ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: WHY FICTION MATTERS

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I explore five features that bear upon literary value and what is involved in appreciating those features. In the introduction, I motivate the project, examine the notion of literary value itself, and sketch the major arguments of the dissertation. In chapter one, I argue that the sonic qualities of a work of fictional literature are always relevant to the literary value of the work. In chapter two, I develop a working account of rhythm in literature and argue that sufficiently appreciating rhythm when reading a work of literature requires performative interpretation. In chapter three, I argue that truth is sometimes relevant to the literary value of fiction. In chapter four, I argue that literature has the capacity to cultivate moral expertise in the intuitive judgment of particular moral cases and that such capacity contributes to literary value. Finally, in chapter five, I argue that fictional literature can provide a reader with the resources for an intimate emotional connection with the author and that a work's ability to afford such an experience is a literary merit. The larger goal of the dissertation is to make a positive contribution to the discussion of literature's value, particularly as it concerns prose fiction.

WHY FICTION MATTERS

by

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INTRODUCTION

By the very fact that the enterprise of literature exists as it does—with magazines, academic programs, and neighborhood book clubs devoted to its study, classes, workshops, and conferences devoted to its production, and publishers and public readings devoted to its dissemination, despite the occasional lament over a decline in reading and book sales—it is clear that we value it. And suggestions as to why this is abound, from author testimonials to critic reports to everyday reader reviews. It is said, among other things, that literature makes us more human, lifts our hearts, allows us to better empathize, and gives us new ways seeing the world. But while such pithy statements may resonate—with us, our intuitions, our own experiences in reading—pinning down just what they amount to, and thus where literature's value lies, is a tricky business.

The concern of this project is to get in on this business, and to do so on four fronts as they pertain to literary fiction: aesthetic, factual, moral, and emotional.[1] As Malcolm Budd (1995) notes, a work of art "can possess as many kinds of value as there are points of view from which it can be evaluated" (1). In this sense, my project is of limited scope in that it only considers four points of view. But the four points of view I take up are, it seems, crucial to literary fiction. On the one hand, the latter three have seen much time in the philosophical literature, and with good reason, as many intuitive notions of fiction's value fit within their bounds. On the other hand, at least when it comes to sonic qualities,

[1] The term "literary fiction" is sometimes taken to designate a particular kind or genre of fictional prose literature. In this sense, a literary novel is distinguished from, say, a horror novel or a romance novel. It lacks the entrenched conventions of these more narrow genres and generally takes more care with the construction of sentences and characters. But in this monograph, unless otherwise noted, "literary fiction" should simply be understood as shorthand for fictional prose literature.

the aesthetic value of literary fiction has been neglected. To be sure, literary critics and scholars almost seem to take the value of fiction's sonic qualities as given. But in analytic aesthetics, when the sonic qualities of literature are addressed, they are often taken as a feature of poetry alone, or at least as primarily a feature of poetry. So something in defense of fiction too having this value seems in order.

The goal of this project is, along each considered point of view, to elucidate a feature of value that has yet to be noted or elucidated in full, and though in doing so I will inevitably express worries with others' accounts, I take the lion's share of my work to be positive. Within each considered point of view, there is room for various particular features of value. Put differently, there need not be any one, exclusive account of any kind of value. In fact, it seems we shouldn't think there is.

A notion of value itself as it pertains to literary fiction seems straightforward enough. Any feature of a work of fiction that is a good-making feature of the work contributes to the work's value; and any feature of a work of fiction that is a bad-making feature of the work detracts from the work's value. But how we are to spell out what such good- and bad-making features amount to is not so straightforward. On the one hand, there is a question of whether such features inhere in or depend on our *experience* of works or somehow inhere in the works *themselves*, independent of our experiences of them. On the other hand, there is a question of what features count in our calculation of the work's value as art, or what its *literary* value is (where literary value is a species of artistic value).

As for the first question, though I have some aesthetic realist intuitions, it seems somewhat mysterious how such features, be they aesthetic or artistic, could be located in

works themselves. In other words, it seems somewhat mysterious how aesthetic and artistic properties could be non-relational, how they could not in some way be dependent on the sorts of creatures we are. In short, it seems all literary value is, strictly speaking, *extrinsic* value, even if there may be compelling ways to accommodate, within an extrinsic framework, some of the intuitions driving the notion that value is intrinsic to works. For example, Jerrold Levinson (2006) argues that though a work of art is not intrinsically valuable, it can contribute to the intrinsic value of a life and a world in which there are lives that include the possibility of experiencing that work. We might also just shift the locus of intrinsic value, at least in part, to the experiences had from properly engaging literature.[2] But it is important to note, as Levinson does, that even if the value of fiction is dependent on our experience of fiction, "it does not follow that an art work is valuable only in so far as experience of it (or engagement with it) is *pleasant* or straightforwardly *enjoyable*. Rather, an experience (or engagement) may be *worth while*, may be worth having, even while not predominantly pleasant, on either a first- or second-order level" (1992, 296). At any rate, I plan to take no hard line on this issue, as it is not the business of this project to argue for any substantive theory of literary value. Whatever way things go, this ultimately seems orthogonal to the particular features I aim to show contribute to literary fiction's value as literary fiction.

As for the second question, we might begin by distinguishing *instrumental* value (being valuable as a means to some other value) and *final* value (being valuable for its own sake). The trouble is that one might argue that all artistic value, and thus all literary value, is instrumental. Robert Stecker (2003) sketches one such possible argument:

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[2] See, for instance, Budd (1995, 4–8).

"Works of art are artefacts in the broad sense of being items made or performed by human beings. Artefacts always have human purposes or functions that they serve, and this is where their chief value is found. Hence the chief value of art is found in fulfilling its functions well" (309). Now, whether this argument is right is not the issue. Rather, that such an argument is at least *prima facie* plausible shows that the distinction on its own does not get us very far in determining what counts as literary value.

We might take a step further and follow Matthew Kieran (2001, 216–17), among others, in distinguishing two kinds of instrumental value: *pure instrumental* value (being valuable solely as a means to some other value) and *inherent* value (being valuable as a means that partly constitutes some other value). Unlike money, which is purely instrumental, the ends served by works of art are in some way constituted by those works. We cannot, for instance, specify the pleasures afforded by a work of art without some reference to the work itself. But even if all artistic value is inherent value, it is clear that not all inherent value of art is artistic value. One may value a literary work because a character in the work reminds one of a loved one, but such inherent value surely is not something that figures in the value of the work as a work of literature. Thus the distinction between kinds of instrumental value also does not, on its own, provide much help in determining what counts as literary value.

The distinctions among pure instrumental value, inherent value, and final value only do work in light of some substantive theory of artistic value. So although it is not the business of this project to argue for any theory of literary value, some discussion of such theories, however limited, is in order.

Broadly speaking, theories of artistic value fall into two kinds: *essentialist* and *non-essentialist* (Stecker 2003, 310). Essentialist accounts have it that artistic value consists in one distinctive value (or bundle of values). So an essentialist theory of literary value as it pertains to fiction would have it that literary value consists in one distinctive value (or bundle of values). For instance, Lamarque and Olsen (1994) argue that literary value consists in aesthetic value, which, in fiction, manifests in structure and theme. Non-essentialist accounts, then, have it that artistic value is pluralistic, that it consists in different things for different works—and likewise for a non-essentialist account of literary value. That is, what contributes to a work's literary value will vary from work to work. For instance, say that works of fiction can, in principle, have cognitive value that contributes to literary value. It does not seem that all works will, in fact, have such value. So if works of fiction can have such value, then it seems literary value is non-essentialist.

Now, there may be a way to accommodate all the features I argue bear on literary value in some essentialist picture, but it seems this is a stretch. Thus, as far as substantive theoretical considerations go, it seems I am committed to a non-essentialist account of literary value. But I have no plans to argue for this account at any theoretical level and do not believe I need to. Rather, my arguments for various particular features being part of literary value will bear this burden. If my arguments for these particular features are convincing, and such features' being part of literary value entail non-essentialism, then it seems we have evidence for just that. I think an argument for non-essentialism can, and maybe must, be run from the ground up. What kinds of features bear upon literary value is to be sorted on a case-by-case basis, in the lines of particular works, so to speak. One of the most powerful arguments for making a substantive distinction between aesthetic

and artistic value is that aesthetic theories of artistic value cannot account for all the reasons we value art as art (see Stecker 2012, 356). But, of course, the force of this argument turns on elucidating these nonaesthetic values.

That said, it would undoubtedly be nice if there were some principled way of picking out features that contribute to artistic—and thus literary—value and, as Stecker puts it, "carv[ing] off adventitious values" (2012, 359), values such as the one noted above regarding a character in a literary work reminding a reader of a loved one.[3] But lacking such an account does not prevent us from getting on with the business of carving, one feature at a time. Even with a satisfactory account of literary value in hand, individual literary values still require elucidation. In the remainder of this introduction, I will outline what values I hope to elucidate and how I go about doing so.

I. AESTHETIC VALUE

In chapter one, I argue that the sonic qualities of fiction's prose are always relevant to literary value and that this has consequences for how we ought to read fiction. In his book *The Performance of Reading*, Peter Kivy argues that when we silently read fiction, he claims, we give a silent performance to ourselves (2006, 126). While I think Kivy is wrong about this, I do think he's on to something with the idea that when we read fiction, we often experience an inner voicing of the text and thus something performance-like. However, I argue not that we *do* invariably experience an inner voicing but rather that we *should*. Kivy makes descriptive claims; in this chapter, I am out to make and

[3] Stecker (2012) and Pratt (2012) are recent promising attempts at offering an account of this kind, a theory of artistic value. Assessing the success of these attempts, however, is beyond the scope of this project.

defend a normative one. Or, more accurately, a normative claim predicated on a descriptive one: since the sonic qualities of fiction are important to its value, we must hear its text read in order to fully appreciate it. But before making this argument, I first use Kivy's account of silent reading to lay some conceptual groundwork and then sketch some reasons why we should not think reading "aloud" silently is a performance.

The brunt of this chapter comes in arguing against Kivy's claim that "largely speaking, *silently read prose fiction is a non-aesthetic art*, or, at least, *less aesthetic than it is usually taken to be*" (*Once-Told Tales* 2011, 72). The main argument against this claim and in favor of the sound of fiction's prose always being relevant to literary value goes roughly as follows. Joyce's *Ulysses* is considered very good fiction, largely because of its mellifluous prose. Now, if a work is considered very good fiction in large part because of some feature *F*, then *F* is an evaluatively relevant feature of fiction. This seems uncontroversial. So sonic qualities are an evaluatively relevant feature of fiction. *Ulysses* demonstrates this. And Kivy, I think, would acknowledge that much. But what Kivy misses is that it is not just poetic or mellifluous prose of which we need to take stock. There's also clunky prose and tinny prose and awkward prose and prose whose alliteration drags, all of which might require pauses, albeit pauses to cleanse the palate rather than "savor the 'sound'" (Kivy 2011, 72), and all of which, unlike the sonicity of *Ulysses*, typically count against a work's value. Sonicity is a good- *or* bad-making feature of fiction, and one that appears to contribute to a work's value or lack thereof. Story may certainly make up for bad-sounding prose, but the prose is still there, calling attention to itself. In short, sonic qualities are a feature of fiction's medium, and one that seems

inescapable. So sonic qualities are relevant to fiction's value as literary fiction, always, for better or worse.

In chapter two, I establish a working account of one of the most notable sonic qualities of literary fiction: rhythm. I have no intentions of attempting to settle the metaphysical question of what rhythm really is, but rather to provide a frame upon which questions of appreciation and value can hang, for it is these questions that I find most pressing. While we of course need to have some idea of what rhythm is in order to address the appreciation of it, there is no requirement to have its nature definitively pinned down. I argue that a working account of rhythm boils down to three conditions: (1) rhythm is organized sound, (2) rhythm does not reduce to meter, and (3) rhythm may be—and often is—experienced as a sense of movement. And the features that organize language—and thus literature—rhythmically fall into three classes: features of pronunciation, features of intonation, and features of phrasing.

After addressing these features, I then argue that if one is to appreciate the rhythm of a work of literature, reading is more demanding than typically thought, as it requires not only critical interpretation but also performative interpretation. To appreciate a literary work's rhythm, one must hear it right. This turns on the fact that the features of rhythmic organization in literature do not determine the rhythm of a work. Because of this, realizing the rhythm of a literary work requires a considered way of reading the work aloud, or what Levinson calls *performative interpretation* (1996c, 63). A reader must elect values of intonation and phrasing that conform to a plausible critical interpretation of the work. She must choose to phrase and place accents in a way she believes captures the way the work should be read aloud. It may seem, then, that the

demands for adequately appreciating rhythm are incredibly high. However, while not part of common reading practice, I argue that an avid reader of literature should be able to build strong performative interpretations into her repertoire without too much difficulty.

II. FACTUAL VALUE

In chapter three, I argue that truth is sometimes relevant to the literary value of fictional works. It seems that we are not willing to give up the intuitions that (a) works of fiction are free from the constraints of historical truth and (b) historical inaccuracies sometimes count against the artistic value of works of fiction. Christopher Bartel calls this *the puzzle of historical criticism* (2012, 213–22). I argue that this puzzle extends beyond historical facts. While it is especially salient that historical accuracy at times appears to be relevant to evaluation of literary fiction, such relevance appears to be a feature of facts in general. Much of the praise of an encyclopedic work rests on how well it weaves non-trivial facts about the real world into its narrative. Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* is a paradigmatic case. It covers, fairly extensively and among other things, chemistry, ballistics, behaviorism, and some calculus, all with both allusion and factual statements. Were an encyclopedic work to get any such non-trivial facts wrong, it would be subject to serious criticism. Of course, with a work that is not encyclopedic, the expectation to get the facts right will likely be weaker. But this expectation seems to exist given any attempt to employ, reference, or allude to non-trivial real-world facts, be it within an encyclopedic work or otherwise. Engaging with non-trivial facts is not an uncommon feature of literary fiction. Many works may do so only to a minor degree, and

so truth may count for little in their overall evaluation, but it still counts. Encyclopedic narratives are simply cases where truth matters much.

I then propose a partial strategy for resolving the puzzle. It is not uncommon to consider what a work of fiction is attempting to do, what its aims are. We might say, for instance, that a work aims to move readers emotionally or parody a particular style, and then assess whether it succeeds in doing so. I think a theory of factual criticism and praise turns on considerations of this kind. If a work's aims are relevant to its evaluation and factual accuracy is an aim of some works of fiction, then factual accuracy is relevant to evaluation. When the aims of a fictional work include employing, referencing, or alluding to non-trivial real-world facts, we are justified in evaluating the work according to those aims. More specifically, given any constituent part *P* of a fictional work *W*, where *W* either aims at real-world factual accuracy in *P* or has a greater aim of real-world factual accuracy against which *P* appears incongruous (in virtue of other constituent parts in which *W* aims at real-world factual accuracy), we are justified in evaluating *P* (and thus *W*) on grounds of real-world factual accuracy. The assessment of aims, as complicated as that may be, explains and unifies the evaluation of fictional works according to real-world factual accuracy, historical or otherwise.

III. MORAL VALUE

In chapter four, I argue that properly experiencing works of fiction can cultivate expertise in making intuitive moral judgments and that this capacity contributes to literary value. When it comes to making a moral judgment of a particular case, intuition more often than not takes the lead. But empirical research has shown that these moral

intuitions are subject to framing and order effects, for both the folk and professional philosophers (see Weigmann 2012 and Schwitzgebel and Cushman 2012). With a change in the order of cases comes a change in moral judgment. The trouble then, as I see it, is understanding what moral expertise amounts to, as the traditional account of expertise does not apply. I argue that though training in moral philosophy may not entail having moral intuitions any more reliable than the folk, it does entail being more sensitive to evidence and thus belief revision, and it is here, in this sensitivity and willingness to revise, in a resistance to becoming what Haidt (2001) calls "morally dumbfounded," that moral expertise lies. But I also argue such moral expertise does not require training in moral philosophy. It seems that properly experiencing works of fiction can cultivate these sensitivities and dispositions, and do so particularly well.

In making this argument, I take a cue from Eileen John (2010), who argues that "morality demands an evaluative 'double take'" and that literature is an apt vehicle through which this demand might be met (287). According to John, "literary works [are able to] set up moral judgment as a form of complex judgment, one that asks for more than one perspective to be taken on situations or persons" (2010, 287). Works often provide resources to see a character's failings as understandable deserving of compassion. However, though we may understand, sympathize, or empathize with a character's moral failing, this does not, as John acknowledges, remove the grounds for our initial judgment. What is at issue with moral expertise as I characterize it is a willingness to revise one's judgment, not simply sympathize with those you have judged. But I think John's view can be pushed further, where these double takes extend to the judgment of the acts in question. To be sure, in morally clear cases this will not be so.

However much readers may empathize with, say, aspects of Humbert Humbert of *Lolita*, their initial judgment of the wrongness of seduction of the underage will stand firm. But there are plenty of cases that are not so clear, and the narratives of much literary fiction live in this middle ground.

IV. EMOTIONAL VALUE

In the fifth and final chapter, I argue that readers can experience an emotional connection with the author of a fictional literary work and that a work's ability to afford this experience contributes to literary value. A satisfying explanation of this experience, I argue, turns on four features: (1) the psychological context of reading, (2) sharing beliefs and attitudes expressed in a work, (3) resonating with the personality expressed through the work's style, and (4) believing that were one to have the expressive powers of the work's author, one would express things in the way the author has. In its most emotionally intimate moments, reading a work of fiction can feel as though you are engaging with the thoughts of a person whose beliefs and attitudes intersect with yours, whose personality you find mesmerizing, and who expresses things in a way that you believe you would if you could, if you had such expressive power. And all of this is intensified by a context ripe for emotional intimacy, one in which it feels as though it is only you and another's thoughts.

It is no surprise, then, that readers sometimes experience an emotional connection with the author of a literary work. Yet it is unclear how a work of fictional literature could supply the resources for such an experience. It is, after all, a work of fiction, not a report of the author's experience, as with memoir or autobiography. It is here that I think

we can turn to something John points to. She argues that "[t]he practice of art, as an intensely focused and reflective making, gives a default warrant for the rest of us to take nearly every mark, every feature that we think could be controlled by the artist, as evidence of something the artist found to be worth experiencing" (2012, 200). So then, while the beliefs, attitudes, and personality expressed in and expressive potency of a work of fiction may only strictly be that of the implied author, the sensibility expressed in a work is that of the actual author. Even if we do not, in reading fictional literature (strictly as literature), have the chance of finding a fellow human being whose actual view of the world resonates deeply with ours, we do have the chance of finding a fellow human being who understands and values a view of the world that resonates deeply with ours, and does so with an expressive power beyond our own. This, it seems, is grounds for intimate human connection.

1. SONICITY AND THE PERFORMANCE OF READING

In his book *The Performance of Reading*, Peter Kivy argues that "silent reading of fictional literature, the novel in particular, can be understood as something very like a performance" (2006, 126). More pointedly, when we silently read fiction, he claims, we give a silent performance to ourselves. While I think Kivy is wrong about this, I do think he's on to something with the idea that when we read fiction, we often experience an inner voicing of the text and thus something performance-like. However, I argue not that we *do* invariably experience an inner voicing but rather that we *should*. Kivy makes descriptive claims; in this chapter, I am out to make a normative one. Or, more accurately, a normative claim predicated on a descriptive one: since the sonic qualities of fiction are always relevant to its value, we must hear its text read in order to fully appreciate it. But before making this argument, I will first use Kivy's account of silent reading to lay some conceptual groundwork and then sketch some reasons why we should not think reading "aloud" silently is a performance.

I. SILENT PERFORMANCES?

Kivy's argument that silent reading can be understood as performance rests largely on an analogy to *score-reading*, where this should be understood as "hearing," or internally realizing, the sounds of a musical work by reading the score alone. As Kivy puts it, when score-reading, "[o]ne can 'hear' a production in the mind" (2006, 36). And because score-reading takes immense skill, a feat only capable of being accomplished by the musically talented, by the Mozarts, Beethovens, and Brahms of the world, score-readers will have sophisticated interpretations of the musical work in question. Thus, it

seems, score-readers will have “an experience in truth significantly like the perceptual experience of listening to a sonic performance of the work” (Kivy 2006, 40). At minimum, according to Kivy, “there is a powerful *prima facie* case for score-reading as an internal performance” (2006, 50).

With this account of score-reading in mind, Kivy’s initial argument for silent reading being performance goes something like the following (see 2006, 50–51). It is clear that playing to oneself on the piano is a *bona fide* case of performance. It is also clear that such a performance, though neither intended nor offered as a “public object,” is *potentially* hearable and observable in principle. Thus, such a performance is a possible object of criticism. There is a powerful *prima facie* case for score-reading as internal/silent performance, as this internal/silent performance is *potentially* hearable in that another token of its type could be produced and criticized in the normal way. If this is right, then the move to silent reading as performance is at least plausible.

The step from plausible to actual comes with poetry. It serves as a sort of halfway house between music and fiction. Consider that in addition to reading poetry silently to ourselves, we also attend poetry readings, where either the poet or some professional reader reads aloud to the audience. It seems this reading aloud is not window dressing, so to speak, to the poem, that it is not simply some pragmatic way of sharing the poem with a mass audience. Rather, it seems this reading aloud relays important qualities of the poem itself, namely its sonic ones. The reading aloud matters because the sound of language is important to poetry. And if this is right, in order to fully appreciate poetry you must, as Kivy puts it, “‘hear’ the sound of the poem in your mind’s ear, be very conscious, in other words, of its sound if it were recited” (2006, 55). Poetry, then, serves

as the verbal analogue of score-reading, giving us a stronger conclusion to the argument above.

The trouble, as far as Kivy sees it, is that the same argument cannot be made for fiction,[1] because unlike with poetry, the sound of language is not important to "anywhere near the degree" (2006, 55). Of course I will be arguing that the sound of language *is* important to fiction, such that without its appreciation, one cannot fully appreciate any work of fiction; so I see no particular trouble here. But more of that later. Kivy's solution is twofold: (a) we naturally read works of fiction with expression or feeling and (b) interpretation is crucial to understanding a work of fiction at any significant or nontrivial level. The former establishes that the silent reading of fiction has clear performative qualities; the latter establishes that the silent reading of fiction is interpretation-driven, and thus that the performative qualities constitute legitimate performance.

First note that works of fiction look clearly performable. When a great actor reads a novel aloud for an audio book recording, she reads with expression and feeling. This seems to be a case of performance just as is the case of musicians in a studio playing a piece of music for a recording. Now consider the same actor reading the same novel silently to herself in preparation for the recording. If she reads with and "hears" in her head all the expression and feeling she intends to present for the recording—and presumably she does—then we have restored a clean analogy with score-reading.

But obviously the readers we are concerned with are not professional actors. Consider, though, a parent reading a bedtime story to her child. She may be no pro, but

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[1] Throughout *The Performance of Reading*, Kivy regularly discusses the novel rather than fictional literature in general. But with respect to the novel (as opposed to, say, the short story), there is nothing distinctively important to Kivy's view. So throughout this chapter, I will simply appeal to fiction in general.

there will be all the dramatic expression required to render the story exciting and lifelike to her child. Here it seems we have no less of a case of performance. It is a performance for a child, but a performance nonetheless. And as far as Kivy's concerned, anytime you read a work of fiction aloud, "unless you make a special effort to read in an expressionless monotone, like a court recorder reading back testimony, you will, quite naturally, read *con espressione*. I think that unless you are autistic, or making a special effort, you will, perhaps unconsciously, make a performance of it" (2006, 46). Questions about autism aside, this looks right. But it is ordinary readers reading silently that's the tricky step. Unlike with the case of the actor reading silently to herself in preparation for her recording, ordinary silent readers are not typically preparing for any reading aloud. So why should we think their silent readings have any expression or feeling? Kivy's answer is the necessity of interpretation.

While readers may understand many sentences of a work of fiction without interpreting them, larger meanings of the work as a whole (be they thematic, symbolic, and so on) along with the function of the work's parts as they bear on that whole (events, embedded references to other material, narrative tone, characters' motivations, dispositions, beliefs, and so on) require interpretive work. Evidence of this consists in the fact that we can have better and worse interpretations of works of fiction. Say you read some work of fiction for the first time as a child. Now say you read the same work for the first time as an adult. It seems clear your reading as an adult "would be a reading with more understanding, more perceptivity, a more highly developed emotional and moral sensibility, wider and deeper knowledge of the literary tradition into which it fits, and so forth" (Kivy 2006, 71). So, because works of fiction require interpretation, silent readers

will always have some interpretation or other of the work, and thus will naturally present that interpretation in their silent reading. Their silent readings will naturally have expression and feeling in virtue of their reading naturally being interpretation-driven.[2]

Despite the analogy to score-reading now back in place for professional and ordinary readers alike, there remains one more obstacle to calling silent reading performance. During a performance, there are two distinct objects experienced: the work being performed and the performance of the work. There is no problem making sense of this when it comes to out-loud, paradigm performances. And it may make sense to distinguish these two objects in score-readings of musical prodigies and silent preparatory readings of great actors. But the distinction seems very strange in the silent readings of ordinary readers. As Kivy notes, "one hardly knows what it would *mean* to switch one's concentration from work to performance" (2006, 84). But this can be attributed to the performance of the work being transparent to most silent readers in most circumstances, just as the performance is transparent to the average concert-going music-lover, who neither has musical training nor any musical knowledge beyond anecdotal accounts of works, composers, or performers. Transparent or not, "[i]n experiencing the work you are experiencing the performance; in experiencing the performance you are experiencing the work" (Kivy 2006, 85).

II. OBJECTIONS TO KIVY'S ACCOUNT

First off, the first move in Kivy's argument seems to need qualification, because it is not, as Kivy assumes, clear that playing to oneself on the piano is a performance. As

[2] For Kivy's own condensed account of these arguments concerning expression and interpretation, see Kivy 2010, 114–16.

David Davies notes, clear cases of performances are done *for* an intended audience, such that the performer is "*guided* in her actions by expectations about *this* audience" (2011, 176). In any uncontroversial case of performance, the performer is not just performing but performing *for* some particular audience. The audience may be many or one, present or absent, actual or imagined, but it seems there must be an intended audience for performance. This is what distinguishes performing, say, a piano piece and merely playing that piece. Without this distinction, anytime anyone plays a piece of music or dances a dance or recites a monologue under some interpretation, however subconscious it is, she is performing.

