



Audiobooks as Artworks:
A Framework for Analysis & Appreciation

A thesis presented in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

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October 2017

Declaration of Authorship

I, the undersigned, hereby declare and confirm that this thesis, *Audiobooks as Artworks: A Framework for Analysis & Appreciation*, is entirely and purely my own.

Additionally, I firmly state that I have exercised reasonable care and considerable effort to ensure that the work presented herein is original, to all intents and purposes, and that it does not in any way breach or challenge, to the best of my knowledge, any laws of copyright. Indeed, any insights or inspiration drawn from works of others, as well as any different sources I may have consulted, been informed by, or directly correspond with, are all appropriately acknowledged in the form of explicit references, citations, and, of course, my bibliography.



David Sheinberg

11 October 2017

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to have this opportunity to thank a number of the many people who have helped and encouraged me over the course of my research.

First, and foremost, I wish to thank my supervisor, Professor Robert Gordon. In my initial search, some four years ago, to find a suitable institution for writing this thesis, Robert was the only person to instantly, and quite intuitively, ‘get it’. He recognized both the embryonic and the fully-developed ideas that inhabited my proposal. He was able to consider my inclinations through the prism of his own interest, employing terms from his fields of expertise—thereby affording me a ‘green light’ and, indeed, the inspiration to continue my endeavour under his wing at Goldsmiths. I will forever cherish his academic and practical advice; his valuable comments and provoking insights; his unfailing guidance, support and reassurance; and, indeed, the remarkable concern, patience, and motivation with which he bestowed both this study and its author.

I also wish to thank my Upgrade examiners—Professors John London and Tim Crook—for their rigorous, yet encouraging, assessments, as well as their recommendations and technical support. That they valued my study's consideration of the ‘performed fictional self’ in the realm of audiobooks as ‘genuinely thought-provoking’ proved highly motivating. Equally impelling was that they recognized the academic merit in the effort I afford the application of an inherently philosophical theory, concluding in a concrete analysis of a yet undefined artistic praxis.

Additionally, for affording me their insights, comments, input, and time, I wholeheartedly thank casting directors Claudia Howard of RecordedBooks, Inc. and Patrick MacQuaid of I.D. Audio, with whom I have conducted qualitative interviews,

different time-zones notwithstanding. Moreover, I wish to acknowledge and thank Mr. Jan Paterson, Head of Books and Audio at BBC Worldwide, for dedicating his time to a telephone interview. I am also thankful to Mr. Jonathan Trurell, CEO of the Criterion Collection, for replying the questions I had sent him via e-mail, concerning the inception of the audio commentary track. Similarly, I acknowledge and thank Mr. Tom Donahue, director of the acclaimed documentary *Casting By (2012)*, for his response to my questions about the craft of casting, and for kindly offering me his further assistance and suggested contacts. Likewise, I wish to express my gratitude to Ms. Mary Thompson, an audiobook reviewer for Audiofile Magazine, for replying to the questions I relayed to via the LinkedIn social-network. Her insights and comments have accordingly been included in my study.

Furthermore, I would like to extend a heartfelt gratitude to Dr Madeleine Schechter (PhD), my M.A. supervisor. Her academic integrity, unrivalled interdisciplinary intellectual infrastructure, and uncompromising strive to achieve precision and identify essence, have all served as an embedded guide in both my research and writing. Her telling me, but half a decade ago, ‘you’re in the big league now’, still resonates with me—effectively making me strive to prove her right.

Last, and most definitely not least, I wish to thank my grandparents—of blessed memory—Nechama and Arye, and my mother, Orly—may she live long—for, among many other things, putting me through university and putting up with me in general.

Abstract

Audiobooks, although largely unexamined, should be perceived as the aural artefacts of a distinct artistic genre. It, in turn, should be identified as part of an interdisciplinary aesthetic category—one which has not been defined hitherto.

To classify audiobooks as artworks, I turn to the New Institutional Theory of Art (NITA), which currently provides the most effective explanation available to determining not only what *makes* something into an artwork, but also whether or not a particular artwork can be deemed beautiful (i.e. aesthetically good). In utilizing NITA, instituting a context—a framework governing the artistic praxis of recording written texts and delivering them to a designated audience—I consequently create a unique aesthetic category. As an artistic institution in its own right, it determines the criteria for identifying aural performances as works of art, and, in effect, establishes audiobooks among *all* forms of aural performance.

