omitting important parts of this text or adding extraneous elements. Next, any satisfactory answer must entail that a reading is a reading of a particular novel only if it follows the norms of pronunciation prescribed by the linguistic context of the novel. Finally, any satisfactory answer must allow for some phonetic variability between readings of the same novel.³⁴

Some Objections

Let us now consider potential objections to the view that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements. One of these objections is as follows: “Suppose there is a manuscript that manifests the text of some novel *L*. Suppose also that this manuscript has never been read aloud. Then the view that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements entails that there are no well-formed instances of *L*. But this entailment seems wrong.

³¹ Thanks to an anonymous referee for pointing out this potential way of extending the view that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements.

³² If a song involves music, then neither readings (understood in the broad sense—as any verbal “soundings”) nor sums of readings and graphic elements can be well-formed instances of this song, for neither the readings nor the sums are capable of manifesting certain musical properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate it. Presumably, the entities that can serve as such instances are sums of readings and musical performances (in the case of songs without any aesthetically relevant visual elements) and sums of readings, visual elements, and musical performances (in the case of songs that have aesthetically relevant visual elements).

³³ If the truth of the thesis that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements depended on whether we know what makes a reading a reading of a given novel, then, by analogy, the truth of the thesis that well-formed instances of musical works are performances would depend on whether we know what makes a performance a performance of a given musical work. But the latter kind of dependence does not hold. For, if it did, we would have to question the thesis that well-formed instances of musical works are performances—given the fact that there is no generally accepted theoretic answer to the question of what makes a performance a performance of a given musical work. But, of course, we do not want to question this thesis. (Surely musical works are properly instanced by performances.)

³⁴ Suppose an answer does not allow for this. Then according to this answer, only sonically identical readings can be readings of the same novel. But this is too restrictive. Surely we would like to regard certain appropriate readings with minor phonetic differences (such as slight differences in intonation or in pronouncing [s] and [z]) as readings of the same novel.

For, if there are no well-formed instances of L , then L itself does not exist. But, intuitively, L does exist—it is embodied or ‘contained’ in the manuscript.” This objection assumes that a novel comes into existence only if its first well-formed instance comes into existence. Must this assumption be true? There seems to be no real reason to think so. Moreover, parallel assumptions with regard to some other artworks are generally rejected. Thus, it is widely agreed that works of classical music come into existence when their scores are created, and not when their first well-formed instances (performances) are produced. Similarly, analog photographs are generally believed to come into existence when their film is exposed to light, and not when they are instanced via printing. Given what has been said, the assumption that a novel comes into existence only when its first well-formed instance comes into existence can, I think, be rejected.

Here is another objection: “Imagine a novel M that is composed entirely of meaningful but unpronounceable strings of characters and, as a result, cannot be read aloud. According to the view that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements, no well-formed instance of M is possible. But surely M can have well-formed instances. So the mentioned view is false.” The objection assumes that unreadable novels fall under the view that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements. But this assumption is false. As mentioned earlier,³⁵ in this paper, the term “a novel” is restricted to readable novels, or novels that can be read aloud. And so the view that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements applies only to readable novels.³⁶

Another objection can be formulated as follows: “Suppose there is a novel N that is written in some archaic language. Suppose also that no one who reads N aloud pronounces all of its words correctly. Then, according to the view that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements, there are no well-formed instances of N . Meanwhile, if there are no such instances, then we are unable to appreciate N . However, this consequence seems mistaken.” According to this objection, the fact that there are no well-formed instances of a novel implies that this novel is completely inaccessible to our appreciation. But this implication is false. The absence of well-formed instances of a novel does not necessarily preclude us from appreciating this novel. Of course, in this case, we will not be able to appreciate the novel *completely*. However, if there is a non-well-formed instance of it (say, a somewhat incorrect reading of it), we will be able to appreciate it *partially*.