So, in the case of playing piano to oneself, for the playing to be performance, the intended audience must be the player. The person playing the piano must not only occupy both the role of performer and audience, but also guide her actions as performer according to her expectations as audience; she must, it seems, not just occupy two distinct roles, but two distinct cognitive states. If this is right, Kivy's claims about the transparency of performance to the silent reader need bolstering, and apparently to an implausible degree. Not only must the performance be transparent to the ordinary silent reader, but so must the fact that she is guided in her reading by expectations about herself, that she is performing *for* herself. Maybe there is a way to render this plausible, but it seems any cognitive state guiding our actions on account of some expectations will be far from transparent.

Second, Kivy's account of score-reading also needs qualification. The trouble here is that despite the anecdotal evidence Kivy gives about Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, and a few others, it is hard to imagine anyone can "hear" in their head more than one line

of a score at a time. Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms may have been able to have some sort of comprehension of the entirety of a many-lined score, but if "hearing" in the head is some form of subvocalization, as it seems it must be, and subvocalizing musical lines is not substantially different from subvocalizing speech, then they could not have "heard" the entirety of a many-lined score, not at all to the degree of a performance of the score. Whether accompanied by faint whispering, soundless movement of the lips, or no visual cues at all, subvocalization is the muscular movements in the larynx of people as they read silently, measured by various types of instrumentation, of which electromyographic equipment is most sophisticated (Wright 2004, 546–47). Since the larynx cannot vocalize two distinct sounds simultaneously, it is hard to see how it could produce two distinct subvocal muscular movements simultaneously. This point does greatly limit the extent of Kivy's anecdotal examples of score-reading, but it does not make any trouble for his overall argument, as the score-reading of a single-lined score will fit the bill just fine.

Third, there are problems with Kivy's move from poetry to fiction, specifically with his analysis of interpretation. Christopher Bartel points out that while, yes, reading literature is interpretation-driven, "the same could be said of our experience of paintings and sculptures. 'Viewings' are arguably interpretation-driven" (2010, 222).[3] Whether viewing visual art or portraits, it seems interpretation of meaning is called for. If interpretation is, as Kivy's arguments appear to entail, what ultimately makes our silent readings performance, then it seems our "viewings" are performance just the same. But Kivy presses that "the most obvious difference between the visual arts and the arts traditionally recognized as performing arts is the existence of a 'notation' in the latter

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[3] A similar objection to the silent reading of poetry as performance is raised in chapter 5 of Nelson Goodman's *Languages of Art* (1968).

from which an experience of the work must be 'realized'" (2006, 129). With music, through a complex act of comprehension, symbols must be "translated" to sounds. With visual art, there is no such "translation." Fair enough, but what is the "translation" when *silently* reading works of fiction? We might press Kivy here, because on his account, it seems it cannot be symbols to sounds. Unlike with poetry, he thinks the sound of language is not important to fiction.

But even if Kivy can dodge Bartel's objection, it appears there is a more fundamental problem with his analysis of interpretation. Interpretation of meaning is, as Jerrold Levinson argues, very different from interpretation of how to play a score or read a piece of poetry in a particular way, "in effect electing particular values of its defining, though never absolutely specific, parameters of tempo, rhythm, dynamics, accent, and phrasing" (1996c, 61). The former (which Levinson calls *critical interpretation*) is the business of criticism; the latter (which Levinson calls *performative interpretation*) is the business of performance. Surely we would not call some literary critic presenting her interpretation of the meaning of some novel to an audience a performance of the novel. So it is not at all clear why, as Kivy seems to think, the necessity of critical interpretation when reading works of fiction entails that silent readings are performance.

One answer might be that, at least when it comes to reading works of fiction, critical interpretation is part of performance. Kivy does not explicitly argue for this point but it might be drawn from his analysis of Socrates' dialogue with Ion, the Greek rhapsode, reciter of the Homeric epics. Kivy's analysis has it that Ion "not only recited or sung the narration, and the characters' speeches, perhaps impersonating the dramatis personae with gesture and voice; he also, *in his performance*, made interpretive remarks

about the meanings of the poems he was performing. […] In other words, Ion *performed* what we would think of as literary criticism" (2006, 9). So it is not so surprising that the necessity of critical interpretation when reading works of fiction would lead to our silent performance of works of fiction, as critical interpretation is part of literary performance.

There are two problems with this answer. First, Kivy himself acknowledges "the danger […] of committing the genetic fallacy of inferring that something must have certain properties or a certain character merely because its historical predecessors and sources had those properties or that character," and claims he will try hard not to commit it (2006, 6). So even if Kivy's analysis of Ion's performance is right, nothing about the performance of silent reading follows from that alone. Second, in his analysis, Kivy clearly acknowledges that performative and critical interpretation are *distinct* parts of Ion's performance. But in his attempt to move from the silent performance of poetry to the silent performance of fiction, Kivy appeals to the necessity of critical interpretation to underpin why we silently read works of fiction *con espressione*. The two elements of the silent performance of fiction are not distinct, as in Ion's case; rather, one gives rise to the other. I think this is the best way to understand Kivy's argument—that we have performative interpretations in our silent reading *because* we must have critical interpretations.

But then Kivy owes an argument as to why this relationship holds and an analysis of the nature of performative interpretation when silently reading works of fiction. To be sure, a critical interpretation of some work may well inform a performative interpretation, such that a critical interpretation limits the domain of appropriate performative interpretations. If one understands a literary work to be satire, presumably some ways of

performing the work would be considered inappropriate. But it seems wrong to think that having a critical interpretation entails having a performative interpretation, for while critical interpretation is a "conceptual and standardly propositional affair," performative interpretation is "a sensuous realization of a work, a particular way of sounding it" and thus contains aspects that "are irreducibly performative—aspects whose content may be signaled, though not captured, by phrases such as '*this* is how it should go'" (Levinson 1996c, 66). So, not only do critical interpretation and performative interpretations appear to be fundamentally different things, however detailed a critical interpretation is, it cannot determine a performative interpretation. The gap between critical and performative interpretation is far too wide for a reader to have latter *because* of the former.

Also, since for Kivy performative interpretation of works of fiction cannot be grounded in the sound of language—as he thinks "hearing" the sound of language in your mind's ear is not important to experiencing works of fiction—it remains to be explained just what performative interpretation of works of fiction amounts to. From Kivy's stress on reading with expression and feeling, it seems performative interpretation lies somewhere with dramatic qualities, with playing the role of an actor. But then Kivy owes us a story of how dramatic qualities, when reciting fiction, do not involve sonic qualities to an important degree.

Ultimately, I think Kivy's only good chance of saving the analogy to (single-line) score-reading is to appeal to the sonic qualities of fiction. But even if he were to do this—and thereby revise the view he argues for in his *Once-Told Tales*[4] of "*how non*-aesthetic the experience of silently read prose fiction really is" (2011, 73)—he would still need to

[4] See especially chapter 5.

move from a descriptive position to a normative one. Our attending performances of plays and musical works is not what makes drama and music performing arts, but rather the fact that only through performances can drama and music be fully appreciated. As Davies notes, if Kivy wants to argue that fiction is a performing art, as he claims in the closing sections of *The Performance of Reading* (§30 on forward), "then descriptive facts about the phenomenology of our reading experiences, however insightful, cannot serve as the principal argument for viewing the reading of fictional literature as a performing art analogous to musical performance" (2008, 90).

It is to this issue, and thus the primary thesis of this chapter, I now turn. In the following section, I argue that fiction is very much an aesthetic art in virtue of its sonic qualities. Then, in the subsequent section, I analyze the consequences this has for the full appreciation of fiction. But as stated in this chapter's opening, these arguments are not intended to save Kivy's view that fiction is a performing art. Due to the first objection discussed in this section, I think the silent performance of fiction is a very odd and demanding affair, one rarely, if ever, instantiated.

III. THE SONIC QUALITIES OF FICTION

The "central thesis" of Kivy's *Once-Told Tales*—a book he calls "a companion piece to my previous monograph on the philosophy of literature, *The Performance of Reading*" (2011, viii)—is that, "largely speaking, *silently read prose fiction is a non-aesthetic art*, or, at least, *less aesthetic than it is usually taken to be*" (2011, 72). Not only does he think the story is *the* focus of fiction, but also that all aesthetic properties take the back seat, so much so that they play no noticeable role in the typical reading experience.

And of the aesthetic properties of fiction—chiefly, as he sees it, sonic and structural—he seems to think sonic ones are the easiest to dismiss or downplay. And as far as the lay of the philosophy-of-literature land goes, Kivy is not alone. While I have no quarrels with calling the story a, or maybe *the* focus of fiction, the business of this section is to argue against Kivy's central thesis on the grounds that the sonic qualities of language are important to fiction and its full appreciation. Even if story is the most important piece of good fiction, this does not preclude the sound of language also being important.[5]

For Kivy, a beginning argument against sonicity playing any important role in fiction rests with comparison to poetry. In essence, the *poetry argument* (let's call it) goes as follows. The sound of language is important to poetry; we can all agree on that. In addition to reading poetry silently to ourselves, we also attend poetry readings in order to hear the poet (or some practiced reader) read aloud. The reading aloud matters because the sound of language is important to poetry. Now consider fiction. The sound of language has nowhere near the importance it does in poetry. Therefore, sonicity is not important to fiction. The poetry argument appears in Kivy's *The Performance of Reading* (2006, 55), but it is given the most attention in Kivy's *Once-Told Tales* (2011, 70–72).[6]

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[5] By sonic qualities, or the sound of language, I mean (and take Kivy to mean) something along the following lines. The sonic qualities of a sentence *S* are all the qualities audible to the human ear when *S* is appropriately vocalized by a natural language speaker of the language in which *S* is written, where an *appropriate* vocalization contains correct pronunciation and has a cadence sensitive to punctuation and contextual cues. And I will assume in this chapter that the sonic qualities of language can be internally realized via subvocalization, just as the sounds of single-lined score can in principle.

[6] Kivy is not alone in subscribing to something like the poetry argument. See Smith (1970, 557) and Davies' critique of Kivy, wherein he states, "Of course, all of these things ['soundings' in the head] *are* arguably crucial to our appreciation of poetry and of drama, which is why we do routinely 'perform' such works, even to ourselves, when we seek to appreciate them, and why the ability to 'sound' such works is one that is fostered in literary education. But *these* considerations seem much more peripheral to appreciation of the novel" (2008, 91).

The main trouble I see with the poetry argument is that its whole force depends on a relative notion. To be sure, at least in general, "in contrast with poetry, prose literary language does not emphasize the sonic dimension" (Kivy 2011, 71). Poetry, unlike fiction, has sonicity woven into its formal structure. Rhyme is an obvious sonic feature. But even in free verse there are still stanzas, lines, and meter, all of which dictate rhythm. And unlike in fiction, the full appreciation of poetry involves formal analysis of these sonic features via scansion, which "helps to reveal rhythm and gives the reader a representation of the 'tune' underlying and supporting the words" (Cuddon 1999, 787). But this contrast alone does not entail that "the sound of the language is hardly paramount" in fiction (Kivy 2011, 25). An independent argument must be provided for that. Simply that fiction typically has, unlike poetry, plot and character as part of its features cannot account for the contrast in emphasis on sonicity. On its own, the contrast only shows that sonicity is less important in fiction than in poetry. To be fair, this may be all the work Kivy hopes to get out of the poetry comparison, since he does have independent, relative-free arguments for his conclusion. He appeals to the experience of reading works of fiction and to literary critics. I will consider these in turn.

Kivy thinks that that the story is the primary focus of works of fiction shows itself in the experience of silently reading fiction. About this he makes two related, but distinct claims: (1) "when reading a novel one tends to get taken up: enthralled and swept away, one hopes, by the story" such that "[t]he novel is read in a rush, with the story continually beckoning one on" (2011, 71); (2) "[t]he ongoing propulsion of literary narrative in silently read prose fiction does not encourage pauses in which to savor the 'sound' or other aspects of literary language that might be bearers of aesthetic properties" (2011,

72). (1) makes a claim about the way people tend to read fiction (presumably when the work is well-crafted); (2) makes a claim about how narrative in fiction affects the experience of reading (again, presumably when the work is well-crafted).

As for (1), even if most people tend (or hope) to get swept up in a story and compelled to read works of fiction in a rush, this says nothing about what *are* the important features of good fiction, unless there is reason to think the reading habits or hopes of the populace indicate what the important features of good fiction are. And it seems there is not. Or if there is, the literary canon and literary education are due for some major overhaul.

As for (2), I do not see why literary narrative itself, however enthralling, propels a reader past the sound of prose if the sound of that prose is worth savoring. And after claiming (2), Kivy makes it clear that he is concerned with the general reading experience, with "most readers, most of the time" (2011, 72). He acknowledges there are exceptions to the general rule—with the examples of Joyce and Proust being mentioned on numerous occasions—and admits that "novels vary in respect to how thick the linguistic medium is, some more than others encouraging or even requiring 'poetic pauses.' And such events, to be sure, are an important artistic and aesthetic part of the novel-reading experience" (2011, 72). So then we are back to (1), and back to the same objection to (1) giving reason to reject sonicity as important to fiction.

Certainly a better place to look for evidence of the important features of some art is in the criticism of that art. On this matter, Kivy's claims that "seldom, in my experience, do literary critics dwell on the sonic aspects of prose" (2011, 25). So, we

might say, if the critics don't discuss it, then it must not be of much concern to the practice and its appreciation.

But just a small sampling of criticism from *The Salon.com Reader's Guide to Contemporary Authors* (2000) seems to suggest that sonic aspects of prose are important, for better or worse. John Banville has "pitch-perfect first person" (30), Raymond Carver's sentences "start on a high note only to give way beneath you" with "foot-dragging rhythms" (82), Karen Joy Fowler's "elegant prose" is "more than window dressing" (148), William Gaddis has an "extraordinary ear for speech" and "a supple style that bridges the lyrical, the elegiac, and the gothic" (151), Denis Johnson "strings sentences" in which "the words crackle and smoke" (202), Cormac McCarthy writes "lyrical books" (247), and Ian McEwan's prose is "affectless" (252). It's suggested that "you listen closely to [Rick Moody's] best work" (263), said that Toni Morrison has "a poet's grace" (272), and that Grace Paley's background in poetry is "apparent in the mobile, seductive rhythms of her prose and in her stubborn care over words" (297). In places, Thomas Pynchon's prose "is as beautiful as prose gets" (319), John Updike "writes beautiful sentences that bop around in your head after you read them like show tunes" (390), William T. Vollman's work has "lyrical complexity" (397), David Foster Wallace "has developed a distinctive and infectious style, an acrobatic cartwheeling between high intellectual discourse and vernacular insouciance, which makes him tremendously fun to read" (405), and "Stephen Wright's novels have such a hair-raising vividness, such a lyric certainty, that reading them is like watching an arrow strike the dead center of a bullseye; you almost don't care what he's writing *about*" (422).

And this comes from a host of critics.[7] And the criticism also is not geared for some elite literary crowd, but rather seems just up the alley of Kivy's serious in-it-for-the-story reader.[8] As Laura Miller points out in the preface, the guide is not for "an audience of researchers or scholars or critics or prize committees or members of the publishing industry," but rather "for those remarkable and slightly mysterious individuals who read contemporary fiction for pleasure" (2000, v). Though I am guessing none of these remarks on sonicity qualify as dwelling. But maybe the lack of critical time spent on sonicity simply reflects story being easier to talk about, that there are no sonic themes or trajectories whose evolutions can be explicated, that the sonicity of fiction occurs sentence by sentence and, when discussing a work as a whole, as critics often do, can only be captured in sweeping statements. Nevertheless, there undoubtedly are critics who routinely do dwell on the sonicity of fiction. William Gass, for example, is one of them.[9] At minimum, it seems there is good reason to question Kivy's descriptive claim about criticism. At bottom, Kivy's appeal to most people's reading tendencies and critics does not much strengthen the poetry argument.

But what positive reason do we have to think sonicity is important to fiction? It lies, I argue, in the fact that there are obvious exceptions to Kivy's general rule, and many more than he recognizes. Joyce's *Ulysses* is often considered in the top tier of works of fiction. It is, in other words, considered very good fiction, in large part because

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[7] Twelve, to be exact. Respectively, Albert Mobilio, Ray Sawhill, Alan Michael Parker, Carter Scholz, Gary Kamiya, A.O. Scott, Sylvia Brownrigg, Dwight Garner, Adam Begley, Sylvia Brownrigg (again), Adam Begley (again), David Lipsky, Lily Burana, Laura Miller, and (again) Laura Miller.

[8] This is the type of reader Kivy is most concerned with. See 2011, 33–34.

[9] Among his other critical collections, see *Finding a Form* (2009), in which he contends that "no prose can pretend to greatness if its music is not also great" (314).

of its mellifluous prose. It seems evidence of this, that *Ulysses*' sonicity contributes substantially to its evaluation as very good fiction, is found in its reputation, the history of criticism surrounding it, that each chapter is written in a distinctively different style, and that every year on June 16th (the day on which the events of *Ulysses* take place) people in Ireland and elsewhere gather for Bloomsday, when the novel is celebrated and read aloud.[10] As Kivy himself says, after claiming the novel, unlike poetry, is read in a rush, "One does not read Joyce or Proust that way" (2011, 71). One does not, because, in part, the prose is too sonorous to pass by so quickly; it requires "poetic pauses." But what Kivy misses is that it is not just poetic or mellifluous prose of which we need to take stock. There's also clunky prose and tinny prose and awkward prose and prose whose alliteration drags, all of which might require pauses, albeit pauses to cleanse the palate rather than "savor the 'sound'" (Kivy 2011, 72), and all of which, unlike with the sonicity of *Ulysses*, typically count against a work's value.[11] Consider, for example, the bit of criticism on Raymond Carver quoted above. Sonicity is a good- *or* bad-making feature of fiction, and one that has the potential to contribute substantially to a work's value or lack thereof. Story may certainly make up for bad-sounding prose, but the prose is still there, calling attention to itself.[12]

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[10] And note that, in general, people go to fiction readings in the same way that they go to poetry readings. Fiction readings are far from uncommon. In fact, fiction and poetry authors often get equal time in university reading series. So Kivy's point that we go to poetry readings does not show anything about poetry that can't be shown about fiction.

[11] And the qualification of "typically" is important, as there very well may be cases where clunky, tinny, or awkward prose is rightly considered a merit of a work, cases where such prose is deliberate, where the nature of a character or narrator calls for such prose, for instance.

[12] Numerous books have been recommended to me with the warning that no, the writing (read: prose) is not very good, but the story is.

What, though, of prose occupying the space between good and bad, prose that is neither clunky nor mellifluous, prose that appears plain? What of, say, Ian McEwan's "affectless" prose, as noted in the criticism above? While Kivy may be right that the sonic features of many of these works themselves don't have important aesthetic properties, such that the sonic features neither add nor detract much from the works' value, this does not entail that sonicity is not important to fiction as a whole, and thus that fiction is a non-aesthetic art. Rather, that there are cases where sonicity does add and detract significantly from a works' value *and* that language is the very medium of fiction demonstrates that sonicity is always relevant to the value of fiction. Minimally, that there are clear cases of fiction where sonic qualities play an important role in evaluation shows that sonic qualities are evaluatively relevant. We may justifiably consider sonic qualities in our evaluation of other works. This seems uncontroversial. When we justifiably find any quality to be important to our evaluation of a particular work, we may consider this new finding in our future assessments of other works, or we may even return to previously read works, hoping to see them afresh. Of course, in either new or revisited works, we simply may not find the quality up for consideration. For instance, layout, font choices, and colored text might justifiably be considered important to the value of Mark Danielewski's novel *House of Leaves*. But in most works of fiction, we will not find colored text; and it would be wrong to consider layout and font as part of most works of fiction, as these things are often neither designated nor determined by the author. However, things are quite different when it comes to sonic qualities. They are a feature of language; and since language is the very medium of fiction, sonic qualities will always be found in and part of any work. Once the literary community recognized sonicity as

important to the evaluation of a work of fiction, all works could legitimately be subjected to such evaluation, for all works have sonic qualities, whether one takes notice of not.

To put the point generally, it only takes one work of art *x* whose evaluation as good or bad is substantially or importantly due to a necessary feature of the art's medium *F* to demonstrate that *F* is always relevant to the value of the art of which *x* is a member. And "demonstrate" should be understood in a weak way. Whether the demonstration is epistemic (such that *x* simply made it known that *F* is always relevant) or constructive (such that *x* made it the case that *F* is always relevant) is of no issue to the general point. It is in virtue of the artworld recognizing *F* as important to the evaluation of *x* that *x* has demonstrated *F* as always evaluatively relevant to the art in question.

Now, even if I am right that (1) sonic qualities are evaluatively relevant to literary fiction and (2) sonic qualities are part of all works of literary fiction, it might be argued that it does not follow that (3) sonic qualities are *always* evaluatively relevant to all works of literary fiction, for an author might not intend for sonic qualities to be considered in the evaluation of her work. And, to be sure, it is easy to imagine an author having such an intention. But while the intentions of the author arguably do matter in some cases, this cannot be one of them. Any feature that is part of a work and evaluatively relevant is open for evaluation whether the author likes it or not. Our evaluation of literature is not held hostage to authorial intent willy-nilly.

IV. EXPERIENCING SONICITY

If sonicity is always evaluatively relevant to fiction, then in in order to fully experience works of fiction, we must experience their sonicity, we must hear the sound of

a work's language, and thus, when reading silently, we must subvocalize.[13] One implied reason Kivy appears to think sonicity is not important to fiction is that if it were, there would be much more re-reading of works of fiction, which he argues does not typically go on. The typical (non-serious and serious alike) reader reads a work of fiction only once. This is because "once you have negotiated the intricacies of the plot […] you have realized the intentions of the novelist *qua* story-teller," and thus exhausted the primary content of the work, or at least till you have forgotten the story (Kivy 2011, 7–8). It seems plausible that most readers only read a book and its passages once, that many authors craft their works "with a view to the effect it will have on the reader the first time through," and that storytelling plays a big (and maybe the primary) role in these considerations (Kivy 2011, 7). But while sonically good works of fiction might reward re-rereading, I do not think sonicity's importance requires re-reading of fiction. I think "hearing" the sentences in your head one time through will do the trick just fine.

Though this does not entail that the silent reading of fiction is performance (just as it does not with poetry), it does, however, seem to entail something strange about the ontology of literature, namely that its *instances*—the things that have all those experiential properties necessary to fully play the experiential role in the appreciation of literary works (see Davies 2011, 27)—are vocalized or subvocalized readings, not texts. As Barbara Herrnstein Smith points out, "texts are altogether mute objects" and thus require something to serve as the instrument of translating the text into an instance of the work (1970, 555). In short, questions of literature being a performing art aside, it looks

[13] Yes, it has been shown that "[s]ubvocal speech is present during silent reading for all individuals" (Riley 1981, 7). But this does not mean that every word, or nearly every word, is subvocalized, and this is what I think fully experiencing the sonicity of literature requires.

like the texts of literary works have the same ontological status as scores. But beside objections of the Bartel sort, along with counterexamples such as concrete poetry, this result might be too strange to buy. And I think it can be resisted.

While texts are mute and need a reader to transform the printed words into their pronounced counterparts, they too need a reader to cognize those words, sentences, and paragraphs. But this latter fact does not lead us to believe newspapers and textbooks, unvoiced, are not instances of those entities. So why should the former (arguable) fact lead us to believe copies of poetry collections and novels are not instances of corresponding works? It appears that readings would alone be instances of literary works only if literary works required performance or, performance or not, dramatization, replete with character voices and so on. Subvocalized silent reading is simply the means through which literary works are fully experienced. Yes, subvocalized silent reading does require something much like a performative interpretation of the way the prose (or verse) goes, which, most markedly, concerns cadence. So there is something akin to reading a score for solo voice. But the score is *for* voice; it is intended to be sung, *aloud*; it is music. Music requires an instrument to be fully experienced; the "music" of literature does not. The "instrument" of voice may aid in revealing *Ulysses*' sonicity, as may a guidebook or piece of criticism aid in revealing its cognitive content. Neither, however, are required.

2. HEARING IT RIGHT: RHYTHM AND READING

Within the philosophy of music, rhythm as a focus of concern is only fairly recent and long overdue, for rhythm is a crucial feature of music and the experience of music. But within the philosophy of literature, the matter of sound, let alone rhythm, has been sadly neglected. To be sure, literary theorists have long been concerned with rhythm. But there is still a gap to be filled when it comes to a philosophical treatment of the issue. In this chapter, I am out to begin the project of filling that gap. Though this is a tall order, my particular aims are modest. At minimum, I hope to clear the ground for further discussion of rhythm in the philosophy of literature. First, I establish a working account of rhythm as it pertains to literature. I have no intentions of attempting to settle the metaphysical question of what rhythm *really* is, but rather to provide a frame upon which questions of appreciation and value can hang, for it is these questions that I find most pressing. While we of course need to have some idea of what rhythm is in order to address the appreciation of it, there is no requirement to have its nature definitively pinned down. Second, I argue that if one is to appreciate the rhythm of a work of literature, reading is more demanding than typically thought, as it requires not only critical interpretation but also performative interpretation. To appreciate a literary work's rhythm, one must hear it right.

I. RHYTHM & LITERATURE

When a work of literature is read aloud, there is a temptation to talk about the work's music, especially when the work's verse or prose is mellifluous or euphonious. But strictly speaking, any reference to a literary work's music is metaphorical. Literature

does not contain bars or notes or time signatures. Nor does it contain any explicit instructions as to how its sentences or lines ought to be read. There are no directions to read *largo*, *presto*, or *forte*.[1] And when read aloud, it lacks two key features of vocal music signaled by Jerrold Levinson: "in song there is a *sustaining* of tones, with some degree of resonance and vibrato, and a *connecting* of sustained tones into a more or less continuous vocal line" (1996d, 43). Literature neither is nor contains music. Yet as William Gass notes, "prose has a pace; it is dotted with stops and pauses, frequent rests; inflections rise and fall like a low range of hills; certain tones are prolonged; there are patterns of stress and harmonious measures; there is a proper method of pronunciation, even if it is rarely observed" (2009a, 314). And surely the same goes for poetry, and maybe even more so, considering its addition of, at least in some cases, meter and lineation. If there is any place where talk of the musical features of literature is not metaphorical, it lies in the features that Gass enumerates. For like a work of music, a work of literature has rhythm, and the pauses, inflections, stresses, and pronunciation of its language all contribute to that rhythm.[2]

But before saying anything more about the features in a literary work that contribute to rhythm, something first must be said about what rhythm is *simpliciter*. Whatever *constitutes* rhythm in a work of literature, the rhythm *itself* is a singular feature to be experienced, and one in need of explanation and analysis. If literature has rhythm, literally so, then we should be able to get a fix on what that feature is by appealing to discussions of rhythm in the philosophy of music.