In rendering aesthetic evaluation and appreciation crucial aspects to defining art, the implied notion of internal logic—while not explicitly expressed—prevails as a core concept, inherent to a comprehensive understanding of NITA. In articulating its meaning, I suggest its association with the idea of informed intuition, thereby introducing them both as pivotal in illuminating the contribution of my expanded application of NITA. Effectively, in recognizing that to define art necessitates more than mere classification, one is able to employ an institutional analysis on different kinds of artistic case studies.

By surveying three major case studies—all manifesting the first-person narrative as a fundamental aesthetic property of audiobooks—the concrete analysis of audiobooks as artworks proves essential to my methodology. Ultimately, by

ascertaining their aesthetic quality, I propose to identify the manner in which the craft of casting aural performances necessarily, albeit unconsciously, consolidates aesthetic evaluation, and, effectively, illustrates how it pragmatically works in action.

A Note to the Reader

For the convenience of the reader, I have included a copy of all of the audio recordings referred to and discussed throughout the thesis. To be sure, as these are of considerable importance in examining this study, it is highly recommended that the reader refer to and consult with the available material when so mentioned in a footnote. Thus, as a secondary bibliographical source, these recorded references are enclosed herein in the form of media files, saved on an ultra-thin (aka 'credit card'-sized) USB flash drive. For further convenience, the files have been arranged in accordance with the running-order of their reference in thesis. Effectively, each filename clearly notes both the Chapter sub-section and the relevant footnote.

For extended listening, consideration and evaluation, I have included a separate folder containing most of these recordings in their complete form so that one is able to engage with the complete work (e.g., a novel or an autobiography), rather than merely with the particular passages I refer to. Nonetheless, where a complete recording could not be made available, I have provided Internet links to selected online samples. These too, in addition to their required citation within the footnotes, have also been supplied in the form of direct 'click-to-open' files, which are accordingly distributed in running-order alongside the media files.

Following my bibliography of textual sources and sound recordings, the reader will find my provided 'audiography', appropriately listing all the aforementioned files.

Disclaimer

All and any material included in the enclosed USB flash drive that may be subject to copyright law is utilised in this study solely for educational and research purposes.

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Introduction: 'And is not that, in a sense, a performance?'¹

In 2006, RTÉ released an eighteen-disc audiobook box set entitled *Samuel Beckett: Three Novels*.² The novels are immaculately performed by acclaimed Irish actor, Barry McGovern. In his contribution to the accompanying booklet, he writes as follows:

Many myths abound about Samuel Beckett. Some of these have to do with the question of performance of his dramatic works, especially the transference from one medium to another. [...] Adaptations of prose works are legion – on stage, TV and radio. [...] many of these adaptations were authorized by Beckett himself or given his blessing – as was my own one-man show *I'll Go On*, with texts selected from *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable* by Gerry Dukes and me and produced by Dublin's Gate Theatre in 1985. The prose works were written to be read, not performed in the conventional sense of the word. The early work is written in the third person. But in the great middle period of the late 40's and 50's the voice changes to the first person: the voice of the four stories or novellas; of *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable*. It always seemed to me that these prose writings cried out to be read aloud. And is not that, in a sense, a performance?³

My short answer to the question posed by McGovern—an answer I am confident McGovern himself would agree with—is that it undoubtedly is. Nevertheless, my attempt to formulate a more elaborate answer, thereby substantiating my brief intuitive response, consequently prevails as one of this study's main objectives.

To begin with, I would argue that explaining just what it is that *makes* a mere reading aloud constitute a performance does not require an exhaustive articulation of what a 'performance' actually is.⁴ Rather, I find that it requires identifying the particular

¹ Barry McGovern, "It's a Question of Voices...." in [accompanying booklet to] *Samuel Beckett: Three Novels*. Read by Barry McGovern. (RTÉ, RTE271CD, 2006), 29.

² Samuel Beckett, *Three Novels*, unabridged, read by Barry McGovern. (RTÉ, 2006).

³ McGovern, "It's a Question of Voices....", 29.