Consider next the following objection: “When we apprehend epistolary novels (such as Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa*, Fanny Burney’s *Evelina*, and Thornton Wilder’s *The Ides of March*), it is reasonable to assume that we are supposed to imagine ourselves apprehending letters which were not intended to be read aloud. But if this is so, then

³⁵ See Footnote 1.

³⁶ One might ask: What are then the entities that serve as well-formed instances of unreadable novels? To my mind, the best candidates for the role of such entities are inscriptions. Presumably in the case of unreadable novels, the only relevant experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate such novels are the properties concerned with the meaning of these novels and perhaps certain visual properties. So to be well-formed instances of unreadable novels, entities must be capable of manifesting both kinds of properties. And inscriptions, doubtless, are capable of that. Furthermore, inscriptions can stand in appropriate intentional-historical relations to the history of making of these novels. Thus, in the case of unreadable novels, on both the proveniential and the purely epistemic accounts, inscriptions can be regarded as well-formed instances.

there is good reason to believe that the sonic dimension of such novels is irrelevant to their aesthetic appreciation, and, as a result, there seems to be no motivation to hold that their well-formed instances are identical to or incorporate readings.” The reason why letters are not supposed to be read aloud is that their content is not intended for anyone other than the reader, and not because their sonic properties are aesthetically irrelevant. So perhaps, when we apprehend epistolary novels, we should assume that we are supposed to imagine ourselves apprehending letters which were not intended to be read aloud *to anyone other than ourselves*. However—contrary to what the objection states—we do not have any reason to believe that when apprehending such novels, we should assume that we are supposed to imagine ourselves apprehending letters which were not intended to be read aloud *at all*.

A final objection goes as follows: “Suppose we listen to a reading of *War and Peace* in English. In this case, we cannot apprehend *War and Peace*, since we have access only to an instance of a *translation* of *War and Peace* (a particular English reading of it), and not to an instance of *War and Peace* (a particular Russian reading of it). However, this result seems wrong. Intuitively, when we listen to a reading of *War and Peace* in English, we can apprehend *War and Peace* itself, and not just its translation.” This objection implies that when we listen to a reading of *War and Peace* in translation, we can apprehend *War and Peace*. However, this implication is far from obvious. In my view, it is more reasonable to believe the opposite—that when we listen to a reading of *War and Peace* in translation, we can apprehend a translation of *War and Peace*, but not *War and Peace* itself. The reason for this is as follows. No translation preserves all of the sonic and semantic properties of *War and Peace*. Meanwhile, these properties are essential to the novel; they constitute what it is. As a result, assuming that the presence of all essential properties of a novel is required for the presence of this novel, no translation can provide access to *War and Peace*. But if this is so, then no one who apprehends *War and Peace* via a well-formed instance of its translation, in fact, apprehends *War and Peace*.^{37,38}

Concluding Remarks

In closing, it is worth highlighting some major consequences of the view that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements. First, if this view is true, then to fully appreciate a novel, one must listen to its reading—a particular sequence of sounds, which can be generated by the reader herself, or someone else, or some electronic device (such as a computer or an e-reader). As is generally agreed, to fully appreciate an artwork, we must experientially engage with its well-formed instance—something that manifests all the experienceable properties that must be experienced to fully appreciate this work. Now, according to the view being discussed, a well-formed instance of a novel either is identical to or incorporates

³⁷ This is not to say, of course, that by apprehending *War and Peace* via a well-formed instance of its translation, one cannot apprehend some relevant parts of *War and Peace*—for example, certain characters, meanings, and compositional elements.

³⁸ Note also that the objection being discussed applies equally to the orthodox view—the view that well-formed instances of novels are primarily inscriptions—and, hence, does not pose a *special* threat to the view that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements.

a reading. So if this view is true, then, given that to experientially engage with a reading, one must listen to it, a full appreciation of a novel requires listening to the novel's reading.