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[1] Though there is nothing in principle that would prevent a writer from including such directions.

[2] See Patel (2006) for a quick canvass of empirical studies that examine the similarities between rhythm in music and rhythm in language.

Rhythm

Minimally, rhythm is organized sound. A continuous, periodic, undifferentiated stream of sound does not have rhythm. For there to be rhythm, sound must be organized or differentiated in some fashion. Various features may do the work of this organization—stress, accent, pitch, or duration, for instance[3]—but it is the ordering itself that gives rise to rhythm. The simplest way to conceive of this organization is in terms of grouping. If we take a series of continuous, periodic, acoustically identical sounds and stress every fourth iteration, we will hear the sound as grouped—and thus organized—into fours. Beyond this minimal account, there is not a great deal of agreement as to what rhythm is. But there are two main issues around which disagreements cluster. The first is the distinction between rhythm and meter. The second is whether movement is essential to rhythm. As already noted, it is not the business of this chapter to weigh in on what rhythm really is. But even a working account of rhythm requires more than the minimal notion of organized sound. So a quick canvass of these issues is in order.

The general consensus among musicians, musicologists, and philosophers of music is that rhythm is distinct from meter, and conceiving of rhythm as mere grouping does not recognize this distinction. Rhythmic organization appears to be much freer and less codified than periodic sound. The rhythm of a piece of music often plays with or against a periodic beat, a grouping of sound that serves as the backdrop for rhythm. A paradigmatic example of this phenomenon is Ravel's *Bolero* (see Hamilton 2007, 136 and Scruton 2007, 236). Conversely, rhythm might exist without a sense of regularity or

[3] For a fairly exhaustive list of these features, see Scruton 1997, 24–31.

consistent periodic backdrop, as is the case in the "Sacrificial Dance" of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* (see Scruton 1999, 23). Thus is the traditional distinction between rhythm and meter justified. Meter (or beat) is periodic, organized sound. Rhythm is organized, non-periodic sound; it is something less constrained, something *more* or *other*. As Roger Scruton puts it, "Meter is the frame; rhythm the life that grows on it" (2007, 136). There are some, however, who do not see a distinction in kind. Rather, it is a matter of degree; meter is a particular, even if rigid, expression of rhythm.[4] And Andy Hamilton strikes a middle ground, arguing that though there is distinction in kind, rhythm cannot be understood independently of meter (2007, 141). Now, though the nature of this distinction is interesting and surely important, to fruitfully consider the appreciation of rhythm, we need not come down on the matter one way or the other. We need only recognize that rhythm does not reduce to meter; that much, at least, is clear.

Less agreed upon is the relationship between our experience of rhythm and rhythm itself. Our experience of rhythm seems to involve a sense of movement spatial in kind, a feeling often bound to actual or imagined bodily movement—foot-tapping or head-nodding, for instance. With our bodily movements it is as if we are tracking the movement of rhythm itself. This much seems uncontroversial. But what this characteristic experience of rhythm demonstrates about rhythm itself is up for debate. There are three possible positions. (1) Movement is an inessential, eliminable feature of experiencing rhythm (Budd 2008a, 167-168). While we *may* hear movement in rhythm, as if each note is brought about by the one before it, this is not an essential phenomenological component of rhythm. All hearing rhythm requires is noticing patterns

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[4] For a sketch of these positions, see Hamilton 2007, 136.

of stress and accent and so forth and the groupings of sounds that form as a result. Rhythm does not move and we need not hear it as doing such. (2) Movement is an essential, but metaphorical, feature of experiencing rhythm. To hear rhythm is to hear movement, a "virtual causality" among sounds, each bringing the next into being (Scruton 1999, 35 and 2007, 229). It is not simply that we may hear movement rhythm, but we *must*; otherwise, we are not in fact experiencing rhythm. Though rhythm does not have the physical property of movement, it has the phenomenological property of movement. (3) Movement is an essential, non-metaphorical feature of rhythm (Hamilton 2007, 144–45). To hear rhythm is to hear movement, but this movement is not a metaphorical projection. This does not mean that sounds literally bring each other into being or that sounds actually move through space. Such a position seems untenable. Nevertheless, the concept of rhythm cannot be pulled apart from movement. We do not take our concept of bodily movement as primary and then project it onto our description of rhythm; rather, the two are intertwined. And metaphor requires such projection.

The debate over movement in rhythm does ultimately have bearing on matters of appreciation. For Scruton and Hamilton, if one does not hear movement, one is not properly appreciating rhythm. But, as Scruton notes, this movement is a gestalt property (2007, 229). We can consider all the basic properties that give rise to rhythmic organization—and thus the properties one must be attentive to when experiencing rhythm—without worrying whether metaphorical or non-metaphorical movement supervenes on this rhythmic organization. At minimum, it is natural to hear movement in rhythm. And even if Budd is right that movement is an eliminable feature of experiencing rhythm, such eliminability does not mean such talk is not useful.

So then, a working account of rhythm boils down to three conditions: (1) rhythm is organized sound, (2) rhythm does not reduce to meter, and (3) rhythm may be—and often is—experienced as a sense of movement. With this account, we can now proceed to consider rhythm in literature.

Rhythmic Organization in Literature

It is clear that a literary work has properties of sound and that this sound is organized. This latter fact is largely in virtue of spoken language itself consisting of organized sound. Various features do the work of this organizing and it is worth enumerating some of them here, but I do not intend to provide a detailed analysis of any. Such analysis has been carried out in detail by both linguists and literary theorists. To get on with a general discussion of appreciating and evaluating rhythm in literature, it need only be clear that (a) literature has rhythm and (b) analyzable features give rise to this rhythm, even if not determinately so. The features that organize language rhythmically fall into three classes: features of pronunciation, features of intonation, and features of phrasing. I will address each briefly.

Correctly pronouncing a word requires enunciating the word's syllables and stressing those syllables correctly. Both how many syllables a word contains and which syllables receive more emphasis determine the patterning of sound, more and less so with respect to the language at hand. Some languages (such as French) are said to be *syllable-timed*, and others (such as English) *stress-timed* (see Wennerstrom 2001, 47). The distinction is intended to trace what feature of pronunciation—syllable number or stress—does the primary work in determining the time it takes to pronounce a word.

Now, this distinction is contested (see Patel and Daniele 2003, B36), but the important point is that both syllables and stress bear on the organization of sound in language. And with English, it is most salient with stress. For instance, a two-syllabled word with stress on the first syllable organizes sound much differently than a two-syllabled word with stress on the second syllable. Consider the words *rocket* and *Rockette* (Wennerstrom 2001, 47) or *content* defined as substance or meaning and *content* defined as satisfied. These example illustrates not only how stress organizes sound, but also that stress is determined—at least usually[5]—by the correct pronunciation of the word.

We should, however, distinguish stress from accent, where the latter is determined not by pronunciation, but by contextual cues. Important words often call for accent, for an increase in the pitch of one's voice (i.e. a change in intonation).[6] And since such increase in pitch can affect the time it takes to pronounce a word, it can affect rhythmic organization. This affect on rhythm comes when an accented syllable is normally unstressed, thereby altering the organization of sound mere pronunciation dictates. But of course what *counts* as "important" within a lexical unit might be open to more than one interpretation. Therefore, unlike stress, accent is not determined by the language at hand. So talking about *the* rhythm of a sentence becomes trickier, about which more will be said below.

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[5] Context may sometimes alter stress. Compare "sixteen believers" and "sixteen anecdotes" (Attridge 1995, 30). In the first phrase, it is natural to stress the second syllable of "sixteen" more than the first. But in the second phrase, it is natural to stress the first syllable of "sixteen" more. Perhaps a more conspicuous example is the pronunciation of "unknown" in the phrases "unknown assailant" and "Tomb of the Unknown Soldier" (Kelly and Bock 1988, 389). While one might stress the second syllable in the first phrase, it would be odd to do so in the second.

[6] Wennerstrom calls this *pitch accent* (2001, 18).

Phrasing—or the enunciation of phrases and clauses—raises similar issues. Yes, just as there are constraints on the proper pronunciation of words, there are also constraints on the proper enunciation of phrases. The most obvious constraint is syntax. Even if the primary function of punctuation is grammatical, translating that function into speech often requires enunciation of a particular kind. Commas call for pausing; and thus a list of items joined by conjunctions reads faster than a list individuated by commas. Periods sometimes call for a pause slightly longer in duration. Parentheses ask not only for a pause, but also a change in pitch, one that can affect the typical time it takes to pronounce a word. An introductory prepositional phrase demands a short pause, even if unpunctuated. But there are various degrees to which syntax can be properly enunciated, where these variances may affect the patterning of sound. Even less determinative of an individual phrasing is semantics. Just as perceived importance may influence intonation, so meaning may influence phrasing. As Scruton argues, "Speech is therefore a paradigm for us of a rhythmical organization generated not by measure and beat but by internal energy and the intrinsic meaningfulness of sound" (2007, 250). A phrase describing action or an agitated emotional state, for instance, may ask to be read swiftly, while a phrase with content more meditative in nature may encourage a slow, deliberate pace. What is expressed by a sentence gives it an "internal energy," a sense of how it ought to be phrased.[7] And we might turn to Derek Attridge for a means of parsing this internal energy more precisely. Attridge argues that most words are felt to have one of four basic types of movement, all of which influence the perceived grouping of words, and thus phrasing: "(1) they are part of a movement *toward* some point that lies ahead; (2) they are

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[7] And of course the rhythms prescribed by syntax and pronunciation may work against the internal energy of a phrase, sometimes for deliberate effect.

part of a movement *away from* some point that has already passed; (3) they are part of a relatively *static* moment from which something might develop; (4) they are part of a moment of *arrival* toward which the previous words have been moving" (1995, 183). Now, one might take issue with Attridge's analysis, with his four basic types, but it seems difficult to deny that sentences deserve analysis along these lines, that meaning influences phrasing and thus rhythm.

So since language contains features that organize sound non-periodically, it has rhythm. And since language is the medium of literature, insofar as an oral reading of a work is an instance of that work, works of literature have rhythm. But language's features of rhythmic organization also underdetermine rhythm. Thus, if there is any sense in determining a literary work's rhythm, interpretation must be part of the picture. However, before unpacking interpretation's role in determining rhythm, a quick discussion of meter is in order. Many poems have this additional means of rhythmic organization, and two things should be noted.

First, that a poem has a particular meter—that it is, for instance, in iambic pentameter—is not often indicated explicitly. While line breaks may arguably serve as the analog to bar lines, the meter of a poem's line is not noted anywhere in the poem's text. So unless the form of the poem is named in the title (e.g. Shakespeare's sonnets), one must *scan* a line to determine if it has meter and what that meter is, where scanning amounts to determining whether any linguistic features of rhythmic organization establish a periodic beat. If they do, the line has meter. But since linguistic features of rhythmic organization may underdetermine rhythm, they therefore also may underdetermine meter.

Second, that meter is usually a feature of verse rather than prose does not mean that poetry is more rhythmic than prose. On the one hand, some prose may have meter. William Faulkner's prose, for instance, is said to exhibit iambic pentameter (Pinsky 1998, 67 and 73). On the other hand, as noted above, rhythm does not reduce to meter. In fact, in some cases meter may overwhelm rhythm, subsuming any non-periodicity to periodic beat. Some argue that this is a common occurrence in rap music (Scruton 2007, 250 and Hamilton 2007, 136). And with enough emphasis on the beat of a metric poem, a reading can begin to lose the poem's rhythm. Some poems may even invite such readings, most likely to their detriment. In her guide to understanding and writing poetry, Mary Oliver warns against just this (1994, 43–44). So while poetry may, on the whole, be more metric, this only entails that its rhythms may tend to be more regular and thus more easily noticed, not that its rhythms are more rhythmic. Many prose writers clearly labor over their sentences' rhythms despite these sentences being non-metric. And Virginia Woolf went as far as believing that rhythm was the primary business of all good writing (see Sutton 2010).

Lineation itself also does not give reason to think verse is more rhythmic than prose. Lineation's influence on rhythm is less straightforward than it may seem. It might seem that line breaks constrain phrasing, calling, like commas and periods, for pause in enunciation. But it would be wrong to say they clearly function this way. Readers unfamiliar with the conventions of verse often treat them in this fashion, pausing longer than they would for a period. But many poets and scholars advise against this, urging that we read through line breaks, pausing only when the usual features of syntax demand we do (e.g. Pinsky 1998, 18). On this view, line breaks may only serve to amplify pause, and

even that function is questionable. Now, some do prescribe a brief pause at line breaks (e.g. Attridge 1995, 2); and this brief pause, of course, would result in rhythmic organization, but no more than syntax does in prose. Either way, there is no sense is saying, on the grounds of lineation, that verse is more rhythmic or has more ability to be rhythmic than prose.

Rhythm & Interpretation

Since the features of rhythmic organization in literature do not determine rhythm—at least not in any obvious way—we are faced with questions of interpretation. Some of these questions can be addressed in the usual fashion. What words carry special significance or importance and thus deserve special emphasis or accent? What is the mood conveyed in a line or sentence? Does it call for moments of slow and heavy phrasing, syllables elongated and perhaps exaggerated in some places? Or does it demand something staccato in nature? What is the best analysis of a passage's internal energy, as Scruton puts it and Attridge demonstrates? These questions all align with those addressed in literary critical practice, questions of theme, structure, semantic content, character, and so on. They fall within the purview of what Levinson calls *critical interpretation*.

Critical interpretation is a familiar feature in literary practice. A literary work's imagery, narrative, plot, characters, structure, and semantic content all have to hang together in one way or another, to greater and lesser degrees. And that hanging together, that complete picture of the work, is often non-obvious, thus requiring an interpretive account of some kind. Critical interpretation is the business of offering such accounts. As Levinson puts it, critical interpretation consists in "formulating a view of what a work

means or expresses and how it hangs together at various levels" (1996c, 61). Literary critics offer critical interpretations in print, in both academic and popular venues; general readers form book clubs and engage in critical interpretation in a less formal setting; informally, in our everyday lives, we might trade critical interpretations over coffee; and in solitude, when reading alone, reflecting on how the various features of a work should be understood or explained is far from foreign. Indeed, it seems reasonable to think critical interpretation is required for the full appreciation of a literary work. But even if one does not go that far, it cannot be denied that critical interpretation is entrenched in our practice, accepted as a norm in the literary enterprise.

Yet some questions concerning the interpretation of a literary work's features of rhythmic organization exceed the scope of critical interpretation; some are the business of what Levinson calls *performative interpretation*. With respect to music, performative interpretation "consists in deciding to play a score, taken as unequivocal or uncontroverted, in a particular way, in effect electing particular values of its defining, though never absolutely specific, parameters of tempo, rhythm, dynamics, accent, and phrasing" (Levinson 1996c, 61). In short, it is "a considered way of playing a piece of music" (Levinson 1996c, 63).[8] Clearly, such decisions are a crucial feature of musical practice, acknowledged as such by both performers and listeners alike. And if we are attending to rhythm in literature, such decisions with respect to the vocalization of a text, such considered ways of reading literature aloud, appear equally crucial, even if they are not a usual part of literary practice.

[8] I am simplifying things a bit. Levinson distinguishes between two modes of performative interpretation: *realizational* and *reconstructive* (1996c, 61–62). But rehearsing this distinction is not important to the concerns of this chapter.

While critical interpretation certainly *informs* an understanding of rhythm and provides guidance in matters of accent and phrasing—and thus informs and guides performative interpretation—critical interpretation does not uniquely determine performative interpretation. As Levinson puts it, “there are inevitably aspects of a PI [performative interpretation] that are irreducibly performative—aspects whose content may be signaled, though not captured, by phrases such as ‘*this* is how it should go’—and which thus could not be part of a CI [critical interpretation], necessarily expressed as it is in articulate terms” (1996c, 66). A CI that demands, say, accent on a word may be realized by various PIs. After all, there are various degrees of accent, with shadings subtle enough such that no plausible critical interpretation could dictate a particular one. The specificity required of such a CI would at best be absurd and at worst collapse the distinction between critical and performative interpretation. The particular values that realize accent and phrasing are firmly within the realm of PI.

It is also important to note that the underdetermination goes both ways. A PI may seem to suggest a certain CI; but, as Levinson notes, it would be a mistake to believe we can infer any one critical interpretation from a PI (1996c, 77–86). To be sure, accent may indicate importance of some kind, but accent alone does not indicate what that kind is. And inferring much about a CI from a particular phrasing seems even worse off. Slow and heavy phrasing of a literary passage is compatible with CIs that consider the passage somber or lethargic or especially tense and fraught with narrative tension, among other moods.

Given this underdetermination in both directions, one might be inclined to think that there is no sense in talking about *the* rhythm of a literary work, for a literary work’s

rhythm is indeterminate. If CIs are the means through which PIs are justified, even if we agree that there is a single correct CI, there is still no principled way to settle on a PI. Among the set of PIs suggested by a CI, one might prefer one PI over another. But it is hard to see what reasons could be offered for that PI—and thus that realization of rhythm—being the correct or best one. Since we cannot infer any particular CI from a PI, it cannot be argued that one's favored PI best reveals the correct CI. Nor is there much help in appealing to the author of the work having that PI. Just as Goldman notes that "composers who conduct are not always the best conductors or interpreters of their own works" (2013, 34), authors are not always the best oral readers of their own works. And some are aware of this. William Gaddis, for instance, abstained from giving readings of his novels, noting that "[y]ou have to be a sort of actor to get away with reading it aloud" (2002, 129).

The only option I see for settling on a single PI and thus *the* rhythm of a literary work is if one subscribes to an aesthetic maximization view of interpretation, at least in part. Clearly, if one believes the best interpretation in every instance is the interpretation that maximizes aesthetic value, then, in principle, determining the best PI is simple. Choose the PI—and thus rhythm—that yields the greatest aesthetic value.[9] But interestingly, even if one does not take an aesthetic maximization view with respect to CI, one might take an aesthetic maximization view with respect to PI. While making a coherent argument for this hybrid view might prove difficult, settling the question of the best PI follows the same path as the full-blooded aesthetic maximization view.

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[9] Of course, in practice this determination is not so easy.

Now, few may subscribe to views of this sort. But rejecting aesthetic maximization does not entail that we should toss PIs to the wind. *The* rhythm of a literary work may be indeterminate in that no one PI can capture it. But vocalization or subvocalization are the only means through which literature's rhythm can be experienced. And (sub)vocalizations can only be experienced one at a time. So while the rhythm of a literary work may be indeterminate among a class of PIs, we only have experiential access to the work's rhythm through those PIs, and they may only be experienced individually. Unlike with CI, there is no possibility of a comprehensive PI that encompasses the entire class. Single PIs are the means through which a literary work's rhythm is experienced, be it indeterminate or not. But this should not be cause for concern. As Peter Lamarque notes, "Few would hold that for each play or musical work there must be a single right performance, even though performances are judged for their effectiveness and fidelity to the work" (2002, 302). There may be no comprehensive PI that allows us, in one go, to experience *the* rhythm of a literary work, but each PI that is a member of the appropriate class allows us to experience a different aspect of a work's rhythm, uniquely illuminating through the particular values of accent and phrasing it elects, in the particular realization of rhythm it brings to the fore.

II. APPRECIATING RHYTHM

With rhythm's place in literature roughly sorted, we are now able to address the question of what it takes to appreciate that rhythm. While rhythm may be the feature literature shares in common with music, appreciating rhythm in literature is a bit more complicated. To be sure, if we are listening to an audio book, appreciating the work's

rhythm may look a lot like the appreciation of rhythm in music. In both cases, attentive listening is in order. But much of our engagement with literature is done in solitude, written copy of the work in hand. And when reading literature alone, appreciating a work's rhythm is not a matter of attentive listening. It is a more demanding affair. The goal of this section is to sort out just how demanding that affair is.

Degrees of Appreciation

Since PIs are the means through which rhythm in literature is experienced, they are the means through which we may appreciate rhythm in literature, even if CIs may enhance or supplement that appreciation. So the degree to which we can appreciate a literary work's rhythm depends on the quality or competence of the PI to which we are attending. Some rough distinctions will be useful. With respect to the rhythm of some work *W*, say that a *best PI* accurately represents all determinate features of rhythmic organization in *W* (e.g. word order and stress) and is compatible with the best CI of *W*. Say that a *strong PI* accurately represents all determinate features of rhythmic organization in *W* and is compatible with a plausible CI of *W* (i.e. a CI that is at least a live option for understanding *W*). Say that a *weak PI* accurately represents all determinate features of rhythmic organization in *W* but is not compatible with a plausible CI of *W*. And say that an *inadequate PI* does not accurately represent all determinate features of rhythmic organization in *W* and is not compatible with a plausible CI of *W*. Certainly a minimal condition for adequacy in any interpretation is getting all the determinate features of a work right, the features not open to interpretation. Any PI that, for instance,

involves pronouncing "rocket" as *Rockette* or not pausing whatsoever at a period is fundamentally deficient.

While hearing a work's rhythm right consists in attending to a best PI, it is questionable whether we can, in practice, determine a class of best PIs. Typically, we will have to settle for a strong PI. And provided that there is not an agreed upon class of best PIs, strong PIs will be in contention for inclusion in that class. Thus strong PIs offer the fodder for intelligent debate over whether one is hearing a work's rhythm right. So provided that there is not consensus on a class of best PIs, strong PIs offer the opportunity for adequate appreciation of a work's rhythm.

Hearing Rhythm

Yet simply *listening* to a strong PI does not result in adequate appreciation of a work's rhythm. One must *follow* the rhythm presented in the PI, along with the effect that rhythm generates; one must recognize the patterns of sound[10] and how those patterns influence or fit with the content of the work. So, for example, when listening to a strong PI of William Gaddis's *JR* or *Carpenter's Gothic*, if one is adequately appreciating their rhythm, one will recognize patterns of sound within sentences that, as Jonathan Raban plausibly claims, brilliantly capture the way we speak now, "with a wicked fidelity to its flimsy grammar, its elisions and hiatuses, its rush-and-stumble rhythms. When Gaddis's characters open their mouths, they're apt to give voice to sentences like car pileups in

[10] And depending on who you ask, one must also hear movement in a passage due to those patterns. Though whatever view one takes on movement and rhythm, it certainly is natural to talk about the way a sentence or line moves, whether that talk is eliminable or not.

fog, with each new thought smashing into the rear of the one ahead and colliding with the oncoming traffic of another speaker's words" (2004, 164).

This does not, however, mean that one must be able to describe Gaddis's prose in this fashion or, for that matter, in any fashion. As Levinson notes of someone who understands a piece of music, one "need only have an implicit grasp of these things—in his bones and ears, so to speak" (1996b, 36).[11] Adequate appreciation of rhythm does not require an ability to *describe* or *explain* what one has heard. Rather, as Levinson argues of musical literacy, it is fundamentally a matter of "*hearing it in an appropriate way*, in virtue of the experiences one has had and the resulting reorganization of one's mental space" (1996b, 36), something that "can be evidenced in having the right kinds of affective responses at the right points; by the character of one's reactions to alterations, rearrangements, truncations of the [rhythmic] progression; in the way one [...] attempts to reproduce given passages; and in the answers to simple questions designed to probe whether the sort of aural experience constitutive of comprehending listening has occurred (e.g., 'Do you hear X as more similar to Y or to Z?' 'Do you hear W as a continuation of V or not?')" (1996b, 39–40). In this way, literacy with respect to literature goes beyond mere verbal literacy, beyond the mere grasp of an articulate meaning, and into a shared space with musical literacy.

But of course this does not give us a complete picture of adequately appreciating rhythm in literature. Listening to literature—via audiobooks or live readings—only accounts for a small portion of most people's engagement with literature. Reading is the primary mode of literary consumption.

[11] Malcolm Budd (2008b, 139–41) argues a similar line.

Reading & Rhythm

When reading, we do not have the luxury of merely listening to a PI; we must produce a PI ourselves in order to attend to rhythm. Thus, when reading, in order to adequately appreciate a literary work's rhythm, we must produce a strong PI ourselves. And so, in reading, literature's primary mode of consumption, attending to rhythm radically diverges from musical literacy, and is, in a sense, a more demanding affair. Yet there is a question of how intentional a reader's production of a strong PI must be to enable adequate appreciation, and thus just how demanding the adequate appreciation of rhythm is when reading. If a reader must herself *have* a strong PI, the demands of appreciating rhythm appear, at first blush, incredibly high, perhaps prohibitively so.

Of a musical performance, Levinson distinguishes three degrees of intentionality, "three relations that may obtain between a performance of a work W and performative interpretations of W" (1996c, 75). A performance may *correspond* to a possible PI, *embody* an actual PI, or *advance* a PI. Every performance trivially corresponds to a possible PI, as every performance "always instantiates some way of playing or other" (1996c, 75). But merely corresponding to a possible PI does not mean that the performance actually contains a PI, that it embodies someone's considered way of playing the piece, even if that someone is not the performer. But if a performance does embody a PI, and the performer either formed the PI herself or embraces the PI as her own, then the performance not only embodies a PI but also advances it.

Now, while some oral readings of literary works are certainly performances (e.g. audio book narrations and live readings), I think most of the reading we do, usually in

relative solitude, does not qualify as performance. So I will continue to speak simply of one's *reading* of a literary work. Thus, how demanding adequate appreciation of a literary work *W*'s rhythm is when reading turns on the relationship that must obtain between one's reading of *W* and performative interpretations of *W*. But nothing in my ensuing analysis depends on the view that solitary readings, be they vocal or subvocal, are typically not performances. My account functions just the same for those who believe solitary readings of literary works are performances.[12]

While every musical performance corresponds to a possible PI, only *oral* readings correspond to a possible PI, as rhythm is a product of organized sound. Thus, a minimal requirement for appreciating rhythm when reading is that the text of the work be vocalized or subvocalized.[13] And of all possible PIs, it is only strong PIs that offer the opportunity for adequate appreciation. So the question is whether oral readings may merely correspond to a possible strong PI or must embody or advance a strong PI.

Since no more than one PI (be it possible or actual) can be represented in a reading, if one's oral reading *R* merely corresponds to a possible strong PI of a literary work *W*, *R* does no more for the reader's appreciation of *W*'s rhythm than an oral reading that corresponds to *any* possible PI. This is because little thought has been given to *R*, with accents unconsciously uttered and phrasings resulting out of necessity. After all, the text of *W* must be read some way or other. Thus there is no sense in saying that the reader *follows* the rhythm presented in *R*. If she did, then her accenting and phrasing in *R* would

[12] Like, for instance, Peter Kivy (2010 and 2006).

[13] I am assuming that subvocalization sufficiently replicates the perceptual experience of hearing a vocalization, at least when it comes to rhythm. However, nothing of radical consequence turns on this assumption. If subvocalization is not in fact robust enough to replicate the perceptual experience of hearing a vocalization, then that simply means no less than vocalization is required.

necessarily be considered, as it would be a focus of her attention, and so *R* would at least embody a strong PI. Thus, *R*'s mere correspondence to a possible strong PI is clearly insufficient for adequate appreciation of *W*'s rhythm.

To be sure, it seems unlikely that any unreflective oral reading would just happen to correspond to a possible strong PI. Perhaps the likelihood increases with one's general aptitude in oral reading. It is at least conceivable that someone especially practiced in oral reading might stumble into producing an *R* that corresponds to a possible strong PI of *W*. And interestingly, *R* could in principle offer an attentive listener the opportunity for adequately appreciating *W*'s rhythm.[14] But during her production of *R*, the reader is simply too inattentive to adequately appreciate *W*'s rhythm.

For similar reasons, an oral reading *R* that embodies a strong PI does not necessarily put the reader in a better position with respect to appreciating rhythm. Yes, for *R* to embody a strong PI of *W*, the reader must have at least decided to produce the PI in *R*. But this does not entail that the reader is reflective in the act of producing *R*. Consider someone who unreflectively mimics, in her oral reading *R* of *W*, another oral reading *R** of *W*, and as a result faithfully reproduces the strong PI presented in *R**.[15] Imagine her dream is to become an audio book narrator and she is practicing her craft by simply copying a master, with her concentration focused solely on strict reproduction. *R* certainly embodies a strong PI (namely, the one presented in *R**). But in the production

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[14] Imagine a talented audio book narrator who records an unreflective oral reading *R* that happens to correspond to a possible strong PI of *W*. If a listener follows the rhythm presented in *R*, then the listener has adequately appreciated *W*'s rhythm, even if the narrator has not. Of course the narrator could, upon listening to her own recording, do the same, and even then, at the point of listening, adopt the possible PI as her own actual PI of *W*. But during the act of producing *R*, the narrator does not adequately appreciate *W*'s rhythm.

[15] As Levinson considers of the musical case (1996c, 75).

of *R*, the reader no more *follows* the rhythm realized in *R* than does a computer programmed to reproduce *R**.[16]

Of course, this does not mean that a reader cannot, in principle, follow the rhythm presented in her oral reading that embodies a strong PI of *W*. One may choose in her oral reading *R* to reproduce a strong PI of *W*, not embrace that PI as her own, and still closely attend to the PI as she executes it in *R*. Thus, one need not *have* a strong PI in order to adequately appreciate a literary work's rhythm; one need only deliberately reproduce a strong PI and closely attend to the rhythm realized in her reproduction. But when it comes to the practice of solitary reading, this would be unusual. When reading, we typically come to a literary work fresh, never before having read or listened to another read it aloud. In this context, it would be by a stroke of wild chance that any oral reading would embody a strong PI. Thus, when reading a work alone for the first time, a reader must advance a strong PI in her oral reading in order to adequately appreciate a literary work's rhythm. She must choose to phrase and place accents in a considered way, such that she believes her choices capture the way the work should be read aloud. In other words, she must *have* a strong PI of the work.

While it may seem, then, that the demands for adequately appreciating rhythm are incredibly high, it is important to keep a few things in mind. First, in virtue of advancing a PI, a reader follows the rhythm realized in that PI. Thus in virtue of advancing a strong PI, a reader adequately appreciates the rhythm of the work. Nothing additional is required.

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[16] It is also worth noting that a reader could mimic herself, unreflectively reproducing a strong PI she formed at some previous time. At the time she formed the PI, the reader adequately appreciated rhythm; but at the time of self-mimicry, she does not.

Second, the requirements for a strong PI itself are not incredibly high. The majority of literature's features of rhythmic organization are features of language generally. So if a reader is fluent in the language in which a literary work is written, making considered choices about accent and phrasing will be far from foreign to her. In fact, such decisions will most likely come naturally. For such a reader, making linguistic judgments based on context and semantic importance is an everyday affair. In principle, for fluent readers, constructing a strong PI of a literary work largely amounts to marshaling and deploying everyday skills. By intending to be sensitive to a literary work's rhythm, a fluent reader's construction of a strong PI is not far off. To be sure, some literary works may have complex syntax, and thus rhythms that may be complicated to realize and follow in one's first reading, fluent or not (e.g. the novels of William Gaddis).[17] But this does not somehow raise the difficulty of constructing a strong PI in principle. Many literary works deemed "difficult" are so deemed in virtue of their complicated syntax (see, for example, Franzen 2003). And yes, even executing a strong PI of a work without complex rhythms may be difficult to do flawlessly. But a PI cannot be mechanically read off an oral reading. As Levinson notes, "Mistakes of execution [...] are not generally accounted part of the PI involved in a performance; we idealize somewhat, bracketing such unintended, unwanted features, so that it is only the performance with those practical blemishes removed that properly represents the

[17] Interestingly, vocalizing rhythmically complicated works may be the best way for one to hone one's ability to construct strong PIs. Benjamin and Schwanenflugel (2010) found that with children of diverse fluency levels, when instructed to read two texts aloud, each with different degrees of syntactic difficulty, "[c]hildren's intonation contour was more adultlike with the more difficult text" (399). This suggests that more difficult texts encourage better reading prosody.

performer's PI" (1996c, 64). Likewise, it is only the idealized oral reading that properly represents the readers PI.

Third, to *have* a strong PI, a reader need not be able to *explain* why her PI is strong. Though accents and phrasings must be chosen deliberately, the felt *reasons* for these choices may be intuitive and non-verbal, sentences, in a sense, seemingly just moving in particular ways. As Levinson notes, "a performer need not be able to articulate reasons why his way of playing is right or true to the work's expressiveness or structure in order for us to say he possesses a PI, so long as he feels, upon consideration, that the work should be played in such and such a manner and is so able to play it. To insist on more is to narrow unjustifiably the gap between a PI and a CI" (Levinson 1996c, 75–76). And given that it is at least likely that there is no singular best PI, a reader need only feel, upon consideration, that her oral reading is *one* way the work should be read aloud. Most would agree that the rhythm of a literary work may be rightly realized in more than one way.

So for a fluent reader—and certainly one practiced in oral reading—adequately appreciating rhythm when reading alone is not, I think, so daunting after all. To be sure, it is not part of common reading practice. But an avid reader of literature should be able to build strong PIs into her repertoire without too much difficulty.

III. RHYTHM & VALUE

Even if I am right about the demands of adequately appreciating rhythm in literature, one might question whether readers need to attend to a literary work's rhythm all that often. It might seem that appreciating rhythm is rarely required to fully appreciate

a literary work. To be sure, there may be some works whose rhythm requires attending to, works where rhythm stands to the fore, works whose authors evidently care a great deal about rhythm and craft their sentences accordingly, authors like Virginia Woolf, William Gaddis, and James Joyce, along with many poets. But this obviously does not encompass most, let alone all, of literature. Especially rhythmic works are the exception. And it seems absurd that one should need to attend to rhythm in drugstore romance novels in order to fully appreciate them. It may be interesting to explore the demands of attending to rhythm in literature, one might think, but nothing discovered in that exploration bears on the reading of literature generally.

Offering a full argument to the contrary is beyond the scope of this chapter. At worst, I hope to have said something interesting about the works in which attending to rhythm is required or worthwhile, even if such cases are only a subset of literature. But I will give a few reasons why rhythm in literature is generally worth attending to.

First, considerations of rhythm are common in literary criticism.[18] So if assessing the value of literary works is at least part of the primary business of literary criticism—as it intuitively seems and as Carroll (2009) argues[19]—then it would seem that rhythm is deserving of our attention when reading. And it is reasonable to think that criticism explicitly serves a social function, one that aids readers in appreciating the value of literary works.

Second, dialogue is a feature of much prose. Often, one of the goals when writing dialogue is that it be natural, that it feel real, that it capture the kinds of things real people

[18] For a sampling of the evidence, browse past issues of the *New York Times Book Review*. At the time of this writing, a search for "rhythm and novel" returns over 700 results.

[19] See especially chapter one of Carroll (2009).

say and the *way* they say them. Successful realist dialogue captures the rhythms of real speech; and one trouble with much novice writing is its failure to do that, its tendency to contain stiff, stilted dialogue (see, for instance, Lamott 1994, 64–66 and Burroway 1992, 135). So it seems that rhythm worth attending to does not just reside in the ornate, complicated, and prominent realms of literature.

Third, a common recommendation given to budding writers of literature is to read their work aloud so they may be more sensitive to its rhythms (e.g. Burroway 2011, 205; Gardner 1985, 153; Gotham Writers' Workshop Faculty 2003, 115; LaPlante 2007, 554; Mills 2006, 35, 91; and Prose 2006, 56). Now, it may not be that everything budding writers are instructed to do or be sensitive to is something deserving of our attention when reading. For instance, another common recommendation is that budding writers should write daily, so as to tune their writing muscles; and a writer's writing schedule is surely not relevant to our appreciation of her work. But we at least have good reason to attend to things writers are often instructed to attend to when those things bear directly on the writer's work.

Finally, it is important to keep two senses of the term "appreciation" distinct: (1) to grasp the value of and (2) to value or regard positively in virtue of experiencing. And it seems wise to follow Levinson in distinguishing the first sense as *evaluation per se* (2009, 415). Given this distinction, I admit that we need not attend to rhythm to fully appreciate at least some literary works. But it does seem that we need to attend to rhythm to properly evaluate literary works. To fully grasp the value of a work, consideration of both good- and bad-making features is required. When evaluating a work, we do not simply sum the good-making features; rather, we weigh the good and bad and come to an

overall view of the work's value. Thus, with respect to literary evaluation, it is odd to suggest that the only works whose rhythm requires attending to are those whose rhythmic fashioning is prominent and presumably counts as a good-making feature. If anything delimits the relevance of rhythm in evaluation, it certainly cannot be the particular value of a work's rhythm. For instance, we might well consider the novels of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce as better than those of the drugstore romance variety because of the poor rhythm evidenced by the latter. Thus even if my exploration of the demands of adequately appreciating rhythm in literature is of no concern for the full appreciation of many literary works, it at least seems to be of concern for such works' proper evaluation.

3. THE PUZZLE OF FACTUAL PRAISE

On the one hand, literary fiction is just that: fiction. So it seems truth should have no bearing on its value as literature and, thus, our appreciation of it as such. And yet, on the other hand, it seems there are clear cases where a fictional work's getting the facts right at least appears to matter to our evaluation of it as a work of literature. Historical facts are a prime example, so much so that Christopher Bartel (2012) argues for what he calls *the puzzle of historical criticism*. Despite obvious conflict, we are not willing to give up the intuitions that (a) fiction is free from the constraints of historical truth and (b) historical inaccuracies sometimes count against the artistic value of works of fiction. I argue that this puzzle extends beyond historical facts. While it is especially salient that historical accuracy at times appears to be relevant to evaluation of literary fiction, such relevance appears to be a feature of facts in general. Furthermore, I argue that this relevance is more than mere appearance. Resolving the conflict calls for a revision of the make-believe theory of fiction.

I. THE PUZZLE OF HISTORICAL CRITICISM

It is hard to see how a work of fiction can assert anything about the real world, let alone assert something true of the real world. In part, what distinguishes fiction from nonfiction, what makes fiction fiction, is that it *constructs* worlds rather than describing the real world. Unlike nonfictional texts, fictional texts are not constrained by the facts; we do not subject them to the same truth evaluation as we do of, say, journalism or textbooks or philosophy. "And," as John Gibson puts it, "this implies an independence of literary content from factual content; indeed, it suggests that the presence of the former

reveals a turning-away from the latter" (2007, 29). Fictional works do not ask us to believe; they ask us to *make-believe* (see Currie 1990 and Walton 1990). When we apply the sentences of fictional works to the real world, most of them turn out to be false. The make-believe theory of fiction makes sense of this. Even with cases of realist—or mimetic—fiction, mimesis is a relationship of *resemblance*, not reference. Realist fiction may resemble the real world, but it does obviously not refer to it. To quote Gibson again, "Literature is not brought before the basic semantic court of worldly truth and reference" (2007, 29). If this is right, then it is wholly unclear how fictional works could get any purchase on the real world. And pointing to cases where the line between fiction and nonfiction is blurred—the "new" journalistic works of Norman Mailer and Tom Wolfe, for instance—does little good, for what is at issue are unequivocally fictional works.

Yet, despite the nature of fiction, it seems historical inaccuracies sometimes count against the artistic value of unequivocally fictional works. As an example, Bartel (2012, 213) appeals to the film *U-571*, which chronicles a pivotal event in World War II. In the film, a German-disguised US naval crew boards a German submarine and captures its Enigma cipher machine, which is needed to break the German Navy's coded messages. In reality, an Enigma cipher machine is captured in the fashion portrayed in the film, and with the same important consequences for the war, but it is the British—not the US—Navy that is responsible for the mission. The filmmakers made this change to appeal to an American audience. But while the film enjoyed general success in the US, it received serious criticism for its distortion of history. As Bartel notes, even Tony Blair publicly condemned the film (2012, 221). Since the film centers on the story of the capture of the

Enigma machine, there appears to be a demand for, or at least expectation of, being faithful to the key elements of that story.

Now, to be sure, Bartel is concerned primarily with film and I am concerned primarily with literature. But in the matter of whether truth matters to the artistic merit of a fictional work, I see nothing special with respect to film or literature. And criticism of historical inaccuracies also shows up in the domain of literature. One notable example is Philippa Gregory's *The Other Boleyn Girl*. Though the novel enjoyed large commercial success, it also received a good deal of criticism on account of numerous historical inaccuracies.[1]

So, given that these cases are merely representative of many more like them, it looks as though the standard conception of the nature of fiction as make-believe is in conflict with a general expectation that some fiction owes a certain degree of fidelity to the historical facts. On the one hand, there is the intuition that fiction is free from the constraints of historical truth; on the other hand, there is the intuition that historical inaccuracy sometimes counts against the literary (or, more broadly, artistic) value of some works. And most of us are not willing to give up either intuition. So it seems that either the standard account of fiction as make-believe must be adjusted to accommodate the relevance of historical truth to artistic value, or else the intuition that historical truth is relevant to artistic value must be explained away.

One means of doing that explaining away amounts to pinning the intuition on genre conventions (see, for instance, Lamarque 2009). The thought goes as follows. In order to be a member of some genre, a work must abide by the conventions of that genre,

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[1] For the most comprehensive review of this criticism, see Bordo 2013.

and one convention of the genre of historical fiction is historical accuracy. So, in cases like *U-571* and *The Other Boleyn Girl*, what has, strictly speaking, gone wrong is not that these works have played loose with historical facts *per se*, but rather that they have failed to meet the conventions of the genre of which they are members. They have broken genre conventions; and that is their flaw. Thus the apparent tension in our intuitions is just that: merely apparent. Fiction in general *is* free from the constraints of historical truth, but works of historical fiction must meet special *conventional* demands as members of that genre. The nice thing about this approach is that it does seem to explain why we only sometimes care about historical inaccuracies in works of fiction. As Bartel notes, “Comedies seem almost entirely immune to historical criticism: no one ever seriously complains that Mel Brooks’s *History of the World, Part 1* (1981) is a bad film because it is historically inaccurate” (2012, 216)! And in virtue of belonging to the genre we might call “alternative history,” our expectations with respect to historical accuracy are a mixed bag. Such works must take liberties with the course of historical events and yet also be faithful to matters of, for instance, historical setting and dress. For instance, Quentin Tarantino’s *Inglorious Bastards* is an alternative account of World War II and thus free from constraints and expectations of historical accuracy concerning events. But, as Bartel notes, “the costumes, props, and setting still aim for some historical accuracy. If Tarantino’s actors had been communicating by the use of mobile phones, then such historical liberties would likely not be condoned” (2012, 216).

But it is not so clear that this appeal to genre conventions really *explains* our intuitions that historical accuracy sometimes matters in the evaluation of fictional works. Criticism of some fictional works on the grounds of historical accuracy really does seem

to be a matter of such works failing to be historically accurate, period, not a matter of such works failing meet the demands of their genre. So even if an appeal to genre conventions helps with the metaphysics of historical criticism, it does not seem adequate to the phenomenology. Then again, a proponent of this account may just say, “So much the worse for our intuitions.” Now, here it would be nice to have an argument as to why our intuitions are so far askew. But failing that, at least an argument is in order as to why we should think an appeal to genre does the metaphysical work desired, for it is questionable that it does.

First, as Bartel points out, it is not clear whether genre plays an evaluative or categorical role (2012, 217). In failing to meet certain demands on historical accuracy, this may mean works like *U-571* and *The Other Boleyn Girl* simply do not qualify as historical fiction, even if that was the intention of the creators and the expectation of viewers and readers. Or maybe, as with science fiction and its distinctions between “hard” and “soft” works, there are gradations within historical fiction such that *U-571* and *The Other Boleyn Girl* fall short of being “hard.” Either way, if genre serves solely a categorial (rather than evaluative) function, then any criticism on the grounds of historical inaccuracy would amount to criticism of a creator for failing to satisfy her intentions, or else mere expression of disappointment that a work is not of some genre.[2] Second, if the demand for historical accuracy is a matter of genre convention, it seems that the problem of how a fictional work could be constrained by truth in the actual world becomes the problem of how a genre of fictional works could impose a constraint

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[2] One might take the position that the categorial role of genre has an evaluative mechanism built in, where some genres have more merit than others (for example, one might think hard science fiction has more merit than soft science fiction). But of course this position still comes with the burden of giving an argument for such evaluative mechanism.

governed by truth in the actual world. Maybe an available response here is that historical fiction is not strictly or purely a genre of fiction. But even if a satisfying account of how to approach the hybrid works of historical fiction can be given, a larger problem looms, namely that the puzzle of historical fiction extends beyond historical fiction. It is a puzzle that applies to fictional literary works in general.[3] Despite obvious conflict, we have intuitions that (a) fiction is free from the constraints of truth and (b) accuracy is sometimes relevant to the literary value of works of fiction. This, at least, is what I argue in the following section.

II. EXTENDING THE PUZZLE

There are two ways the puzzle of historical fiction might be generalized to all literary fiction: by appealing to thematic truth or factual truth. While the former may seem intuitively compelling, I argue it does not pave the path to the generalization of the puzzle. We do not evaluate the merit of a literary work by the truth of its thematic concerns—its implied general propositions about human life[4]—but rather by the plausibility of such concerns. What leads to the generalized puzzle is the expectation of fidelity to certain facts. Despite a work of fiction being just that—*fiction*—it is, in some of its fictional assertions, expected to get things about the real world right.

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[3] And more broadly, as noted above, I see no reason why it does not extend to all works of narrative fiction. But I will not explicitly argue for that in this chapter.

[4] More generally, following Lamarque, we might define a *thematic concern* as "a perspective or vision or general reflection that informs the subject matter and moves beyond the immediate events portrayed," "a unifying thread that binds together incident and character in an illuminating way" (2009, 150). But certainly any general proposition about human life implied by the entirety of a literary work falls under this more general definition. And the perspectives, visions, or unifying threads that we tend to be interested in are those that deal in human life.

Thematic Truth

A seemingly obvious place where truth appears to be relevant to literary evaluation generally is in the truths found in literary works' themes. For instance, M. W. Rowe asks us to imagine works whose themes show that "nudism makes you intelligent, or that cruelty to children makes them outgoing and well adjusted" (1997, 337). He then goes on to claim that not only would such idiotic ideas count against the literary value of the works that express them, they would debar the works from the category of literature. Even if we set the stronger claim aside, which I am more than skeptical of, Lamarque objects to the weaker one on the grounds that *imagining* some work that has a blatantly false theme distorts the enterprise of literary interpretation; we must begin with a specific, *actual* work, not an imagined general statement (2006, 138). When we do consider specific works, we see that it is common for them to develop conflicting themes, such that this conflict does not appear to affect our evaluation of the works' value. A paradigmatic case of this is the question of whether we have free will.

Nevertheless, I think Rowe's point has an intuitive pull we cannot ignore. If we look to terms found in standard criticism of literary works, we find "[w]ords like 'sentimental,' 'unrealistic,' 'improbably,' 'priggish,' 'immature,' 'adolescent,' and so forth" (Rowe 1997, 338). So we owe some explanation that accounts for the use of such terms. Rowe thinks the explanation must lie with some notion of truth or adequacy to the facts.[5] But I think there is a better explanation, one that accounts for the use of such terms and the intuition that a blatantly false theme counts against a work's literary value as well as the fact that conflicting themes do not appear to affect our value judgments. What I

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[5] As does Miller (1979).

have in mind is Peter Kivy's plausibility theory, which has it that "it is a good-making feature of a literary work that it expresses a live hypothesis as part of its purpose, a bad-making feature if it expresses a dead one," where a *live hypothesis* is, to the reader, at least a viable candidate for belief, even though she might not believe it (2006, 102). If we exchange "theme" for "purpose," it seems Kivy's theory can both do the explanatory work we want and save the phenomena Lamarque points out. It explains both why Rowe's imagined theme would (most likely) count against the value of a work and yet why a theme concerning the question of free will would not, whatever the fact of the matter is. Something that appears to a reader as a viable candidate for belief need not have any relationship to truth or factual adequacy. So an appeal to thematic truth does not result in a more general version of Bartel's puzzle.

Factual Truth

However, there is another type of case Rowe evokes that Kivy's plausibility theory cannot handle. These are cases of factual falsehoods within the text of a literary work. Rowe provides a handful of specific examples where works get the facts wrong and where it is hard to deny that the errors matter to the evaluation of the works (Rowe 1997, 333–35).[6] In the first edition of *Middlemarch*, Eliot describes a character's pupils as dilated from the effects of opium, when opium in fact causes the pupils to contract. After this was pointed out to her, she made the correction in a later edition. An error more serious with respect to plot occurs in Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. The glasses of a shortsighted character, Piggy, are stolen in order to light fires. Concave lenses, however,

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[6] The first two of these cases he takes from Ricks (1996).

diffuse rather than concentrate light, and so cannot be used to light fires. But Piggy could not simply be made long-sighted because his shortsightedness is crucial to an incident in the plot. And an error maybe even more serious concerns imagery in Larkin's poem "Absences." At the poem's beginning, he describes waves offshore dropping like walls. But offshore, waves don't drop like a wall; this only happens with waves rolling into shore. After this was pointed out to him, he added a note to the poem, admitting this error damaged the poem technically.

Early on, Lamarque responded to these cases in hand-waving fashion, claiming that most readers are able to brush the factual errors aside (2006, 138). But even if he is right about how most readers would react to discovering these falsehoods, more recently Lamarque recognizes that such a response will not do, acknowledging that "[f]actual mistakes of this kind, when brought to the surface, do have an adverse affect" (2009, 230). But he goes on to argue that "such cases seem curiously peripheral to the formula of 'instruct' and 'please'" (2009, 230). To be sure, these works do not aim, even in part, to instruct readers as to the physical effects of ingesting opium and the fire-starting properties of lenses; these things "are part of the subject and imagery of the works but not part of any significant 'truth' the works impart" (Lamarque 2009, 230). And despite the falsehoods, the works still "give pleasure and retain their essential literary interest" (Lamarque 2009, 230).

But the question on the table is whether truth is relevant to the evaluation of works of fiction as fiction, period. And yes, these works may not aim to instruct, but *aiming* to instruct has no bearing on whether a work *can* instruct, let alone whether truth *matters*. Lamarque is perhaps right that even if the works did get these facts right, they

would not be part of any significant truth in the works. Such facts are minor concerns in the grand literary scheme of things. But with Golding's novel and Larkin's poem, if not with *Middlemarch*, this seems questionable. I think Rowe is, in part, right that "we can never be quite comfortable with these works again because, while we read, we have to make a conscious effort to suppress the knowledge that what they describe is impossible" (1997, 335). I know that at least I would not be quite comfortable. But the claim is empirical. Maybe Lamarque is right that most readers would read on just fine.

What we need are stronger cases. And I think we can find them within a class of works deemed "encyclopedic." Here there is a similarity to the historical fiction Bartel considers.

In 1976, Edward Mendelson introduced the term *encyclopedic narrative* to identify a literary genre that had not yet been fully recognized. He gives a series of fairly strict conditions for the genre, so much so that at the time of his writing, he could think of only seven works that qualified: Dante's *Commedia*, Rabelais' five books of Gargantua and Pantagruel, Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Goethe's *Faust*, Melville's *Moby-Dick*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, and Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1976, 1267). But for the purposes of argument here, I am only interested in one of these conditions: "Encyclopedic narratives all attempt to render the full range of knowledge and beliefs of a national culture" (Mendelson 1976, 1269). Of course, Mendelson notes, these works cannot actually cover all of the culture's knowledge, so one or two examples from a field of knowledge stand in for all. With respect to this condition, *Gravity's Rainbow* is a paradigmatic case. It covers, fairly extensively and among other things, chemistry, ballistics, behaviorism, and some calculus, all with both allusion and factual statements. Richard Poirier claims,

"Really to read Pynchon properly you would have to be astonishingly learned not only about literature but about a vast number of other subjects belonging to the disciplines and to popular culture, learned to the point where learning is almost a sensuous pleasure, something to play around with, to feel totally relaxed about, so that you can take in stride every dizzying transition from one allusive mode to another" (2003, 47–8). And if you are not so learned, you might invest in Steven C. Weisenburger's 400-page *A Gravity's Rainbow Companion* (2006), now in its second edition.