Second, the view that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements entails that a novel cannot be fully appreciated by means of silent reading. Suppose this view is true. Then, as shown above, to fully appreciate a novel, we must listen to its reading. However, silent reading does not involve the production of any physical sounds and, hence, does not enable us to listen to a reading. Thus, by reading a novel silently, we cannot fully appreciate it.

Third, combined with certain plausible assumptions, the view that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements has a particular implication for the fundamental ontology of novels—namely, that novels do not depend for their existence on their well-formed instances. Suppose this view is true. Then, since most novels have never been sounded out, most novels do not have well-formed instances. But if this is so, then the supposition that a novel exists only if at least one of its well-formed instances exists has an absurd consequence—that most novels do not exist. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that this supposition must be false. Thus, if well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements, then novels do not depend for their existence on their well-formed instances.

Here, one might ask: If the existence of novels does not depend on the existence of their well-formed instances, then what does it depend on? There can be different answers to this question. One possible answer, endorsed by pure platonists, such as Julian Dodd (2007) and Peter Kivy (1987), is that novels, being eternal types, do not depend for their existence on anything (other than perhaps God). Another possible answer, advocated by Levinson (1980), is that novels, being initiated types, depend for their *coming into* existence on their authors' acts of indicating particular abstract structures (by means of creating certain inscriptions), but do not depend on anything for their *subsequent* existence. According to one more possible answer, upheld by Rohrbaugh (2003), novels, being "historical individuals," depend for their existence on their "embodiments"—all those physical objects that ground the facts concerning the novels' essential properties.

Finally, fourth, the view that novels are properly instanced solely by readings and sums of readings and graphic elements entails that the art of the novel has a lot more in common with performing arts (especially, with music) than usually thought. We generally believe that the art of the novel is considerably different from any of the performing arts. Thus, in our view, most well-formed instances of novels (inscriptions) differ, in their fundamental nature, from well-formed instances of works of performing arts (performances). In particular, we believe that most well-formed instances of novels are objects, whereas well-formed instances of performing arts are events. Furthermore, we think that the way well-formed instances of novels are generated is different from the way well-formed instances of performing arts are generated: Well-formed instances of novels are generated by means of writing or copying, whereas well-formed instances of works of most (though not all³⁹) performing arts are generated by means of performing in accordance with particular written and/or oral instructions (or quasi-

³⁹ In jazz, which is, doubtless, a performing art, well-formed instances are normally produced without recourse to instructions.

instructions). Now, if the view that novels can only be properly instanced by readings and sums of readings and graphic elements is adopted, then the mentioned dissimilarities largely (though not completely) disappear. For, suppose that well-formed instances of novels are readings and sums of readings and graphic elements. Then, since readings are events, well-formed instances of novels are identical to or contain events and, hence, are close (albeit not the same), in their fundamental nature, to well-formed instances of performing arts. And since readings are generated with the help of inscriptions, which can be characterized as instructions (or quasi-instructions), the way well-formed instances of novels are generated is similar to the way well-formed instances of works of many performing arts are generated.

That the art of the novel has so much in common with performing arts does not, by itself, mean that it is one of them. For, it also differs from them in at least two important respects. First, not all well-formed instances of novels are pure events; some are sums of events and objects. On the other hand, well-formed instances of works of performing arts are generally considered to be pure events. Second, well-formed instances of novels can be easily created by most of those who speak English (or any other sound-based language) and can use a copying device (such as a printer) to reproduce graphic elements. However, most well-formed instances of works of performing arts can be created only by a relatively small number of specialists (actors, stage directors, musicians, dancers, etc.).

In light of the mentioned dissimilarities between the novel and performing arts, the thesis that the novel is a performing art can be tenable only if there is a plausible explanation of why these dissimilarities do not disqualify the novel from being such an art. Is there such an explanation? Answering this question requires a substantial investigation into the nature of performing arts, and, due to space limitations, this investigation cannot be carried out here. So, for now, I would like to leave the mentioned question—and, thus, the question of whether the novel is a performing art—open.

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