So it seems that if we are properly appreciating *Gravity's Rainbow*, were we to discover that any of its allusions to or statements of supposed fact are in error (which, to my knowledge, none are), this would be far from something we could just brush off.[7] From Mendelson to Poirier to numerous other literary critics—not to mention Pynchon's large, cult-like readership—the encyclopedic quality of *Gravity's Rainbow* is one of the reasons it is touted as an exemplary work of literary fiction. Yes, these facts serve as part of the work's subject and imagery, but getting them *right* matters. Perhaps the work's central aim is not actually to instruct the reader on matters of chemistry, ballistics, or calculus. But insofar as the praise given to *Gravity's Rainbow* on account of its encyclopedic qualities is something we should take seriously, truth at least appears relevant to such evaluation, and significantly so. And this goes, it seems, for all encyclopedic narrative. What we have, then, is a situation similar to the puzzle of historical criticism. On the one hand, encyclopedic fiction is just that: fiction. Yet on the

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[7] It is worth noting that in a fictional work, the accuracy of any appeal to real-world "facts" established by science will be measured against the scientific findings of the era in which the fictional work is set. As anyone versed in the debate between scientific realism and antirealism knows, what our best scientific theories say is the case is always, at best, approximately true. So even when fictional works appeal to current real-world science, *truth* is in relation to the propositions of the *real-world science*, not the *real world* itself.

other hand, much of the praise of an encyclopedic work rests on how well it weaves non-trivial facts about the real world into its narrative. Were an encyclopedic work to get any of these non-trivial facts wrong, it would be subject to serious criticism, just as the historical works Bartel considers have been criticized for getting historical facts wrong.

But how does this show much more than the case of historical fiction? How does this extend, in any notable way, the puzzle of historical criticism? Encyclopedic works are, after all, only a small subset of literary fiction. The difference is that rendering the full range of a culture's knowledge is only one feature of encyclopedic narrative as Mendelson defines it. Meeting it is not sufficient for a work to be included in the genre. Many works might be fittingly described as "encyclopedic" in one respect or another without, strictly speaking, qualifying as *encyclopedic narrative*. And most works that might not be fittingly described as "encyclopedic" still engage with non-trivial facts about the real world (*Lord of the Flies*, for example). Doing so is not an uncommon feature of literary fiction. To be sure, if an encyclopedic work—even one that does not meet all the criteria for Mendelson's encyclopedic narrative—gets a non-trivial fact about the real world wrong, we may find it more troubling than Golding's error in *Lord of the Flies*. But there is a good explanation for why this might be. Works fittingly called "encyclopedic" engage with non-trivial facts to a far greater degree than the typical novel or short story, so much so that we are inclined to call them encyclopedic. Their dealing in real-world facts is front and center, notable even to the casual reader.[8] And because of

[8] That the descriptor "encyclopedic" has moved beyond academic circles and into mainstream literary criticism serves as partial evidence of this point (see, for instance, Kelly 1995, Karbo 2003, Heighton 2006, and Burn 2011, all reviews in *The New York Times*). For further evidence, we may turn to the reviews of an encyclopedic work on the pages of an online bookseller (see, for instance, the reviews of *Gravity's Rainbow* on Amazon.com). Somewhat ironically, in both venues you will often find almost as much criticism of encyclopedic qualities as you will praise.

this, there is more at stake in the accuracy of those dealings. The more a work attempts to employ, reference, or allude to non-trivial real-world facts, the more that work sticks its neck out, so to speak. If it succeeds in this attempt—where a necessary condition of this success is, of course, getting the facts right—then it may well be deserving of praise.[9] But if it fails by getting any facts wrong, the more notable this failure will be in virtue of the work drawing attention to its use of facts. With any work that we come to call "encyclopedic," there is a strong expectation that such a work will do, in some sense, what we expect an actual encyclopedia to do: get the facts right. Of course, with a work that is not encyclopedic, the expectation to get the facts right will most likely be weaker. But this expectation seems to exist given any attempt to employ, reference, or allude to non-trivial real-world facts, be it within an encyclopedic work or otherwise.

III. RESOLVING THE PUZZLE, IN PART

If my account of facts and fiction is right, then the puzzle Bartel outlines so nicely has much greater reach than matters of historical accuracy. The puzzle extends to factual accuracy of all kinds (or at least all kinds in which there is an agreed upon matter of fact). On the one hand, literary fiction is supposedly wholly within the realm of fiction; yet on

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The appreciation of encyclopedic works tends to be a polarizing affair, where detractors argue that all of this dealing in real-world facts dampens a work's emotional power, which, as far as they are concerned, is the primary goal of good literary fiction. But even if these naysayers are right, the puzzle still stands, for their criticism of encyclopedic qualities turns on recognizing them as just that: the rendering of extensive non-trivial facts about the real world. And if it turned out that an encyclopedic work was in error about any of these facts, it would be even worse off in detractors' eyes, caught in something of an emperor-has-no-clothes scenario.

[9] Other conditions of this success may be complex, a matter of how well the facts are integrated into the overall narrative. It is, to be sure, not the case that a writer can simply drop facts into her work of fiction and expect to receive praise. For an example of someone who disagrees with Poirier on *Gravity's Rainbow's* successful use of facts, see Vidal 1976.

the other hand, some of its praise and criticism turns on its fidelity to real-world facts. But of course, that literary fiction is praised and criticized on such grounds does not entail that such evaluation is justified. The evidence certainly does stack up in favor of taking this praise and criticism seriously. And in typical cases where a work of some kind is considered good or bad largely in virtue of some feature *F* (as it arguably appears to be for *Gravity's Rainbow* and possibly *U-571* when it comes to truth), I think we can take that as sufficient evidence for *F* being relevant to the evaluation of works of that kind. But as the puzzle of historical criticism or, more broadly, what I will call *the puzzle of factual accuracy* shows, we are not dealing with a typical case. So it seems we should be willing to readily accept an alternative explanation for the apparent relevance of truth to the evaluation of fiction. But barring this alternative explanation, we should yield to the weight of the evidence and accept that real-world factual accuracy is relevant to the evaluation of at least some fictional works. That, however, is not the end of the story. Even if it is accepted that truth is relevant in the evaluation of fiction, we need to do two things: (1) reconcile our theory of fiction with the evaluative relevance of truth and (2) provide a theory of factual criticism and praise, one that delimits and unifies the evaluation of fictional works in virtue of their fidelity to real-world facts. While I have little to say about (1), I will suggest a strategy for (2). But before I proceed to that, I will first consider one seemingly promising alternative explanation, a means of dismissing any evaluation of fiction on the grounds of factual accuracy or inaccuracy as misguided.

Dissolving the Puzzle

Of the options Bartel considers for dissolving the puzzle of historical criticism—for explaining away our intuitions and evidence that truth is relevant to our assessment of fictional works—an appeal to imaginative resistance seems to be the most promising. Bartel believes imaginative resistance theories can, broadly speaking, be divided into two camps: *conceptual inconceivability* and *subjective inconsistency*. And the latter is the real contender when it comes to the puzzle of historical criticism or, more broadly, the puzzle of factual accuracy. As a representative of the subjective inconsistency camp, Bartel examines Tamar Gendler's account. Gendler has it that imaginative resistance arises when the reader is unwilling to believe something a fictional work invites the reader to take as true not just in the fictional world, but also in the real world. To put it in Gendler's terms, imaginative resistance occurs when the reader is unwilling to *export* a proposition that the storyteller seemingly intends the reader to export. So, for instance, say some work invites the reader to export the proposition that infanticide is morally permissible. Certainly some readers would refuse to export this proposition. Thus: imaginative resistance. In being unwilling to believe that infanticide is morally permissible in the real world, readers also resist imagining it is true of the fictional world. The authorial invitation to export the unacceptable has, in a sense, spoiled the experience of the work itself. (Bartel 2012, 219)

One might argue, then, that what occurs where there is factual inaccuracy in fiction (either historical in nature or otherwise) is imaginative resistance. So, in *U-571*, because we are unwilling to export the notion that the US Navy was responsible for capturing the German Enigma cipher machine, we resist imagining that the US Navy is

responsible for this feat in the film. And in *Lord of the Flies*, because we are unwilling to export the proposition that concave lenses can light fires, we resist imagining that Piggy's glasses can light fires in the book. Thus, any legitimate criticism of these works lies in the invitation to export, not in the facts of the matter themselves. Accordingly, our intuitions that factual accuracy is relevant to our evaluation of works of fiction *as works of fiction* are explained away.

But Bartel notes two troubles with this potential line of argument (2012, 220). First, some works criticized for their factual inaccuracy clearly do not invite the reader (or viewer) to export the propositions for which the work is criticized. Such is the case with *U-571*. The filmmakers obviously do not have the intention that anyone who watches the film leave believing it was the US and not the British Navy that, in real-world actuality, captured the Enigma machine. The filmmakers were not out to revise history. In fact, the filmmakers explicitly state that the film is a "parallel history." And the film itself ends with a dedication to the British naval officers who in actuality retrieved the Enigma machine.

Second, any appeal to imaginative resistance of this kind is descriptive, not normative. On a subjective inconsistency account, criticism of *U-571*, *The Other Boleyn Girl*, and any other work that gets the non-trivial real-world facts wrong boils down to what we cannot stomach imagining. It is a state of affairs contingent on an individual being constitutionally *unable* to export some proposition expressed in a work of fiction. But surely the criticism targeted at these works does not reduce to people merely expressing their own inability or reluctance to export propositions. It is criticism of the works themselves, such that any proper experience of the works *ought to* be attuned to

their factual inaccuracies. Or, at minimum, this criticism is intended to be normative, more than the mere expression of one's own imaginative resistance. So any appeal to imaginative resistance as a means of resolving the puzzle of factual accuracy requires an error theory of sorts. Such an account must explain why the general belief that factual criticism is of a work *itself* and of normative significance is mistaken.

Furthermore, an imaginative resistance account has little to say of factual praise. It is hard to see how the praise of *Gravity's Rainbow* on account of its extensive use of non-trivial real-world facts could reduce to mere success in imagining. Presumably, there is something notably praiseworthy about encyclopedic qualities, where, as discussed above, a necessary condition of such qualities is factual accuracy. So even if there is a version of imaginative resistance that can somehow deal with Bartel's objections, at minimum, it cannot be the whole story.

Requirements for a Theory of Factual Criticism and Praise

When it comes to any good theory of historical criticism, Bartel points out two desiderata (2012, 214–15). First, it should satisfactorily deal with what Bartel calls the *problem of scope*. It should be able to distinguish between cases where historical accuracy does and does not matter. For instance, in the film *A Knight's Tale*, a musical comedy, characters sing and dance to twentieth-century pop songs, despite the film being set in the fourteenth century. But unlike the cases discussed above, this is an instance in which historical accuracy is clearly not at issue. And, as Bartel notes, "someone who objected that *A Knight's Tale* was not a good film because it was historically inaccurate would likely be dismissed as simply 'not getting it'" (2012, 214).

Second, a good theory should provide a unified account of historical criticism. It should provide a common feature that underlies all historical criticism and explains why historical inaccuracy, in such cases, counts against the artistic value of the work. Bartel is not, in principle, opposed to a piecemeal account, one that includes no common feature of historical criticism. But without a unified account, Bartel believes “we would be forced to abandon the intuition that history deserves justice,” an intuition that seems to motivate historical criticism in the first place (2012, 215).

Both desiderata extend nicely to the larger issue of factual accuracy. Unlike *Gravity’s Rainbow* and *Lord of the Flies*, there are clear cases where factual accuracy is not at issue. For instance, plenty of science fiction falls into this domain. And of course, within the very works where factual accuracy does appear to matter, more often it does not. *Gravity’s Rainbow* is not subject to criticism for introducing a US soldier whose sexual encounters predict the fall of German V2 rockets on the grounds that this soldier never existed in reality or in myth. But if, in *Gravity’s Rainbow*, the chemical composition of benzene were described as “three carbon atoms arranged in a triangle” instead of “six carbon atoms [...] curled around into a closed ring” (1995, 413), it seems it would be subject to criticism. So when it comes to the evaluative relevance of factual accuracy in general, we have the problem of scope.

As for the matter of a unified account, history deserving justice is just a species of the facts deserving justice. Just as we speak of doing justice to history, we speak of doing justice to facts of all kinds, from a scientific theory to the way a natural landscape looks. Of course, when the reputation of actual persons is at stake, the business of doing justice may take on moral and even legal overtones. And historical fiction may deal in the

reputation of actual persons more often than other kinds of fiction. But it has no special purchase on this domain and, more importantly, as Bartel himself notes, "insofar as these films [or novels] are criticized for their inaccuracies that are not morally offensive, and these inaccuracies are also thought to diminish the value of the work as fiction, then the moral argument cannot give us a unified account" (2012, 215). So there should be no worry about the moral flavor of some historical criticism ruling out the potential for a theory that gives a unified account of all factual criticism and praise. On, then, to a theory that attempts to do just this.

A Theory of Factual Criticism and Praise

It is not uncommon to consider what a work of fiction is attempting to do, what its aims are. We might say, for instance, that a work aims to move readers emotionally or parody a particular style, and then assess whether it succeeds in doing so. I think a theory of factual criticism and praise turns on considerations of this kind. And if a work's aims are relevant to its evaluation and factual accuracy is an aim of some works of fiction, then factual accuracy is relevant to evaluation. But while it seems perfectly intelligible in casual conversation to talk about works of fiction in this way, strictly speaking, a work itself cannot attempt or aim at anything. An act of this kind requires an agent. Thus we should take talk of a work's aims as shorthand for authorial intentions, however thick or thin. I find authorial intentions of the hypothetical sort to be a natural rendering.[10] When we say that a work *W* aims at *x*, we mean that, considering *W* in its context of origin,

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[10] Here I have in mind Jerrold Levinson's version of hypothetical intentionalism (see his 1996a paper).

intended readers have good reason to believe that in writing *W*, the author was aiming at *x*.

But authorial intentions might be described more thinly, without reference to contextual considerations and intended readers. When we say that a work *W* aims at *x*, we mean that, considering all constituent parts of *W* (and only those constituent parts), readers are justified in positing that the author was aiming at *x*. Thus talk of a work's aims may be friendly to those with formalist leanings. After all, as Henry Staten notes, "Wimsatt and Beardsley's argument in 'The Intentional Fallacy' has been widely misunderstood to exclude intentionality as such, in any sense of the term," when "the only kind of intention Wimsatt and Beardsley ruled out of bounds to the critic is the author's *private* intention" (2010, 420–21). In fact, Staten argues that "both the Russian and American [formalist] groups clearly believed that one kind of context, at least, is indispensable for construing the structural intentionality of literary texts," namely a context of other literary works (2010, 421). So an even looser formulation than the one given above may accommodate formalists.

In this chapter, it is not my business to determine which analysis of a work aiming at *x* is correct or to spell out either analysis given above in detail. Rather, my goal is merely to render the notion of a work aiming at something intelligible. If I have succeeded in doing this, then the notion can be used to construct a theory of factual criticism and praise, and the theory I propose goes roughly as follows: when the aims of a fictional work include employing, referencing, or alluding to non-trivial real-world facts, we are justified in evaluating the work according to those aims. More specifically, given any constituent part *P* of a fictional work *W*, where *W* either aims at real-world factual

accuracy in *P* or has a greater aim of real-world factual accuracy against which *P* appears incongruous (in virtue of other constituent parts in which *W* aims at real-world factual accuracy), we are justified in evaluating *P* (and thus *W*) on grounds of real-world factual accuracy. Examples are in order.

The clearest cases are those where, in a constituent part, a work aims at fidelity to real-world facts. Consider, again, Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. It seems that in the case of Piggy's glasses being used to light a fire, the work was aiming at real-world factual accuracy. Everywhere else the behavior of the physical world in the novel aligns with the behavior of the physical world in the real world. So barring any special indication otherwise, the aim of *Lord of the Flies* is that its physical world be true to the real physical world, including the light-diffusing properties of concave glass. Thus, we criticize Golding's mistake accordingly. A similar story can be told for Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Larkin's "Absences" with respect to the effects of opium on humans and the behavior of offshore waves. The aim in the constituent parts criticized for factual inaccuracy is factual accuracy. And the same goes for *Gravity's Rainbow*, just in the other direction. *Gravity's Rainbow* receives praise partly because of its success in aiming at real-world factual accuracy. To be sure, much of the praise given to *Gravity's Rainbow* concerns the way real-world non-trivial facts are used, the way they are woven into the work. But this praise presupposes *Gravity's Rainbow* getting the facts right.

But what about cases like *U-571* and Gregory's *The Other Boleyn Girl*, cases where in some constituent part, it is clear that the work is not aiming at real-world accuracy, and yet it is equally clear that criticism on such grounds seems appropriate? Here the situation is much trickier, but if we turn to the work's greater aims, I believe we

can sort things out. Yes, *U-571* is not, in depicting the US Navy as being responsible for recovering the German Enigma machine, aiming at real-world accuracy. But in other major respects, *U-571*'s depiction of the mission to recover the German Enigma machine is aiming at real-world accuracy, from the fact that the German Enigma machine is what was crucially recovered, to the time and location of the battle. Thus there is a strong sense, given the aims of the work, that depicting the US Navy rather than the British Navy as the heroes of the Enigma story is incongruous. To be sure, as Bartel notes (2012, 213), *the filmmakers* had a reason for substituting the US for the British (namely, to appeal to an American audience). It would be odd if they did not. But this reason seems external to the aims of the work; and even if it does figure in some way into the work's aims, it still seems that the aim at real-world accuracy is overriding. And there is also no indication that *U-571* has competing aims of presenting an alternative history in the way Quentin Tarantino's film *Inglorious Bastards* or Philip Roth's novel *The Plot Against America* do. If *U-571* did have such aims, it would no longer be appropriate to critique it on the grounds of inaccuracy, for no longer would we have good reason to consider the switch of the US for the British ad hoc or the aim at historical accuracy as overriding with respect to events. Of course, it is difficult to say just what features *U-571* would need to exhibit in order to demonstrate the aim of presenting an alternative history. But certainly it would require more than simply switching the identity of those responsible for executing a military mission that actually occurred in the real world while holding all other features of that mission fixed.

Bartel himself hints at a strategy along the lines of the one I propose, claiming that "the filmmakers' deliberate choice of the Enigma machine as the object that

motivates their story's drama suggests that they at least partly wanted to tell the story of the Enigma machine, and it appears to be this that raises the expectation and the demand for historical accuracy" (2012, 213). But I suspect that some (and maybe even Bartel) might accuse my account of being unable, with difficult cases like *U-571*, to offer a unified theory of factual criticism and praise. After all, determining the greater aims of a work and how a constituent part of the work fits within those aims is a piecemeal affair, dependent on various fine-grained considerations of the work at hand. But if fictional works do in fact have determinable aims against which their parts can be assessed and this assessment serves as the foundation for all factual criticism and praise, then however piecemeal that process may be, a work's aims are at the heart of all factual criticism and praise. The assessment of aims, as complicated as that may be, explains and unifies the evaluation of fictional works according to real-world factual accuracy. To be sure, it would be nice to have a theory of factual criticism and praise that offered a simpler procedure for evaluation, one that could easily be spelled out in detail. But since literary and film criticism is an intricate business, an enterprise that lives in the particularities of works, I do not think we should expect one.

Reconciling a Theory of Fiction with Truth

Yet even if I am right about aims and factual criticism, there remains the problem of reference. On the one hand, I am not convinced it is as much of a problem as Lamarque and Gibson think it is. After all, as Gaut points out, with works of satire, audiences must recognize the reference to actual persons (2005, 447). So it seems there is at least some amount of reference to the real world in satirical works of fiction. But even

if Lamarque and Gibson are right that reference is impossible in clear-cut literary fiction, I do not think the relevance of truth is. The make-believed worlds constructed by works of literary fiction typically overlap to some degree with the real world, and where a work has the aim that its world overlaps with the actual world, we may evaluate the work with respect to this aim. Now, Gibson does admit this much, acknowledging that "[t]he real world and its history often provide settings for the literary; they provide a backdrop for the action (praxis) of the narrative line. But," he goes on to argue, "literary texts do not refer to or make truth claims about this backdrop of reality; *they use it*" (2007, 31). So Gibson thinks our evaluation of this overlap amounts to how well or badly the work *uses* features of the real world as its backdrop, just as we might evaluate the *accuracy,* not truth, of theatrical sets. To claim that a theatrical set functions to make truth claims about a region of physical space in the real world is nonsense. So too with works of fiction, according to Gibson.

But accuracy, in such cases, is a notion closely related to truth. A theatrical set or literary backdrop is accurate only insofar as it overlaps with the real world in the right way, only if it gets the facts *right*. And while the accuracy of a literary backdrop may be trivial when it comes to our evaluation of a work as a work of literary fiction, the accuracy of a work's rendering of history or a culture's knowledge is not, as it is not always simply the backdrop on which the narrative takes place. Rather, it may, like *Gravity's Rainbow*, be a major aim of the narrative.

So when it comes to reconciling our theory of fiction with factual criticism and praise, we might not have to give up a make-believe account. Works of fiction may ask us only to make-believe. But the proper evaluation of some fictional works calls for

considering their make-believe worlds' conformity with the real world. Of course, this route may raise metaphysical worries, for now we have a proliferation of entities: those of the real world and those of make-believe worlds that accurately resemble entities of the real world and are assessed according to that accuracy. Any metaphysicians who prefer desert landscapes will not be happy with this situation. But that is territory I will leave for another paper.

4. FICTION AND MORAL INTUITION

When it comes to making a moral judgment of a particular case, intuition more often than not takes the lead. A seemingly effortless and unconscious process quickly assesses the situation and then spits its output into consciousness as something that just feels right. But empirical research has shown that these moral intuitions are subject to framing and order effects (see Weigmann 2012). With a change in the order of cases, so comes a change in moral judgment. But you might argue, in the spirit of Williamson (2011), that these results do not demonstrate the unreliability or instability of moral intuitions per se. Rather, the results can be accounted for by the kind of subjects used in such studies, namely the folk, and more specifically, often undergraduate students. Were these studies to take moral experts as their subjects, the results would come out differently, or so it is argued.

To be sure, this line of argument is reasonable. Experts in other areas do much better than novices in making quick assessment of particular cases; so it is natural to assume the same would apply to the moral sphere. But recent empirical evidence suggests otherwise. Schwitzgebel and Cushman (2012) have shown professional philosophers' moral intuitions are just as subject to order effects as the folk's.

The trouble then, as I see it, is understanding what moral expertise amounts to, as the traditional account of expertise does not apply. Such is the problem this chapter takes up. I argue that though training in moral philosophy may not entail having moral intuitions any more reliable than the folk, it does entail being more sensitive to evidence and thus belief revision, and it is here, in this sensitivity and willingness to revise, in a resistance to becoming what Haidt (2001) calls "morally dumbfounded," that moral

expertise lies. Furthermore, I argue that developing moral expertise in this sense does not require training in moral philosophy. Rather, something like Haidt's social intuitionist model might do the trick. But this model need not be restricted to standard social interaction. My hunch is that private engagement with narrative art might suffice to cultivate moral expertise.

I. MORAL INTUITION & ORDER EFFECTS

Consider your favorite version of the trolley thought experiments first introduced by Foot (1967) and Thomson (1976). On whatever version one chooses, there are two standard scenarios up for consideration. On the one hand, a runaway trolley destined for five people on the tracks can be diverted to another set of tracks where one person lies if you pull a lever. On the other hand, a runaway trolley destined for five people on the tracks can be stopped if you push a sufficiently large person off a bridge above and into the trolley's path. It is well known and well established that people tend to judge the first action as morally permissible and the second action as morally impermissible (see Hauser 2006). This is the case even though both actions yield the same net result: one person is killed to save the five.

Now, what this difference in moral judgment demonstrates about the moral facts, if anything at all, is not an issue that will be considered in this chapter. What is, however, of primary consideration is how these judgments can be influenced simply by the order in which the scenarios are presented. When the second scenario (push) is presented first, judgment of the moral permissibility of the action in the first scenario (pull) decreases (for a review of this research, see Weigmann et al. 2012). In fact, in a study conducted by

Weigmann et al. (2012), participants' approval of the action in the first scenario decreases by more than 50% when presented with the second scenario (followed by three related intermediary scenarios) first. Such so-called "order effects" are troubling. If anything ought to be irrelevant to moral judgment, the order in which scenarios to be judged are presented surely should. Something has gone badly awry if, say, a request for physician-assisted suicide is not granted solely because a bioethics board just minutes before reviewed a request for euthanasia.

Thus, the phenomenon of order effects shows that the kind of moral judgment made in these studies is unreliable, where we may call this *kind* moral intuition, as the judgments are pre-theoretical and made quickly, without time for reflection.[1] In fact, these latter aspects are built into the procedure of the studies themselves. Participants are neither given much time to deliberate, nor are they allowed to change their answers after the fact. However, that moral intuitions fall prey to order effects does not entail that we need to throw moral intuitions out entirely. It might be noted, for instance, that our perceptions fall prey to numerous means of distortion (for example, that a stick partially submerged in water appears bent, or, more akin to the moral cases under consideration, that judgment of a color in the middle of a spectrum may change depending on which end of the spectrum one begins). But despite our faculties of perception being not wholly reliable, we do not jettison them entirely as a source of evidence. Nevertheless, that the mere ordering of cases influences moral intuitions is troubling, even if such intuitions are

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[1] To be sure, there are other accounts of just what moral intuition amounts to, of what moral intuition *in fact* is (Rawlsian accounts, for instance). But it is not the business of this chapter to adjudicate accounts of moral intuition or make any substantive claims about what moral intuition *in fact* is. In this chapter, I am strictly concerned with the type of moral judgments subject to order effects. It seems perfectly fitting to deem such judgments intuitions, but nothing argued in this chapter turns on calling or considering them as such.

epistemically analogous to sense perception. Moral thought experiments are often constructed as a means of argument, as in, for example, Thomson's famous violinist scenario. At minimum, the phenomenon of order effects gives us cause to be wary of the intuitions these thought experiments pump, especially when dealing with tricky cases.

There is, however, another move open to the defender of moral intuitions, namely what has been called the expertise defense. Both the studies reviewed by Weigmann et al. (2012) and the study they conducted themselves take the folk as their subjects, and oftentimes folk from undergraduate student populations. In light of this, you might argue that the right moral intuitions, those of moral experts, have yet to be tested. Just as the intuitions of experts in mathematics and chess are to be trusted more than the folk's intuitions about how to construct a mathematical proof or choose a chess opening, the intuitions of moral experts are to be trusted more than the folk's when it comes to judging moral cases. Moral experts would not be so susceptible to ordering effects. And if anyone should count as a moral expert, it seems it is a moral philosopher.

This is just the line Williamson (2011) takes. To be sure, Williamson is concerned with Gettier cases and other epistemic thought experiments. But the spirit of his argument can easily be extended to the moral realm. And it is important to note, as Williamson does, that the expertise defense does not amount to claiming that "philosophical education 'immunizes' one against the influence of whatever psychological factors distort the judgments of untrained subjects" (2011, 219). Rather, the defense amounts to claiming that "philosophical training substantially reduces the influence of the distorting factors, even short of total eradication" (Williamson 2011, 219).

II. MORAL EXPERTISE & ORDER EFFECTS

Unfortunately, the expertise defense has recently been empirically undercut. Schwitzgebel and Cushman (2012) tested whether ordering effects hold for philosophers, and it turns out they do, and nearly to the same degree as for the folk. Philosophers and ethics PhDs were only marginally more resistant to the influence of order effects, far from the substantial reduction in influence the expertise defense calls for. And given the shaky ground on which the expertise defense stands, this is not surprising.

Weinberg et al. (2010) submit that the reason the expertise defense has garnered support and, on the face of things, appears convincing rests on a mistaken folk theory of expertise. This folk theory is composed of two general notions: "(i) sufficient background, training, or experience is by and large all it takes to get better at any given activity; and (ii) expertise at one aspect of an activity is closely correlated with expertise in other aspects of that activity" (Weinberg et al. 2010, 333). But the reality of developing expertise and its application in practice is not so simple.

First off, expertise develops very narrowly and task-specifically, with little transfer among domains, even when the domains seem similar. Having expertise in some board game does not mean you will have expertise in another, similar game. And the same goes for surgical expertise and particular surgical tasks; having expertise in one is not necessarily transferable to a similar other. "So," as Weinberg et al. (2010) put it, "philosophers' possession of such demonstrable skills as, say, the close analysis of texts, or the critical assessment of arguments, or the deployment of the tools of formal logic, does little to nothing to raise the probability that they possess any correspondingly improved level of performance at conducting thought experiments" (335). But there are

three ways you might argue philosophical expertise could extend to evaluating thought experiments: the possession of superior conceptual schemata, the deployment of more sophisticated theories, and the possession of more finely-tuned cognitive skills. Weinberg et al. (2010) consider these possible avenues of the expertise defense in turn, and I will sketch their critiques of them.

The main thrust of the superior conceptual schemata line lies in claiming that due to possessing these superior schemata, in judging thought experiments, philosophers will not be distracted by philosophically-irrelevant features (e.g. the order in which the cases are presented). Unlike the folk, philosophers have the conceptual schemata required to track the philosophical truth. The main trouble is that philosophical training does not involve substantial feedback on the truth of judgments of thought experiments, and such substantial, reliable feedback is what is required to finely tune conceptual schemata. In fields where experts on particular cases routinely develop (e.g. meteorology, livestock judging, and chess), "experts are confronted with a truly vast array of cases, with clear verdicts swiftly realized across a wide range of degrees of complexity or difficulty. Philosophy rarely if ever (outside its formal subareas) provides the same ample degree of well-established cases to provide the requisite training regimen" (Weinberg et al. 2010, 341). Feedback on errors in judgments of thought experiments often comes only when judgments and arguments are made public, and even then, the feedback received is often ambiguous. Negative feedback is easily construed as simply in error; and positive feedback may be due to a tendency to surround ourselves with like-minded intuiters. In addition, the size of the set of cases on which conceptual schemata could be tuned is much smaller than in fields with recognized experts. Though seemingly large, the number

of trolley cases or fake barn cases or teletransporter cases (and so on) pales in comparison to, say, the number of times a chess master in the making will practice an opening.

The main thrust of the "more sophisticated theories" line is that philosophers have mastered philosophy's well-established theories or principles and call on this mastery when evaluating thought experiments. The main trouble is that (i) the discipline of philosophy does not contain a sufficient set of well-established theories on which such theoretical expertise can be built, and (ii) even if philosophy did have such a sufficient set, mastery of it would not entail that philosophers' intuitions would be shielded from order effects and other irrelevant factors. As Weinberg et al. (2010) note, "in the areas of philosophy in which appeals to intuition about cases are still central, such as epistemology and action theory [and ethics], there is just nothing out there that can serve for 'solving a philosophy problem' anything like the role that is played by the contents of a good physics textbook for solving a physics problem" (345). And even if it were convincingly argued that there is something in philosophy that can serve such a role, only if these best philosophical theories rested on the backs of intuitions shielded from irrelevant factors could we trust that evaluation of thought experiments too is so shielded.

The main thrust of the "more finely-tuned cognitive skills" line has it that like other experts, philosophers, when considering thought experiments, "have an expanded ability to extract quickly and to store temporarily lots of domain-related information" (Weinberg et al. 2010, 347). This is the only underpinning of the expertise defense that Weinberg et al. find potentially promising. Yet they also note that it is not entirely clear how the details of this defense should be fleshed out and how these finely-tuned cognitive skills would make philosophers' moral intuitions more resistant to order effects.

Ultimately, the answer to the latter question is an empirical matter, and so far, in light of Schwitzgebel and Cushman (2012), the empirical evidence weighs in favor of a negative response.

And it is this empirical evidence that also weighs against Williamson's (2011) response to Weinberg et al. (2010). One of Williamson's major criticisms of Weinberg et al.'s arguments is their comparison class. Weinberg et al. take chess, mathematics, and physics as exemplars of domains in which expertise develops and measure the prospect of philosophical expertise in thought experimenting against these domains. "But," as Williamson (2011) argues, "who ever claimed that the difference in skill at thought experimentation between a professional philosopher and an undergraduate is as dramatic as the difference in skill at chess between a grandmaster and a beginner" (224)? A more apt comparison, Williamson goes on to claim, "is between feedback in legal and philosophical training with respect to hypothetical cases" (224). These are reasonable points. But as noted, given the recent empirical evidence, the dialectical ball is in Williamson's court, particularly with respect to the former, main claim. As for the legal comparison, this may still have something going for it, but not, I think, with respect to the expertise defense in thought experimenting. And I will have more to say about this below, in section three. But before moving on, I will sketch a few more reasons why we should expect further empirical evidence to support Schwitzgebel and Cushman's results (because besides Schwitzgebel and Cushman (2012), only one other study has tested philosophers' judgments of thought experiments (Tobia et al. 2013), and its results are both not focused on order effects and less clear overall).[2]

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[2] And though I do not have time to consider it here, for an argument against the analogy between intuition and sense perception doing the expertise defense any good, see Mizrahi (2015).

Ryberg (2013) gives two more reasons to doubt the expertise defense: (i) with respect to moral philosophers, evidence is not in favor of a causal link between prior experience and present moral intuitions; and (ii) judgments of particular moral cases are not assessable on some sort of quality parameter. One reason we regard the intuitions of the mathematician or grandmaster as more reliable than those of the novice or amateur is that the formers' intuitions are the result of vast prior experiences in chess and math; their expertise is the causal result of prior experiences. But the situation does not look the same when it comes to philosophers and moral intuitions. Ryberg (2013) points out that while the novice at math or the amateur at chess have only very weak intuitions compared to the grandmaster or mathematician, when it comes to moral cases, "[w]hat moral psychological studies have revealed clearly is that lay people have just as many and equally strong intuitions as trained philosophers" (6). Even if this does not establish that there is no causal link between moral philosophers' prior experiences in doing moral philosophy and their moral intuitions, it does give us reason to be wary of there being such a causal link.

But suppose there is such a causal link for moral philosophers; there is still an important disanalogy between moral philosophers' prior experiences doing moral philosophy and mathematicians' or grandmasters' prior experiences doing math or playing chess. As Ryberg (2013) puts it, "What the mathematician has prior experience of is not merely numerous mathematical problems but of having been engaged in *correct* mathematical proofs or other sorts of *correct* mathematical problem-solving. Likewise, the grandmaster of chess has not only been engaged in numerous plays but possesses a comprehensive experience of making moves in *won* plays" (8). For the moral

philosopher, the story is not the same, for "while the philosopher may have engaged in many cases of intuition-based reasoning, it seems much less plausible to hold that she has prior experiences of having made intuitive judgments which led to *correct* moral answers" (Ryberg 2013, 8).

But then again, maybe Ryberg's arguments turn on a bad analogy. That moral expertise in the judgment of particular cases is not analogous to expertise in mathematics or chess does not entail that the notion of moral expertise is entirely vacuous. Rather, moral expertise might just need to be recast in a different light. This recasting is the business of my next section.

III. WHAT MORAL EXPERTISE AMOUNTS TO

The challenge in the wake of Schwitzgebel and Cushman (2012) (bolstered by Weinberg et al. 2010 and Ryberg 2013), as I see it, is understanding what moral expertise in the intuitive judgment of particular cases amounts to.[3] I think the answer lies in noticing something about Williamson's analogy of philosophical expertise to legal expertise, namely how both professions proceed in practice. Legal experts may have intuitions that come to bear on a case, but their expertise manifests in the form of methodical research and careful analysis, the sorting out of how current law and the character of previous cases apply to the case at hand, not in any pre-theoretical judgments

[3] It is worth noting that this thought is compatible with a critique De Cruz (2014) directs at Schwitzgebel and Cushman (2012). Since "[e]xpert skills are typically context-sensitive," she finds it puzzling "that philosophical expertise should be measured by how *context-insensitive* philosophical intuitions are" (De Cruz 2014, 13). We should, she argues, expect philosophers to be especially sensitive to contextual features, such as the order in which moral cases are presented. While I am not so sure about this, De Cruz is right to think that experimental results like those of Schwitzgebel and Cushman (2012) do not take some notion of expertise off the table, and one that philosophers might well exhibit.

that come before this work. There is little involved in the application of a lawyer's expertise that resembles the intuitive judgment of particular moral cases rendered in thought experimenting.

Given the results and arguments outlined above, I think something similar must be said of moral expertise. It cannot be said to be had in the actual intuitive judgments of particular cases, for the judgments of even those we can rightly call moral experts fall prey to the influence of morally irrelevant factors. In other words, moral experts appear to do no better than the folk when it comes to making intuitive judgments of particular cases, at least in any in measurable sense of the notion. So then, like legal expertise, I claim that moral expertise comes in the aftermath of initial intuitive judgments. In the domain of thought experimenting and intuitive judgment, what differentiates a moral expert from a moral novice is the *attitude* taken after making judgment and the cognitive skills required to shape and have this attitude. More specifically, I claim that moral expertise in thought experimenting amounts, in the aftermath of an intuitive judgment, to sensitivity to evidence, sensitivity to belief revision, an ongoing search for justification, and, as a result, a resistance to being what Haidt (2001) calls "morally dumbfounded." In order to have such an attitude (or cluster of attitudes), one must have the ability to suppress or overcome the strong pull of intuition, and such cognitive aptitude must be cultivated. This is what makes having such an attitude a matter of expertise rather than simply a matter of disposition or character.

So, in one sense, Williamson is right. Holding the notion of moral expertise up to the light of expertise in mathematics or chess is a poor analogy. But in another sense, Williamson is wrong. A more appropriate analogy, such as to legal expertise, is of no

help to the expertise defense as outlined above. In the *act* of making an intuitive judgment of some particular moral case, moral expertise appears to play little role. It is, rather, in the *attitude* one has toward one's intuitive judgment that moral expertise manifests itself. The task, then, for the rest of this section, is spelling out this notion of moral expertise.

For the folk, the emotional pull of intuition appears to supersede rational reflection on a moral judgment via intuition. After making a fast, pre-theoretical judgment of a moral case, Haidt and Hersh have found people often to be "morally dumbfounded," "that is, they would stutter, laugh, and express surprise at their inability to find supporting reasons, yet they would not change their initial judgments of condemnation" (Haidt 2001, 817). One such case is of incest. Consider the following story.

> Julie and Mark are brother and sister. They are traveling together in France on summer vacation from college. One night they are staying alone in a cabin near the beach. They decide that it would be interesting and fun if they tried making love. At the very least it would be a new experience for each of them. Julie was already taking birth control pills, but Mark uses a condom too, just to be safe. They both enjoy making love, but they decide not to do it again. They keep that night as a special secret, which makes them feel even closer to each other. What do you think about that? Was it OK for them to make love? (Haidt 2001, 814)

After hearing this story, most people immediately say it was wrong for Julie and Mark to make love. But they have trouble giving reasons for this judgment. As Haidt (2001) describes it, "They point out the dangers of inbreeding, only to remember that Julie and

Mark used two forms of birth control. They argue that Julie and Mark will be hurt, perhaps emotionally, even though the story makes it clear that no harm befell them. Eventually, many people say something like, 'I don't know, I can't explain it, I just know it's wrong'" (814).

It is here, in this final move that the folk make, this condition of being morally dumbfounded, where I argue moral experts differentiate themselves.[4] While moral expertise does not make one more resistant to ordering effects, we should expect it to make one more resistant to moral dumbfounding, to claiming that "I just know it's wrong," especially in face of a lack of reasons for saying so. In fact, if one is susceptible to moral dumbfounding, it seems strange to consider such person a moral expert. To be sure, it is possible someone susceptible to moral dumbfounding still may have a stock of moral theory at her cognitive fingertips, and so may be justifiably considered a moral expert in this sense. But the sort of moral expertise that we are concerned with—that the so-called expertise defense is concerned with—is moral expertise as it pertains to the *intuitive* judgment of particular moral cases.

There is, however, a worry one might have about this conception of moral expertise. Given the tendency for people to quickly judge moral cases and become morally dumbfounded, Haidt argues that moral reasoning rarely plays a causal role in most people's moral judgments. Rather, it seems most people only reason about moral cases in a post hoc fashion, first making an intuitive judgment, and only then, after the

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[4] One might be quick to point out that this is a case of social taboo; so people who have grown up in the appropriate environments are especially disposed to respond in the fashion described above. But Haidt also asked participants to consider cases of homosexuality and found similar results. And, furthermore, the crucial consideration for this chapter's purposes is that, taboo or not, the case described is a moral matter (in that there are serious debates over the morality of sexuality).

fact, engaging in reasoning in order to justify the judgment they have already intuitively made. In short, though people are capable of reasoning their way to a moral judgment, they just do not do so very often. Haidt does note that philosophers are “one of the few groups that has been found to reason well” (2001, 819) and that “solitary moral reasoning may be common among philosophers” (820). But if it is granted that this ability and tendency distinct from the folk does not bear on the *act* of making intuitive judgments of moral scenarios, one could argue that philosophers’ superior reasoning abilities might just make them very good at post-hoc reasoning. And so philosophers might be resistant to moral dumbfounding simply because they are very good at post-hoc reasoning. They never are faced with the dilemma of giving up their intuitive judgments or else saying, “I can’t explain it, I just know it’s wrong.” If this is moral expertise, it is not moral expertise as it pertains to the *intuitive* judgment of particular moral cases.

But this worry forgets that I claim resistance to moral dumbfounding is the result of an attitude. To be sure, this attitude in part comprises an ongoing search for justification, but it also comprises sensitivity to evidence and belief revision. And we have good reason to believe that philosophers’ attitudes toward their intuitive moral judgments embody these latter features. One testament of this comes from Jan Crosthwaite. Of her view that “the use of fetal tissue for research and therapy is morally permissible,” she says, “My current judgment is not fixed; it could be altered by information which affects my assessment of the likely harms and benefits of using fetal tissue—including harms to women (through potential exploitation) and harms to the community through permitting actions which lead to some change in important values. It could change were I to be given reason to revise a particular judgment” (1995, 367). And

I would be very surprised if anyone doing philosophy would not testify to something similar. Having such an attitude seems to be part of the ethos of philosophy; one will not get far in the field without it.[5]

So it might be said that within professional philosophy there is an institutional filter for just the sort of attitude moral expertise in thought experimenting requires. But while the discipline of philosophy may filter, it also trains. One need not come to philosophy already having the attitude in question; one may acquire it along the way as a product of learning to suppress or overcome the strong pull of intuition, not due to explicit instruction, but rather due to the way in which philosophy is taught and done in the professional sphere. Positions are posited, challenged, and defended, arguments are amended and augmented, conclusions are rehearsed and rescinded, be it in the classroom or at a conference. As Haidt notes, "[S]ince Plato wrote his *Dialogues*, philosophers have recognized that moral reasoning naturally occurs in a social setting, between people who can challenge each other's arguments and trigger new intuitions" (2001, 820). Haidt argues that this social exchange and triggering of new intuitions does occur among the folk, but it is a rare rather than common occurrence, and typically only occurs when the challenge to one's arguments or views comes from a member of one's ingroup, from one's friends, allies, and acquaintances (2001, 819). The discipline of philosophy simply institutionalizes this exchange. Challenging each other's arguments and taking those challenges seriously is just part of the business of philosophy practiced.

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[5] In fact, with difficult moral cases (such as the trolley thought experiments), many philosophers might be wary of even making definitive judgment. Given the results of the Phil Papers internet survey of professional philosophers, Rini (2015) agues that "[i]n general, it seems, philosophers' actual moral judgments do not correspond well to forced choice binary answers" (445).

But aside from belonging to a group where the practice of challenging arguments and intuitions is commonplace, I think there is, for the folk, another road open to cultivating moral expertise in the intuitive judgment of particular cases, namely narrative art. Or so I will argue. And though I will focus my attention on literary fiction, I see no reason why the argument would not extend to all narrative art.

IV. FICTION & MORAL EXPERTISE

If reading literary fiction can, as I claim, cultivate moral expertise with respect to the intuitive judgments of particular cases, then it seems something must appropriately distinguish it from thought experiments. For if thought experiments are, in all relevant respects, equivalent to the narratives in literary fiction, then with respect to the folk we should expect nothing but the same psychological results produced by moral thought experimenting in itself, namely moral dumbfounding. There are only two ways the narrative of literary fiction could differ from thought experiments: in kind or degree. I have dim hopes for the latter, but despite some troubles with the former, I believe there a case can be made. I argue that, unlike thought experiments, the narratives of fiction do not demand definitive moral judgment and, because of this, are capable, in themselves, of cultivating the attitude required for moral expertise. But before making this argument, I will say a bit about why thought experiments and the narratives of fiction do not seem to differ in any notable sense.

First off, it is clear that thought experiments are narratives. They tell a story of some kind. To be sure, the narratives of literary fiction are usually more detailed; but this is only a matter of degree. After all, even a novel with the most robust narrative is, just

like a thought experiment, metaphysically incomplete. For both thought experiments and narratives of literary fiction, there are always questions with no right answer. For instance, “How many hairs were there on Leopold Bloom’s head when he met Stephen?” or “How many hairs are there on the head of the person steering the runaway trolley?”

So, if there is to be a difference in kind, it is to be found in the kind of narrative, where the only potentially relevant kind distinction here seems to be fictionality. Questions of why a narrative being fictional would matter to the cultivation of moral expertise aside, it seems clear that this distinction cannot be made. Davies (2007) offers two conditions on the fictionality of a narrative: (i) “fictional narratives must be products of acts of ‘fiction-making,’ where the maker’s intention is that we make-believe, rather than believe, the content of the story narrated;” (ii) “the construction of a fictional narrative must not be primarily governed by what we may term the ‘fidelity constraint’—’include only events you believe to have occurred, narrated as occurring in the order in which you believe then to have occurred’—but, rather, by some more general purpose in story-telling” (31). It appears thought experiments meet both of these conditions. As for the first condition, the narratives of thought experiments present a hypothetical situation, one which it clearly seems we are meant to imagine, not believe. As for the second, the author of a thought experiment does not believe the narrative being presented actually occurred, and thus the narrative’s construction is not governed by the fidelity constraint. It appears, then, that the narratives of both literary fiction and thought experiments are of the same kind.

Maybe, however, a case could be made for greater narrative detail playing some role in differentiating narratives that cultivate moral expertise from those that do not.

Details can, after all, give pause in making moral judgments. The more sensitive we become to the complexity of a moral situation, the more reluctant we may be to make definitive moral judgments, and thus the more open we may be to new evidence and belief revision, thereby becoming resistant to moral dumbfounding. But there are some works of literary fiction whose narratives are extremely short, shorter than those of some thought experiments. Consider flash fiction, which is 1,000 words or fewer, and often under 500. Or, for a more extreme example, consider the six-word stories popularized by the Hemingway legend.[6] And, on the other hand, some thought experiments are fairly detailed. Camp (2009) argues that while thought experiments often "are only schematically described, since their main point lies in the situation's structure," some "can also operate in at least one of the ways literary fictions do: By describing counterfactual situations in concrete detail, they can trigger a kind of experiential acquaintance that an abstract description misses" (124). Consider, for instance, Williams' (1973, 98–99) case of Jim and the Indians.[7] Of this thought experiment, Camp claims that

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[6] Run a simple internet search on "six-word stories" to see just how popular these six-word tales have become. The story said to have been written by Hemingway (though most likely was not) goes as follows: "For sale: baby shoes, never worn." See Haglund (2013).

[7] Jim finds himself in the central square of a small South American town. Tied up against the wall are a row of twenty Indians, most terrified, a few defiant, in front of them several armed men in uniform. A heavy man in a sweatstained khaki shirt turns out to be the Captain in charge and, after a good deal of questioning of Jim which establishes that he got there by accident while on a botanical expedition, explains that the Indians are a random group of the inhabitants who, after recent acts of protest against the government, are just about to be killed to remind other possible protestors of the advantages of not protesting. However, since Jim is an honored visitor from another land, the Captain is happy to offer him a guest's privilege of killing one of the Indians himself. If Jim accepts, then as a mark of the special occasion, the other Indians will be let off. Of course, if Jim refuses, then there is no special occasion, and Pedro here will do what he was about to do when Jim arrived, and kill them all. Jim, with some desperate recollection of schoolboy fiction, wonders whether if he got hold of a gun, he could hold the Captain, Pedro and the rest of the soldiers to threat, but it is quite clear from the set-up that nothing of the kind is going to work: any attempt at that sort of thing will mean that all the Indians will be killed, and himself. The men

"the rich imagery (e.g., 'a heavy man in a sweat-stained khaki shirt') helps us to project ourselves imaginatively into the situation, in a way that precludes the pat application of general moral principles (in particular, utilitarian principles) that might be tempting given a more abstract, schematic description" (2009, 125). So if I am right that there is something special about literary fiction that allows its narratives to cultivate moral expertise, then whatever role narrative detail plays in that cultivation, it is not enough to do the job. On with the argument for the antecedent.

To begin, I take a cue from Nersessian (1993), who argues that "unlike the fictional narrative, […] the context of the scientific thought experiment makes the intention clear to the reader that the situation is one that is to represent a potential real-world situation" (297). More precisely, I take a cue from Davies' (2007) refining of Nersessian's claim, for if we take her claim on face value, as it stands, it is false, as many fictional narratives intend for the reader to take the situations to represent potential real-world situations. As Davies puts it, "People in fictions are assumed to be biological and behavioral analogues of people in real life, and fictional toasters burn the fictional bread put into them if fictionally ignored" (2007, 32). So we ought to construe Nersessian's claim not as suggesting that the narratives of thought experiments fail to meet the requirements for fictionality, but rather that the narratives of thought experiments are presented with a motivation different from that of the narratives of literary fiction. With the narrative of a work of literary fiction, given some circumstances *C*, the *belief* that some sequence of events *S* would occur is instrumental to the goal of the narrative: *making believe* that *C* obtains and *S* occurs. However, with the narrative of a thought

against the wall, and the other villagers, understand the situation, and are obviously begging him to accept. What should he do?

experiment, the situation is reversed; *making believe* is instrumental to coming to the *belief* that given *C*, *S* would occur (Davies 2007, 33). In short, while *belief* is the motivation for presenting the narratives of thought experiments, *making believe* is the motivation for presenting the narratives of literary fiction.

Now, I am not so sure about the claim that the motivation behind the narratives of literary fiction is making believe. Writers of fiction often talk about wanting to emotionally move their readers; and so while belief may be instrumental to making believe, making believe may be instrumental to emotional resonance or something along these lines. But what does seem right about Davies' sharpening of Nersessian is that, unlike with the narratives of literary fiction, the motivation behind the narratives of thought experiments is belief. The whole business of making believe that there is a runaway trolley headed for five people lying on the tracks is so that we come to a moral judgment, to a belief that pulling the trolley's lever or pushing a person off a bridge is either morally right or morally wrong. This, then, appears to be enough to distinguish the narratives of literary fiction from the narratives of thought experiments. Fictionality is not the only relevant measure by which we can distinguish kinds of narratives.

Davies, however, points out that some fiction appears to be motivated in a way similar to thought experiments. "[W]riters of utopias or dystopias such as *1984* and *Brave New World*," he notes, "plausibly intend that, as a result of the receiver's making-believe the content of the narrative, she will come to believe that this is how certain societies would turn out, and will therefore amend her views about the merits of alternative political or socio-economic systems" (2007, 33). Accordingly, by the lights of the distinction above, it seems some works of literary fiction are in fact merely elaborate

thought experiments. And this looks like a bad result. Something seems wrong about calling *1984*, *Brave New World*, and the like thought experiments.

But we need not give up Nersessian's insight entirely. Even if Davies is right—and it seems he is[8]—there is at least a large subset of fiction whose writers do not intend make-believe to be an instrument for belief. So while the narratives of literary fiction *may* be motivated by belief, unlike thought experiments, they *need not* be so motivated. And it is the narratives of literary fiction that are *in fact* not so motivated that I am interested in, for within this subset of fiction lie the works capable of cultivating moral expertise.

My second cue comes from John (2010), who argues that "morality demands an evaluative 'double take,'" and that literature is an apt vehicle through which this demand might be met (287). According to John, "literary works [are able to] set up moral judgment as a form of complex judgment, one that asks for more than one perspective to be taken on situations or persons" (2010, 287). For instance, given some segment of a work of fiction's narrative, readers might be led to judge a character or her actions as morally wrong. But the experience of the reader is many times not simply left there. Works often also provide resources to see a character's failings "as understandable, perhaps as reflecting a social and psychological context in which some human tendencies are encouraged and some discouraged, or in which human nature is put under severe pressures" (John 2010, 288). Or, even if the work does not provide such resources, the failings "may appear to call for acknowledgment as human and to deserve some form of compassion" (John 2010, 288). While these moments of "double take" do not remove the

[8] A potentially even clearer case is one Davies notes elsewhere (2010, 62). Noël Carroll (2002, 9–10) argues that Graham Greene's *The Third Man* should be understood as a counterexample to a universal claim E. M. Forster made about loyalty to one's friends, which is a function that thought experiments often have.

grounds for the initial judgment, they do introduce non-judgmental response and thereby put pressure on the reader not simply to condemn, but rather to see another's moral failings "as possibly shared by me, or as influenced by a social world that I help to sustain, or as making manifest the possibilities of my human kind" (John 2010, 288).

This all looks right. It seems fiction does have the power to produce moral double takes, and to do so in the way John describes. But it is a stretch to think such experiences in themselves could cultivate moral expertise with respect to the intuitive judgment of particular cases, because these double takes amount to a matter of *understanding,* not revision or reconsideration. We may understand, sympathize, or empathize with a character's moral failing, but this does not, as John acknowledges, remove the grounds for our initial judgment. What is at issue with moral expertise as I have characterized it is a willingness to *revise* one's judgment, not simply sympathize with those you have judged. But I think John's view can be pushed further, where these double takes extend to the judgment of the acts in question. To be sure, in morally clear cases this will not be so. However much readers may empathize with, say, aspects of Humbert Humbert of *Lolita*, their initial judgment of the wrongness of seduction of the underage will stand firm. But there are plenty of cases nowhere near as clear, and the narratives of much literary fiction lie in this middle ground. As Putnam has argued, "What especially the novel does is aid us in the imaginative re-creation of moral perplexities, in the widest sense" (1978, 87).[9] It is in these cases of moral perplexity, this moral middle ground, that our judgments of acts themselves will be subject to double takes.

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[9] Putnam's line of argument suggests a view about the role literary fiction may play in our moral lives akin to the one I am arguing for in this chapter.

Consider, for instance, a scene from Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*, which John takes as a paradigmatic case of the double-take phenomenon. As John sets the scene, "The protagonist, society belle Lily Bart, is leaving a young man's apartment, where she has done nothing but have tea and conversation, and yet from which she would rather not be seen leaving" (2010, 288).

> There was no one in sight, however, but a charwoman who was scrubbing the stairs. Her own stout person and its surrounding implements took up so much room that Lily, to pass her, had to gather up her skirts and brush against the wall. As she did so, the woman paused in her work and looked up curiously, resting her clenched red fists on the wet cloth she had just drawn from her pail. She had a broad sallow face, slightly pitted with small-pox, and thin straw-coloured hair through which her scalp shone unpleasantly. "I beg your pardon," said Lily, intending by her politeness to convey a criticism of the other's manner. (Wharton 1969/1905, 13)

John has it that here, in the face of Lily's superiority, her failure to be sincere, exhibit a respect that transcends class lines, appreciate the charwoman's vulnerability, "we might have a slight bristle of distaste" and make moral judgment accordingly (2010, 289). But we are also subject to a double take in, John argues, at least three ways. First, we may experience Lily's desire not to be humanly accessible to a person like the charwoman, finding ourselves caught in a morally vulnerable position as a result, one that does not allow for moral superiority, and we may be thus led to sympathize with Lily. Second, we may imagine Lily's anxiety at being seen leaving from a man's apartment and thus empathize with her. Third, we may register how restrictive and unforgiving the social

world in which Lily lives is, how it would be a surprisingly impressive feat for Lily to transcend this and exhibit kindness or openness with the charwoman, and we may thus be led to understand Lily's action.

Again, this all seems right. But it also seems we can go further, that the scene serves the material for a double take on the judgment of Lily's action itself or even a reluctance to make any particular judgment at all. Yes, we may see that Lily has been short of sincere, kind, and open. But we might also see the charwoman pausing to look up curiously as also short of sensitive, even if not at all deliberately so. And yes, all things considered, at the moment of interaction, we may see the charwoman as in a more vulnerable position, and so we may *more easily* empathize with her and understand her stopping to give a curious look (and we may even question whether this look was *in fact* curious, or only seen as such from Lily's perspective). But this only means we may be quicker to experience a double take of the kind John describes—a *double take of understanding*—with respect to the charwoman. But our questioning of the charwoman's action would still stand, as double takes of understanding do not remove the grounds for judgments of acts, thus giving rise to a tension in the judgment of either character's action. Accordingly, we may experience a double take with our initial judgment of Lily's action—a *double take of judgment*—or we might be hesitant to make any definitive judgment at all, even for a moment. And given my analysis of the scene, fully appreciating *The House of Mirth* requires such double take or hesitancy of judgment. To do otherwise would be either to overlook the moral complexity the work has offered or mistake moral judgment as the motivation of the narrative.

If I am right about this, then literary fiction is fit to cultivate moral expertise in the intuitive judgment of particular cases, as it can make readers wary of their initial intuitive judgments, more open to belief revision, more sensitive to evidence and the demands of justification, and thus, in the end, more resistant to moral dumbfounding. To become moral experts, or at least less susceptible to moral dumbfounding, people need not do philosophy or, as Haidt suggests, surround themselves with friends and acquaintances who challenge their intuitions; people may fill their lives with literary fiction.

Now, there are various accounts that pin the moral value of literary fiction on its ability to bolster our moral knowledge. For instance, Noël Carroll (2001, 2002) argues that the moral value of fiction lies in its ability to clarify our conception of particular moral principles by instantiating these principles, by giving them life. The narrative functions to "deepen our moral understanding by, among other things, encouraging us to apply our moral knowledge and emotions to specific cases. For in being prompted to apply and engage our antecedent moral powers, we may come to augment them" (Carroll 2001, 83). This may be true, in part. Sure, we may, in some portions of a work's narrative, find ourselves making moral judgments, and doing so without hesitation because these judgments seem clear, part of our moral stock, and clearly presented as such. And of course, when a work couples a clear case with the expectation of judgment,[10] then the narrative may very well function in the way Carroll describes.

But an account of this sort does not capture all the morally foggy moments in fiction, where it is unclear just what moral principles are being instantiated, yet clear that something moral is at hand, the moments where our moral judgment comes down to a

[10] As Carroll (2002, 10) argues of Graham Greene's *The Third Man.*

matter of intuition, not application. It is here, in these moments, that the narrative encourages us to experience a double take of judgment or maybe even rest in the space of no judgment at all, withholding definitive judgment of any sort. This is crucially distinct from the narratives of thought experiments, where the expectation of judgment is clear, however foggy the moral territory. Judgment is the currency in which thought experiments traffic. The enterprise of fiction often proceeds far from such traffic, and when it does, its moral value is not so much found in an ability to deepen our moral understanding or improve our making of moral judgments, but rather in an ability to modify our attitude or stance toward the judgments we intuitively make.

There still, however, remains the issue of such moral value's relationship to literary value. After all, there are some positive effects reading a work of literature may induce that clearly do not figure into that work's value *as literature* (a character reminding a reader of a loved one, for instance). But here I think it is equally clear that this kind of moral value is relevant to literary value. This is due to double takes being predicated on proper engagement with a literary work. When fully attending to a literary work, the experience of a double take of judgment (or reluctance in making any definitive judgment) results from appreciating that the work presents a morally complex situation and does not ask the reader to make any definitive intuitive judgment regarding that situation. To make definitive intuitive judgment in the face of such features is to miss or ignore what the work itself has offered. So if experiencing a double take is morally valuable, as I have argued, a work's ability to afford double takes contributes to its literary value, as this ability is in virtue of its proper appreciation.

Even if it turns out that a reader's experiencing double takes does not, in fact, result in the development of moral expertise in the intuitive judgment of real-world cases—if, in other words, the literary experiences do not translate to a real-world attitude or disposition—it still seems that the experience of double takes has moral value, albeit of a much more limited sort. At minimum, the literary double take of judgment places a reader in the cognitive position of the moral expert, even if momentarily. It offers a reader a glimpse into a world whose moral complexity embodies that of our own.[11]

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[11] John makes a related point: "To the extent that literature aims to show the evaluative possibilities of life in an interesting way, this moral complexity, the way in which opportunities for moral value emerge from messy conditions, has literary potential" (2010, 295).

5. READING TO FEEL LESS ALONE: EMOTIONAL INTIMACY IN LITERATURE

When reading literature, a very common emotional experience is one had with a work's characters. Their actions evoke emotional response, however irrational this may seem. But when reading literature, we might also experience an emotional connection with the author, or at least what appears to be such. We might feel as though there is someone else out there who not just holds the same views as us or likes the same things we like, but who sees the world in the way we do, experiences it similarly, characterizes it in a way that resonates deeply with our worldly perspectives, where this someone is, of course, the author. But it is unclear how such an experience could be had when engaging with a work of literature strictly as a work of literature, at least when it comes to fictional literature. In other words, it is unclear how a work of fictional literature could supply the resources for such an experience. It is, after all, a work of fiction, not a report of the author's experience, as with memoir or autobiography. The task of this chapter is twofold: first, to explain the nature and value of this emotional experience; second, to argue that a fictional literary work can supply the resources for such an experience—or at least something close to it—and its ability to do so counts toward its value as literature.

I. AUTHORIAL CONNECTEDNESS

Much has been written on the value of emotional response to fictional characters, especially when what is evoked is empathy for them.[1] But little has been written about the emotional connection it at least appears a reader might have with an author. When reading a literary work we might feel a sense of intimacy, as though we are getting to

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[1] See, for instance, Robinson 2005 and 2010.

know the author on a deep personal level. And in this intimacy, we might even feel a sense of identification, a robust resonance with the way the author describes and sees the world, and thereby feel less alone, because we feel there is someone else out there who gets *it*, gets us, understands things the way we do and can put those things better than we ever could ourselves. As David Foster Wallace expresses in an interview,

> There's another level [on which] a piece of fiction is a conversation. There's a relationship set up between the reader and the writer that's very strange and very complicated and hard to talk about. [...] There's a kind of Ah-ha! Somebody at least for a moment feels about something or sees something the way that I do. It doesn't happen all the time. It's these brief flashes and flames, but I get that sometimes. I feel unalone—intellectually, emotionally, spiritually. I feel human and unalone and that I'm in a deep, significant conversation with another consciousness in fiction and poetry in a way that I don't with other art. (Miller 2012, 62)

And notably, Wallace's fiction often seems to evoke something like this in his readers. In her reflection on the cult community that surrounds Wallace's work, Kathleen Fitzpatrick argues that "many of his readers experience a sense of intimate connection with his writing, a connection that can very easily bleed over into a relationship, however imagined, with the man himself" (2012, 184–85).

Call experiences of this kind *authorial connectedness*. But we now need a sharper picture of what authorial connectedness consists in, for it is not entirely clear how reading literature could lead to an experience of this kind. That is the task of the next section. But

before getting on with that project, something needs to be said about what authorial connectedness is not.

It might be tempting to class authorial connectedness as a kind of friendship. It certainly does not seem foreign to conceive of a favorite author as a kind of friend. As Rick Gekoski puts it, “for so many people—not just authors and serious readers—an admired writer is a peculiar but superior form of ‘friend.’ There are a number of senses of the term in which this seems true: someone you can turn to; someone who has wisdom to transmit; who has been a constant and trusted presence; who can share similar experiences with us; who can give without asking anything in return” (2012). And in his book *The Company We Keep* (1988), Wayne Booth uses the metaphor of friendship to construct an account of the ethical criticism of literature.[2]

But it is for this reason that I want to resist the notion of friendship in understanding the emotional relationship readers perceive having with authors: it is a *metaphor*. What I am interested in understanding is the *actual* emotional connection a reader might perceive having with an author. Additionally, the metaphor of friendship is applied both to the relationship readers perceive having with authors and the relationship readers perceive having with books,[3] at times without care for how distinct these relationships are.[4] And though the application of the metaphor is more common in regard to books, I suspect that many times it is a relationship with the author that one intends to

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[2] For an excellent overview of Booth’s account, see Nussbaum (1990).

[3] For a treatment of the latter that does not lean on the metaphor, see Levinson (2016).

[4] See Gekoski (2012), for instance.

be express. But simply put, and suspicions aside, the metaphor of friendship is not likely to be helpful.

It might also be tempting to see authorial connectedness as akin to something Jerrold Levinson notes as a potential reward of listening to music, something he calls Emotional Communion. This reward amounts to the listener adopting the assumption that the emotion expressed in a work was felt by the composer and thus, when the listener is moved to that emotion because of the work, she feels she is having a shared experience with the composer. As such, Emotional Communion offers a feeling of intimacy with the composer. In Levinson's words: "The emotional separateness and alienation which occur frequently in daily living are here miraculously swept aside in imaginative identification with the composer whose feelings are, on the Expressionist assumption, plainly revealed for any listener to hear and to mirror" (2011, 329). So too it might go for literature, as of course Tolstoy believed, since for him transmitting emotion was the essential business of art.[5] In assuming that the author felt the emotions expressed in her work, when moved to these emotions, the reader may experience a feeling of emotional intimacy with the author.[6] But while Emotional Communion and authorial connectedness both result in a sense of intimacy with the author, it is intimacy of a different sort. The intimacy had from Emotional Communion is due solely to a feeling evoked in the reader by the work. The intimacy had from authorial connectedness is due, in part, to the reader recognizing something of herself in the work, something she believed or thought or felt *before*

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[5] See Tolstoy (1995), particularly page 511.

[6] Of course, Emotional Communion had with a composer and Emotional Communion had with a literary author is not exactly alike. While the latter involves articulate thoughts, it is not obvious that the former does.

reading the work, for authorial connectedness turns on the reader feeling as though she has found, in some sense, a fellow soul.

II. AUTHORIAL CONNECTEDNESS EXPLAINED

Even if readers do in fact experience authorial connectedness, it could very well be an emotional response that has little to do with the act of reading. It could be the case that readers import wild beliefs about literature and authorship that prime them to experience perceived intimacy with authors. Maybe some feel authorial connectedness because certain works or authors have sentimental value wholly independent from the works or authors themselves. (A work was a deceased friend's favorite, say.) Or maybe intimacy felt with a loved one is somehow projected onto the author of a work one is reading. To be sure, in such cases authorial connectedness might be *felt*, but due to reasons lying beyond the reading experience itself. In other words, a satisfying explanation of authorial connectedness must locate the cause of a perceived sense of intimacy with the author within the act of reading. A satisfying explanation is moreover one that renders authorial connectedness *reasonable*, without the requirement of any special beliefs or life circumstances, even if the experience may not be sustainable when fictional literature is read and appreciated strictly as fictional literature. I argue that there are four features of the reading experience that, taken together, offer such an explanation. The first concerns the psychological context in which readers read. The other three concern readers' sensitivity to features of the text. I will address these in turn.

The Psychological Context of Reading

In his critical discussion of John Ruskin's use of the friendship metaphor, Proust identifies an important feature of the act of reading: "When we read, we receive another's thought, and yet we are alone, we are in fully thinking work [sic], in full aspiration, in full personal activity: we receive the ideas of another person in spirit, that is to say, in truth, we can therefore unite with them, we are that other person and yet all the time we are developing our own I with more variety than if we thought alone, we are driven by another on our own ways" (1987, 147). Now, we might not be able to pin down exactly what receiving another person's ideas in spirit or truth amounts to. Though if we do consider another's ideas openly, with full concentration, and beyond all the distractions that can infringe upon social interaction, it does seem that we can engage with that person's ideas "in truth" if that simply means to give these ideas full consideration. But, at bottom, what Proust puts his finger on is that we are, strictly speaking, alone when we read. And it is this being alone that allows one to engage with the product of another person's thought in a richer way than one typically does (or can) in conversation. There is the possibility for a strong sense of intimacy, for "uniting," as Proust puts it, with another's thought.

There is an apparently obvious irony here: being (strictly speaking) alone allows the reader to develop a strong sense of intimacy with another's thoughts. But then equally obvious is that there is no real irony, for we are engaging with another's *thoughts*, not another individual. The same situation would obtain if we were reading a letter from an actual friend. One condition for best engaging with the content of a letter is being strictly speaking alone, or at least having the perception of being strictly speaking alone (i.e.

feeling as though you are not in the presence of those meaning or attempting to engage with you in some capacity or another). Even being in the presence of the author of a letter written to you, however quiet and unobtrusive that person is, can sometimes disrupt an intimate engagement with the letter itself. But while being alone allows for the *possibility* of experiencing intimacy with the written thoughts of another, it of course does not *constitute* or *compel* this experience. Being alone and able to concentrate fully, without distraction, on the dictionary, say, will most likely not result in any sense of intimacy with what is on the page. Whatever gives rise to experiencing a sense of intimacy with an author's thought must in some way be grounded in the act of reading the author's thoughts, in having a response to the text itself. So while the solitariness of reading may bolster authorial connectedness, it is some perceived feature (or features) of the text that elicits authorial connectedness in the first place.

Shared Beliefs & Attitudes

An obvious starting point is the observations, insights, attitudes, and ideas expressed in a work. Part of what makes us feel emotionally connected to others is commonality. If we share no points of intersection with what another person thinks, it is incredibly difficult to feel emotionally connected to that person in any way. There is simply little upon which an emotional connection can be built, let alone an intimate one. And it certainly would not be possible, within reason, to feel as though that person sees or understands the world the way you do. But a reader's sharing or agreeing with the observations, insights, attitudes, and ideas expressed in a work of literature does not seem to be enough to elicit a perceived emotional connection with the author, at least not of the

intimate kind. Experiencing emotional intimacy with someone seems to require more than simply sharing beliefs and attitudes. There are plenty of people with whom I share beliefs and attitudes about various things, but feel little, if any, emotional connection to. And I imagine I am not unusual in this respect. In fact, I suspect that it is not uncommon for one to share beliefs and attitudes with another and yet still dislike that person. To be sure, if one shares enough beliefs and attitudes with another, an emotional connection might be felt. But to experience a rich sense of intimacy, something more is required. There are two features that could do such work: style and expression.

Style & Personality

Standardly, style in literature is thought to be a set of formal features—rhythm, rhyme, repetition, sentence length and syntactic structure, and so on. But on the one hand, this standard account does not seem to capture all of the features that constitute an author's style. Subject matter and thematic concerns appear to be such features at least some of the time.[7] That, for instance, novelist Thomas Bernhard almost always deals in misanthropic characters cannot be divorced from Bernhard's style. On the other hand, the standard account seems to allow too much. Sometimes repetition and rhyme are incidental, and as such, do not appear to be part of what constitutes an author's style. So the standard account requires retooling. A simple divide between form and content will not do the trick.

As an alternative to the standard account, Robinson offers the following view: "literary style is rather a way of doing certain things, such as describing characters,

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[7] For an argument to this effect, see Goodman (1975).

commenting on the action and manipulating the plot" (1985, 227). Now, this view does make room for subject matter and ruling out incidental formal features. But of course, as stated so far, it is troublingly vague. However intuitive it may be to speak of style as being a certain way of doing things, we need some guidance on how to pick out what features of a work are part of this "certain way." Following Richard Wollheim (1979), Robinson takes style to be of two distinct kinds: *general style* and *individual style*. General style is defined by literary historians or critics. An individual within this literary community "picks what seem (to that person) to be the interesting or significant categories and [...] identifies the features characteristic of each category" (Robinson 1984, 148). And thus a general style—e.g. minimalism, maximalism, modernism, pastoral poetry, and so on—is constructed.

Individual style, on the other hand, is solely a function of the author. As Robinson puts it, "Something is an element of individual style only if it is consistently used by a writer in a work in such a way as to express personality or character traits, interests, attitudes, qualities of mind, etc., unique to the (implied) author of that work" (1984, 148). If she is right that individual style expresses the (implied) author's personality, then an explanation of authorial connectedness can get off the ground.

Robinson's argument goes roughly as follows. Grant that style is a *way* of doing things. Surely, a way of doing things might emanate from an individual's personality. Someone who has a crass sensibility may have a crass way of dressing. Someone who has an uncompromising character may have an uncompromising way of making decisions. Someone who has a witty mind may speak in a witty way. In fact, this often seems to be the case. It is the mode or manner in which individuals dress and speak and generally

conduct themselves that give others a window into their personalities. Such things, as Robinson puts it, are “typically an expression of (some features of) [an individual’s] personality, character, mind or sensibility” (1985, 229). And these ways of doing things constitute one’s individual style. In sum, Robinson’s account boils down to two related claims: (1) features of one’s individual style are an expression of one’s personality and (2) one’s personality is causally related to the features of one’s individual style. “In expression,” Robinson argues, “an ‘inner’ state is expressed or forced out into ‘outer’ behavior. An ‘inner’ quality of mind, character or personality causes the ‘outer’ behavior to be the way it is, and also leaves its ‘trace’ upon that behavior. A timid or compassionate character leaves a ‘trace’ of timidity or compassion upon the actions which express it” (1985, 229).[8]

So too goes the story for individual style in literature. It is a way of doing certain things—constructing phrases, punctuating sentences, delineating lines, presenting a theme, describing a setting or the psychological workings of a character, and so on—and that *way* is an expression of the author’s personality (because the author’s personality is causally related to the features of her individual style). Thus the obsessive tone of Thomas Bernhard’s novels expresses Bernhard’s obsessive temperament. David Foster Wallace’s way of constructing introspective narrators expresses his own tendency toward introspection. Or, to use Robinson’s examples, “[Henry] James’ humorous yet compassionate way of describing Strether’s bewilderment expresses the writer’s own humorous yet compassionate attitude. Jane Austen’s ironic way of describing social pretension expresses her ironic attitude to social pretension” (1985, 230).

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[8] Tillyard also suggests this line of thought, though much less explicitly (1939, 35).

But of course, style does not amount to a way of doing just anything. For instance, something done once in a particular way does not constitute a style of doing that thing. Something must be done in a particular way consistently. It is that Bernhard is *consistently* obsessive in tone or that Wallace's narrators are *consistently* introspective that makes these ways of doing things stylistic and thus expressive of the authors' personalities. Also, of course, an individual may have a consistent way of doing various things. And we do not always consider these various things in isolation, speaking only of one's style of doing this and style of doing that. So we may say that it is the collection of these various things that constitutes an individual's style simpliciter. It is someone's consistent way of speaking and dressing and making decisions, among other things, that constitutes her (individual) style. They collectively express her personality. Thus, in the domain of literature, "[i]f a writer has an individual style, then the way she writes has a certain consistency: the same traits of mind, character and personality are expressed throughout her work" (Robinson 1985, 232). It is, for instance, Bernhard's consistent way of presenting obsessive prose and misanthropic themes and text without paragraph breaks, among other things, that constitutes his (individual) literary style.

There is, however, one large qualification in order. Strictly speaking, the style of a literary work expresses the personality of "what, following Wayne Booth, we might call the 'implied author,' that is, the author as she seems to be from the evidence of the work" (Robinson 1985, 234). Though we are justified in inferring that someone's way of speaking or acting expresses features of her (actual) personality, the situation is trickier for works of literature. Authors commonly employ or adopt personas when narrating their

works.[9] As Robinson notes, "however querulous and intolerant the actual Tolstoy may have been in real life, the implied author of *Anna Karenina* is full of compassionate understanding" (1985, 234). And however consistently obsessive and misanthropic Thomas Bernhard's narrators are throughout his novels, there is some sense that the degree misanthropy is a bit of a show. Even with a work of nonfiction, it seems we are not justified in attributing the personality expressed through the work's style to the actual author. As David Foster Wallace says in an interview, "In those essays that you like in *Harper's*, there's a certain persona created, that's a little stupider and schmuckier than I am" (Lipsky 2010, 41). Of course in some cases, it may be that a work's implied author overlaps entirely with the actual author. But from the work alone, we cannot determine to what degree the implied and actual authors overlap, if at all.[10]

Now, this matter of the implied author may seem to spell trouble for fictional literature *as* fictional literature supplying the resources for authorial connectedness. After all, any emotional intimacy felt on account of the personality expressed through a work's style will seemingly be, strictly speaking, emotional intimacy had with the *implied* author, not the author herself. And I will take up this trouble later. But this matter of the

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[9] This may seem especially salient in fictional works narrated from the first person. Nabokov has his Humbert Humbert; Salinger has his Holden Caulfield; Melville has his Ishmael. But the implied author is distinct from first-person narrators. First-person narrators are characters in the work; the implied author is not.

[10] It should also be noted that there is some dispute over the notion of the implied author. Some simply find it to be an unintelligible notion. But at minimum, the implied author is intelligible as a pragmatic device. Rabinowitz (2011) gives an argument to this effect. And the editor of a special issue of *Style* on the implied author has the following to say: "The conclusion of this inventory of the practice of authors over several centuries in both high and 'low' forms is that the construction of the persona projected by the author is important to literary analysis and that the term 'implied author' is a most useful one to identify the congruence or divergence of different historical authors and inferred authorial voices in a work or body of work" (Richardson 2011, 6). For the purposes of this chapter, a pragmatic understanding of the implied author is all that is required.

implied author does not pose trouble for a satisfying explanation of authorial connectedness, of the fact that readers may *feel* a sense of intimacy with the author. Even if, strictly speaking, the personality expressed through a work's style is that of the implied author's, it nonetheless gives the sense of a singular consciousness as the cause of the text, the sense of a unified person, one with a personality to which the reader may be drawn, and one which the reader may reasonably take as the actual author's. Even savvy readers, those well aware of the distinction between the implied and actual author, may reasonably take the implied author's personality as overlapping with the actual author's and thereby project the connection they feel with the personality expressed in the work onto the actual author. To be sure, there may be narrators whose personalities few readers would take as the actual author's; but such cases certainly do not constitute the rule, even for first-person works.

There are, however, reasons to find Robinson's account worrisome. As Stephanie Ross notes, it seems somewhat stipulative, for Robinson "declares style features to be those that express personality. It follows that, say, formal features of a certain work that aid us in identifying its creator but that aren't expressive of character or personality fail to be stylistic traits of the work in question" (2003, 240). Euphonious sounds, for example, might be such features. They may be neither expressive of personality nor indicative of a school or period and thus features of neither individual nor general style. However, Robinson is aware of this worry and has something to say about it.[11] And Ross does not spend a great deal of time addressing Robinson's response.

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[11] See Robinson 1985, 237–38.

But the dialectic between Robinson and Ross is not of primary importance here; the larger issue is that Robinson's account is not uncontroversial. As such, it may appear that for personality to be of any use in explaining authorial connectedness, a defense of Robinson's account is wanting. I do not, however, believe this is so. For the purposes of explaining authorial connectedness, there is no need to adopt Robinson's entire account. The fact that *some* features of style express the implied author's personality—namely, those things that are done in a uniquely particular way consistently—is all that is required. And Robinson's argument seems to establish this much, that some stylistic features are expressive of the implied author's personality. So, we can acknowledge the force of Ross's worry without wholly giving up Robinson's insight.

Still, being drawn to someone's personality is not typically enough to establish emotional intimacy. We may "click," so to speak, with another's personality, like that person as a result, and thus have the foundation to develop emotional intimacy. But if that relationship begins and ends with merely getting along well, the chance of emotional intimacy seems dim. I may be drawn to someone's personality and yet find that our interests, perspectives, and beliefs are wildly divergent, and thus that we have little to talk about, or at least little of substance, and thus little over which to experience emotional intimacy. So there must be more to a satisfying explanation of authorial connectedness, something more closely tied to the content of the work. It may be that being drawn to or identifying with the implied author's personality in addition to sharing the beliefs and attitudes expressed in the work does give us a satisfying explanation of authorial connectedness, generally speaking. Anyone who has a personality you find mesmerizing and with whom you share beliefs and attitudes is certainly someone with whom you may

experience intimacy. But to experience the especially rich sort of connection Wallace describes, one where you "feel unalone—intellectually, emotionally, spiritually" (Miller 2012, 62), one potentially unique to the act of reading literature, it seems something more must be at work. And I think Levinson's analysis of emotional response to music can shed some light on this.

Expressive Potency

When listening to music, Levinson argues that we may experience what he calls the reward of Expressive Potency (2011, 329). On the nature of this experience, it is worth quoting Levinson at length.

> If one begins to regard music as the expression of one's own current emotional state, it will begin to seem as if it issues from oneself, as if it pours forth from one's innermost being. It is then very natural for one to receive an impression of expressive power—of freedom and ease in externalizing and embodying what one feels. The sense one has of the richness and spontaneity with which one's inner life is unfolding itself, even where the feelings involved are of the negative kind, is a source of undeniable joy. (2011, 328)

If we relax the bit about "one's own current emotional state" to include the whole of one's current cognitive state or cognitive dispositions, then Levinson's reward of Expressive Potency applies nicely to the literary case. To be sure, a reader's connection with an author is an emotional response, a felt sense of intimacy and identification. But in virtue of its medium, literature has a much wider expressive scope than pure music. In addition to its expression of emotion, a work of literature might be perceived as

expressively potent or powerful in its portrayal of events, mode of description, and manner in which observations, insights, attitudes, and ideas are expressed. Thus the reader of a literary work may feel a connection of the sort Levinson describes with respect to any of these features. The reader may feel as though she would portray some event, describe some object, or present some observation in the way the author does, maybe even so much so that it begins to feel to the reader that were she to write a book, it would be just like the one she is reading.

Of course the reader most likely does not have the expressive power to write or have written such a book. And I imagine most readers would be well aware of this, even when in the throes of such a rich emotional experience. But, as Levinson notes of the musical case, “The composer’s musical genius makes possible the imaginative experience described above, and we can remain aware of that throughout. But this does not take away the resulting satisfaction. The coat may be borrowed, but it is just as warm” (2011, 328–29). In fact, with the literary case, being aware that the coat is borrowed is an important component of the emotional experience. Were the reader not aware that it is another’s coat, another’s thoughts and mode of expression, she would not then be able to believe that there is another person in the world whose thoughts mirror her own, another person who sees things as she does or, more accurately, as she would if she had the expressive power of the author. It is, to return the metaphor, a matter of the coat fitting perfectly—better, even, than anything one owns—and yet still recognizing it as borrowed.

Put concisely, then, Expressive Potency in literature amounts to the following: when reading a passage within a work of literature that expresses *x*, the reader values the

expression of *x* and believes that were she to have the expressive powers of the author, she would have expressed *x* in the way the author has. Expressive Potency in literature of course comes in varying degrees. In its most robust form, the reader highly values the author's expression of *x* and believes she would have expressed *x* in *exactly* the way the author has. But, in principle, if the reader values the author's expression of *x* and believes she would have expressed *x* in the way the author has *to some degree*, a corresponding amount of Expressive Potency will be felt.

To be sure, there is a threshold below which the weakness of the experience renders it unnoteworthy, something that would not play much of a role in explaining authorial connectedness. But when notable, Expressive Potency—taken together with sharing beliefs and attitudes expressed in the work, being drawn to the manifest personality of the implied author, and the psychological context of reading—tips the scales in this explanation. It is also, I think, largely what makes authorial connectedness a uniquely rich form of felt emotional intimacy. Certainly speaking one-on-one with someone who shares your beliefs and attitudes, has a personality you find mesmerizing, and expresses things you value in a way that you believe you would if you could, if you only had such expressive power, has the makings for feeling a rich sense of emotional intimacy with this person. But the trick is that most people do not have the expressive power to evoke Expressive Potency, at least not nearly to the degree that literature does. Literature, especially that of the so-called "literary" sort, is often prized for its expressive power. Thus, when compared to our daily interpersonal engagements, reading literature occupies a special place in its ability to evoke Expressive Potency and the felt emotional intimacy that comes with it. Even authors of expressively powerful works are, I suspect,

rarely so expressively powerful in their daily interpersonal engagements. Writing is often considered to be a craft, and works of literature things that have been crafted, written and revised and rewritten. The author of an expressively powerful work most likely did not create it in one go or at the speed at which typical conversations progress. Rather, it most likely took various stages of fine-tuning so as to render the expression just so. As Anne Lamott says in her well-known book on writing, “Almost all good writing begins with terrible first efforts” (1994, 25).[12] In our everyday interpersonal lives, our expression does not typically undergo any matter of revision or refining; we are left only with our first efforts.

A Satisfying Explanation

In its most emotionally intimate moments, reading a work of fiction can feel as though you are engaging with the thoughts of a person whose beliefs and attitudes intersect with yours, whose personality you find mesmerizing, and who expresses things in a way that you believe you would if you could, if you had such expressive power. And all of this is intensified by a context ripe for emotional intimacy, one in which it feels as though it is only you and another’s thoughts. It is no surprise, then, that readers sometimes experience authorial connectedness.

But even if I have offered a satisfying explanation for authorial connectedness, it is still unclear how a work of fictional literature as such can supply the resources for authorial connectedness. A fictional work’s mode of expression and expressed beliefs,

[12] In fact, the chapter from which this quote is taken, entitled “Shitty First Drafts,” routinely makes an appearance in the syllabi of creative writing courses. And many other books on the craft of writing give budding writers similar advice.

attitudes, and personality are, strictly speaking, that of the *implied* author. They may happen to be, in part or in full, the actual author's, but they need not be. Any such overlap between the actual and implied authors is beyond the bounds of the work as a work of fiction. In other words, there seems to be no way to justify a suspicion that the actual and implied authors overlap solely from consideration of the work as a work of fiction. How, then, does the notion of authorial connectedness get any purchase? How could it feature in any proper appreciation of fictional literature? There is, in itself, little solace in finding a fictional character who sees the world the way you do. Likewise, it would seem there is little solace in finding an implied author who sees the world the way you do. That is, in experiencing merely *implied authorial connectedness*.

III. AUTHORIAL CONNECTEDNESS JUSTIFIED

The first thing we might turn to in an effort to justify authorial connectedness, in understanding this experience as an appropriate part of the appreciation of fictional literature as fictional literature, is oeuvre and biography. Considerations of an author's oeuvre or biography might yield evidence of overlap between the author's genuine mode of expression and expressed beliefs, attitudes, and personality and the mode of expression and expressed beliefs, attitudes, and personality of one or more of her fictional work's implied authors. And considerations of oeuvre and biography are often features of literary criticism, in both matters of understanding and appreciation.[13] But on the one hand, I am skeptical of consideration of oeuvre proving all that useful; and on the other hand, consideration of biography in matters of literary appreciation is contested. Thus, it would

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[13] See Olsen (2010) and Lamarque (2009), ch. 3.

be desirable to justify authorial connectedness on more neutral ground. I will attempt to do just that with the help of Eileen John's thoughts on an artist's sensibility.

Oeuvre

Of course, considerations of an author's oeuvre, when that oeuvre includes only fictional works, seems to provide little if any more evidence of overlap between actual and implied author than considerations of a single fictional work. To be sure, if mode of expression and expressed beliefs, attitudes, and personality are consistent across the oeuvre, it is much more tempting to think that these qualities are qualities of the actual author, especially when the body of work is large. This does, after all, seem to be the most compelling explanation for the consistency across all works. But considerations of an oeuvre of fictional works cannot *determine* this explanation. Even if less likely, the author *could* have constructed a persona she employs when writing her fictional works, a persona whose beliefs, attitudes, personality, and mode of expression is little or nothing like her own. That established authors routinely write works under pseudonyms—sometimes unbeknown to anyone and sometimes, as Joyce Carol Oates said, because "I wanted to escape my own identity" (McDowell 1987)—lends to the plausibility of this. And as briefly noted above, obsessive and misanthropic beliefs, attitudes, personality, and modes of expression consistently run through Thomas Bernhard's oeuvre, but there is some sense that—given the mannered and dramatic mode of expression and overall bravado—it is a bit of a performance, a persona adopted by Bernhard. While it may not be the case that this persona is so far from Bernhard himself (if it indeed is a persona), it is fairly plausible to imagine it is.

Yet even if an author's oeuvre includes nonfictional works, it is not clear that the situation is, in principle, much better. Recall the "stupider and schmuckier" persona behind at least some of David Foster Wallace's essays (Lipsky 2010, 41). It would not be surprising if other writers of nonfiction would admit to such divergence between their genuine selves and the persona at least some of their works project.[14] For budding writers, there is even a book designed to help them craft their nonfiction persona, "which is a version of your self made of words, a carefully crafted version that you can vary as you see fit. Confident or fretful, solemn or sassy, tough or tender, casual or formal—these are just a few of the many stances you can assume" (Klaus 2013, xi–xii). And James Phelan (2011) argues, intuitive so, that the actual author and implied author of a nonfictional work can diverge unintentionally. In fact, it seems easy to imagine an unskilled writer's words expressing a personality radically divergent from her own.[15] To be sure, there is a fidelity constraint on nonfiction, such that we are, all things considered, warranted in taking at least the beliefs and insights expressed in the work as the actual author's. But the mode of expression—and even the attitudes expressed[16]—may be the result of a crafted persona and thus may be distinct from the actual author's. And as noted

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[14] Interestingly, when asked "to what extent the persona in your *nonfiction* represents you," Geoff Dyer attests that though his "tone is pretty similar, in real life and in the books," "[i]t's not the same persona in every book. The Lawrence book [*Out of Sheer Rage*] contains a particularly irritable one. That's partly a phase I was in at that point in my life. But more importantly because, stylistically, I was under the spell of Thomas Bernhard" (Ratliff 2011).

[15] I especially have stiff and stilted prose in mind, the kind that can make it seem that someone is uptight and rigid, when they are in fact not. Though it should be noted that this is not Phelan's focus.

[16] Certainly our personalities influence the attitudes we have. Thus if the authorial persona of a nonfiction work is distinct from the actual author's personality, the attitudes expressed in the work may too be distinct from the actual author's attitudes. So, for instance, the attitudes expressed in Dyer's *Out of Sheer Rage* may have been at least partly determined by the stylistic influence of Bernhard (see note 14 above).

in the section above, shared beliefs and attitudes is not enough for authorial connectedness. So it seems considerations of an author's oeuvre, even if it includes nonfictional works, will not justify authorial connectedness.

But maybe this conclusion is too fast. Colin Lyas argues that, in matters of personality and thus the construction of a persona, there are limits to pretense, both in matters of "what it is possible for a pretender to pretend and what it makes sense for an audience to assume is being pretended" (1983, 22). When the implied author "is perceptive, sensitive, emotionally mature and the like, there seems to be little sense in the supposition that the artist has, by an act of pretence, embodied these characteristics in a work although he himself was not possessed of them. The judgment that the work *is* these things is the judgment that the author *there* exhibited those qualities (though he might not otherwise exhibit them in the responses of his or her non-literary life)" (Lyas 1983, 22). Now there does appear to be something to this. But some sorting is in order.

First, what "makes sense for an audience to assume is being pretended" only has bearing on explaining, not justifying, authorial connectedness, as it only establishes the reasonableness of experiencing authorial connectedness, not (actual) authorial connectedness itself. When it comes to justifying authorial connectedness, the limits of pretense *on the pretender* are all that is of concern. Second, whether there are such limits of pretense on the pretender is ultimately an empirical question, and one that is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, it is difficult to imagine someone who is not, say, sensitive being able *merely* to pretend being sensitive.[17] At least in that moment when sensitivity is expressed, it seems the person was in fact sensitive. So for the sake of

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[17] But perhaps not impossible: it is at least imaginable that an especially cunning sociopath could pull off something like this.

argument, let us grant that Lyas is right about these limits. Thus when style expresses or mode of expression demonstrates sensitivity, the actual author, at least in those moments, was sensitive.

While this does not get us to the justification of authorial connectedness full stop, it may justify connectedness with the author as she was in the act of writing. Call this *literary authorial connectedness*. To be sure, literary authorial connectedness does not afford the same degree of emotional intimacy as authorial connectedness. But here considerations of oeuvre might be of some help. If a reader experiences literary authorial connectedness when reading work *W* by author *A* because of the set of features *F*, and *A*'s oeuvre consistently exhibits *F*, then the reader's connection with the author does seem more robust. Even if the author does not exhibit *F* in her non-literary life, that she does consistently exhibit *F* when engaged in the act of writing seems to say something about her character. But of course the same limits on pretense clearly do not apply to beliefs. In fictional works, the beliefs of the implied author and actual author may be distinct; and as argued above, some shared beliefs are required for authorial connectedness. So literary authorial connectedness is justified only if the beliefs in *F* are those of the actual author. Here considerations of oeuvre will again be of help. Given the fidelity constraint on nonfiction—such that we are, all things considered, warranted in taking at least the beliefs expressed in the work as the actual author's—if *A*'s oeuvre includes nonfictional works and those nonfictional works express the beliefs in *F*, then we are warranted in taking those beliefs as the actual author's, and literary authorial connectedness is thereby justified.[18]

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[18] In fact, if Levinson is right that an artist's oeuvre "can, at least in many cases, be seen as, or as the upshot of, *a single artistic act*," and thus that "it is possible to understand the items in an

Nevertheless, this justification is a tall order. It turns on (1) Lyas being right about the limits of pretense, (2) the author's oeuvre containing nonfictional works, and (3) the author's nonfictional works expressing at least some of the same beliefs in the author's fictional works. I am skeptical of (1); and many authors of fiction do not write nonfiction. Though if we widen the scope of *nonfictional work* to include prefaces, open letters, blogs, lecture transcripts, interviews, and so on—or, in other words, if we relax the traditional conception of oeuvre—we certainly will get more mileage out of consideration of an author's oeuvre. Many authors have at least one of these nonfictional items in their historical record. But even if a convincing argument can be given for such widening (or relaxing), any of the nonfictional items that one might plausibly argue warrant authorial connectedness itself are biographical in nature (e.g. interviews). Thus if we are going to move beyond a particular fictional work in an effort to justify authorial connectedness (rather than just *literary* authorial connectedness), considerations of biography are a much more direct route.

Biography

As both Lamarque (2009, 91–95) and Olsen (2010, 436) note, considerations of biography in the appreciation of fictional literature are commonplace. And Olsen argues that "biographical information that provides a background for appreciation poses no real challenge to the integrity of the literary work" (2010, 446). If biographical information can bear on our appreciation of fictional literature as fictional literature, then justifying

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oeuvre, or some significant portion of it, to be the utterance of a single individual or mind, and the carrier of a unified enterprise of meaning" (1996e, 245–46), such holistic assessment might be required.

authorial connectedness is straightforward. If an author's biographical information indicates that, for the relevant fictional work, the mode of expression and expressed beliefs, attitudes, and personality of the implied author and actual author sufficiently overlap, then authorial connectedness had when reading that work is justified.

But whether biographical information can in fact play a role in the appreciation of literature as literature is a contested issue. The New Critics notably held the position that, as Lamarque notes, "the work must 'speak for itself' as far as possible so that responses—particularly affective responses—that depend exclusively on external information about the circumstances of the author should not be deemed appropriate as distinctly 'literary' responses" (2009, 95). In light of this dispute, Lamarque suggests a pragmatic approach, one that evaluates the relevance of biographical information on a case-by-case basis. While this seems reasonable, it is not my business in this chapter to adjudicate the debate over the relevance of biographical information to literary appreciation. Furthermore, it would be nice for the justification of authorial connectedness not to be hostage to a particular stance on a contested issue. So, in an effort to provide a more neutral justification of authorial connectedness, we can turn to something Eileen John points out about the actual artist's relationship to her work. It might not get us as far as the full sense of authorial connectedness outlined above; but it will get us something nearby, something that does look like emotional intimacy had with the actual author.

Sensibility

John argues that "[t]he practice of art, as an intensely focused and reflective making, gives a default warrant for the rest of us to take nearly every mark, every feature that we think could be controlled by the artist, as evidence of something the artist found to be worth experiencing" (2012, 200). This seems fairly uncontroversial, especially when it comes to literature. It would be incredibly odd for someone to write a work of literature that included elements she believed, at least at the time of writing, were not worth experiencing. Sure, there may be cases in which a writer wrote without focus and reflection, simply letting her subconscious lead her pen wherever, willy-nilly. And in the case of conceptual poetry, it seems that for some works, the poet may not find all the elements of her poem worth experiencing. For instance, Kenneth Goldsmith's *Day* is, as he says, "an entire edition of a day's copy of *The New York Times*. Everywhere there is a letter or numeral, it is transcribed onto the page" (2013, 933). While Goldsmith clearly believes that contemplating the act of him transcribing *The Times* is worth experiencing, and may certainly find some content within that day's paper worth experiencing, it is easy to imagine that he finds more than a few marks not worth experiencing.[19] But such cases are not the norm. The default premise of the practice is intense focus and reflection at nearly every turn. And even in the case of conceptual poetry, if we are a bit more careful about considering what is within the writer's control, John's claim might still apply. Goldsmith teaches a class at the University of Pennsylvania called "Uncreative

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[19] Evidence of this can be found in Goldsmith's view that "conceptual writing is more interested in a thinkership than a readership" (2013, 935) and his admission that "[m]y books are impossible to read straight through. In fact, every time I have to proofread them before sending them off to the publisher, I fall asleep repeatedly. You really don't need to read my books to get the idea of what they're like; you just need to know the general concept" (2013, 940–41).

Writing," in which students are instructed to retype five pages of their choice, and about which he says the following:

> The trick in uncreative writing is airtight accountability. If you can defend *your choices* from every angle, then the writing is a success. […] We proceed through a rigorous examination of the circumstances that are normally considered outside of the scope of writing but, in fact, have everything to do with writing. Questions arise, among them: What kind of paper did you use? […] Do you reproduce exactly the original text's layout page by page or do you simply flow the words from one page to another, the way your word processing program does? (2013, 937, my emphasis)

Thus, of the features within the writer's control, there is intense focus and reflection. Conceptual poetry, then, may fit within John's account after all. It simply requires understanding that the writer is not in control of all of the features a writer is usually in control of, that what the writer of a conceptual poem is in control of is somewhat inversely related to the norm. Typically, when a work of literature is published, the writer has little say about the paper stock, font, or typesetting.

So when it comes to literature, it seems John is right. Though the actual author may not overlap with the implied author, we are justified in believing that the actual author in some way values the implied author's mode of expression and expressed beliefs, attitudes, and personality. We are justified in seeing these features as expressive of the actual author's *sensibility*, her sense of what is worth experiencing, considering, or understanding, of what is generally worth being sensitive to.[20] Thus even if we do not, in

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[20] It might also be argued that one's sensibility is an aspect of one's personality, especially if that sensibility is consistently expressed. Thus if a particular sensibility is consistently expressed

reading fictional literature (strictly as fictional literature), have the chance of finding a fellow human being whose actual view of the world resonates deeply with ours, we do have the chance of finding a fellow human being who understands a view of the world that resonates deeply with ours, does so with an expressive power beyond our own, and finds that view worth experiencing. This, it seems, is grounds for emotionally intimate human connection.

To be sure, this emotional intimacy is not of the extremely rich kind described by Wallace. It lacks the key feature of *shared* beliefs and attitudes. But this does not mean there are no points of intersection, no commonality had between reader and author. The author's understanding and, in some sense, appreciating the reader's way of seeing and experiencing the world is an intersection in itself, and, I think, a strong one. Engaging with someone who understands our perspective on things and finds that perspective worth experiencing is a vibrant and validating piece of social life, one that surely can make us feel less alone intellectually and emotionally, even, it seems, if we only engage with this someone through her written words. Let us say, then, that there two kinds of authorial connectedness: a strong and a weak kind. While experiencing *strong authorial connectedness* is certainly a reasonable response to reading fictional literature and may, depending on where you stand with respect to biographical information's bearing on appreciation, be justified, fictional literature as fictional literature can certainly supply the resources for *weak authorial connectedness*. And this, I think, is no small feat.

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across an author's oeuvre, it might be argued that we are justified in taking that sensibility as an aspect of the actual author's personality. But I will not pursue that line here. Even if correct, personality is only one piece of authorial connectedness.

IV. THE VALUE OF AUTHORIAL CONNECTEDNESS

Ultimately, I aim to argue that a work of fictional literature's ability to afford (weak) authorial connectedness is a merit in our evaluation of fictional literature as fictional literature. The argument calls for three things: (1) fictional literature (as fictional literature) must be able to afford authorial connectedness, (2) authorial connectedness must be a valuable experience, and (3) *ability to afford authorial connectedness* must be an intelligible notion. I have argued for (1) in the section above. Here I will argue for (2) and (3).

That authorial connectedness is a valuable experience seems fairly obvious. But this seeming is worth shoring up. First, many psychologists hold that emotional intimacy (also sometimes called *psychological intimacy*) is critical for personal wellbeing and human development, and much social psychological research on the essential features of adult relationships is driven by this notion (Gaia 2002). So since authorial connectedness provides a sense of intimacy, it is no surprise that we would value authorial connectedness. Second, since reading is done when we are alone (strictly speaking), authorial connectedness offers intimacy that is, in some sense, psychologically richer than intimacy experienced in typical interpersonal relationships. The solitariness of reading allows us to consider and engage with the thoughts of another person in an especially focused and reflective way; it allows us to "unite," as Proust puts it, with another's thoughts. Third, literature has the potential to be expressively potent. Much literature is prized for its mode of expression, for the powerful ways in which it puts things. And it is unlikely that any of the people in one's life have the same expressive

power of a work through which one experiences authorial connectedness. As such, the kind of intimacy had from authorial connectedness may not be able to be found elsewhere in our lives.

The trouble with figuring authorial connectedness into an account of literary value is that given some fictional work *W* that triggers justified authorial connectedness in some reader (or readers), *W* will most certainly not trigger authorial connectedness in every competent reader. In fact, it would be extraordinary if it did, maybe impossible, as it would amount to the work expressing beliefs, attitudes, and personality that richly “clicked” with all. And the evaluation of any literary work should be held hostage neither to those who simply have the right cognitive dispositions to experience authorial connectedness in a particular case nor to any such individual’s testimony of experiencing authorial connectedness. Thus, if we want authorial connectedness to figure into the evaluation of literature as literature, we need an intelligible account of a work’s *ability* to afford authorial connectedness.

Now while it certainly does not seem that there is any principled way of assessing whether a work has the ability to afford authorial connectedness, it seems equally certain that assessment of such an ability itself is not off the table. Even if one does not experience authorial connectedness when reading a work of fiction, it is possible to consider whether one could. We routinely engage in acts of imagining what it is like to be someone else, to feel and think as they do. In short, we routinely engage in acts of empathy. And such activity is central to the practice of reading, understanding, and appreciating literature.[21] Assessing a work’s ability to afford authorial connectedness,

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[21] See, again, Robinson 2005 and 2010.

then, is a matter of extending that activity to other, imagined readers. If we can imagine that others *could* share the beliefs and attitudes expressed in the work, *could* find resonance with the personality expressed through the work's style, *could* experience Expressive Potency as a result of the work's expressive power, then we have good reason to believe that the work has the ability to afford authorial connectedness. And if this is right, then the business of *determining* whether a work has this ability can proceed in the usual fashion of literary criticism, on a case-by-case basis, one competent reader's assessment against another's.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding pages, I have explored five features that bear upon literary value and what is involved in appreciating those features. In chapter one, I argued that the sonic qualities of a work of fictional literature are always relevant to the literary value of the work, for better or worse. Sonicity may serve as a merit, demerit, or neutral feature in our overall evaluation of a literary work, but whatever evaluative role sonic qualities play for a particular work, they are always evaluatively relevant, always something that must figure into our evaluation of a work's literary value. In chapter two, I developed a working account of rhythm in literature and argued that sufficiently appreciating rhythm when reading a work of literature requires having a strong performative interpretation of the work. Readers must advance a considered oral reading, one whose enunciation, intonation, and phrasing conforms to a plausible critical interpretation of the work.

In chapter three, I argued that truth is sometimes relevant to the literary value of fiction. If a work aims to employ, reference, or allude to non-trivial real-world facts, we are justified in evaluating the work on the grounds of real-world factual accuracy. In chapter four, I argued that literature has the capacity to encourage readers to reconsider their initial moral judgments of particular cases and thus the capacity to cultivate moral expertise in the intuitive judgment of particular moral cases, for it is in a sensitivity to evidence and belief revision that such moral expertise consists. Furthermore, since such moral value results from the proper appreciation of a literary work, it figures into a work's literary value. Finally, in chapter five, I argued that fictional literature as fictional literature can provide a reader with the resources for an intimate emotional connection with the actual author and that a work's ability to afford such an experience is a literary

merit. We are justified in taking the beliefs, attitudes, and personality expressed in a work and the work's mode of expression as things the author genuinely values and thus as providing the grounds for genuine emotional engagement.

If I have been successful in these arguments, then any satisfactory theory of literary value must account for sonicity, real-world factual accuracy, the capacity to cultivate moral expertise in particular cases, and the ability to afford emotional intimacy with the author. However, I believe there is much more at stake than the reflective equilibrium between particular literary values and a theory of literary value. As I said in the introduction, it is clear that we, as a society, value literature. Working to understand why something we value is in fact valuable is, I believe, an important and worthwhile endeavor. Such efforts, at their best, can codify everyday discourse, correct misperceptions, justify intuitions, and, most importantly, enrich our appreciative practice. I hope to have done some of that here for something I value greatly.

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