⁴ Notwithstanding the various approaches associated with the term, I regard its meaning as a given: a performance, in essence, constitutes a kind of human behavior consciously created for a designated audience. (Human behavior in itself is predominantly not self-conscious. While behavior may include a certain performative aspect, it is more likely to be analyzed using anthropological terms). Fundamentally, the purpose of a performance is to manipulate or influence the viewer by drawing attention to the doer. In essence, one can only bear witness to behavior *as* a performance within a particular context.

aesthetic context—a discrete set of circumstances—that determine when one can regard a reading aloud as a performance to begin with. Accordingly, I would argue that the processes of identifying the performative context of a reading aloud can be likened to the process of classifying works of art—the latter being essentially concerned with identifying just what it is that *makes* something into a work of art.⁵ With cases such as McGovern's narration of Beckett's three novels, one is thus required to ascertain under what circumstances an aural recording of the reading aloud of a written text would qualify as a unique form of performance. Now, since performances can constitute works of art in their own right, in order to identify these kinds of recordings as aural performances, one would need to assign them a particular prescribed aesthetic category.

An audiobook, for example, can be established as something more than a mere aurally recorded version of an existing printed book.⁶ Indeed, within a particular context, audiobooks constitute a certain kind of recorded performance—one which is confined to an exclusively aural medium. As an aural artefact, an audiobook possesses its own aesthetic properties, and thereby manifests what I will later regard as a unique internal logic.⁷ Overall, the audiobook exists as one of a number of different kinds of aural performances. As such, audiobooks represent a discernible artistic genre in its own

⁵ As will presently be explained, there exists a particular theory in the philosophy of the arts—one which appears to articulate the notion of the classification of artworks remarkably well. The first chapter of this study examines this theory and its insights.

⁶ In recent times, nearly every book published in print is entitled to recording copyrights—and since these are principally negotiated separately, many major print publishing houses employ their own individual audio division. Audiobooks fundamentally consist of nearly any given literary genre, as well as any work that one would regard as non-fiction. The medium of audiobooks is commonly regarded as Spoken Word—a phrase that in fact constitutes the particular title one would customarily see in bookshops and libraries that include a designated audiobook section.

⁷ Now, the notion of internal logic is crucial to this dissertation. So much so, in fact, that the entirety of my Chapter 2 is devoted to articulating both its philosophical infrastructure and its practical application with regard to aural performances.

right—one that in effect belongs to the general aesthetic category used for classifying all of the different kinds of aural performances.⁸ Consequently, as an aural performance, an audiobook should therefore constitute a distinct kind of artwork in *its* own right, and thereby possess its own unique aesthetic. However, if one attempts to adopt this perspective, one finds oneself faced with two main obstacles: (a) no such general aesthetic category actually exists, and (b) audiobooks are neither perceived as artefacts—nor are they addressed in aesthetic terms.⁹

In point of fact, while they have essentially been in existence since the late nineteenth century—with their inception commonly traced to Thomas Edison's tinfoil-cylinder phonograph recordings—audiobooks remain to this day virtually un-explored, but for a small number of exceptions. Matthew Rubery, for instance, has recently published *The Untold Story of the Talking Book* (2016)¹⁰—a panoramic study of the manners in which spoken word recordings have captured the aural medium over the past 150 years, while also highlighting the differences in listeners' reception.¹¹ To be

⁸ At the same time, audiobooks also prevail as a comparatively recent cultural phenomenon: that is to say, their very existence is rooted in a cultural praxis that centers on the act of recording written texts in an aural format. Bernard J. Hibbitts, for instance, referencing Tony Schwartz, points out that 'the history of Western culture over the past 125 years suggests that the recent turn towards the aural is largely a product of new aural technologies. In essence, cultural aurality has tended to become more pronounced as aural technologies have multiplied and spread. At every stage in this process, the existence of these technologies has radically extended the power and range of aurally communicated information. As technologically transmitted and amplified sound has become able to assume more of the cultural burden, culture itself has turned towards sound for inspiration.' Bernard J. Hibbitts, "Making Sense of Metaphors: Visuality, Aurality and the Reconfiguration of American Legal Discourse", *Cardozo Law Review* 16, (1994): Part III [3.12], accessed August 31, 2016, http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/22609/1/meta_int.htm.

⁹ Customarily, the significance of aesthetics has ostensibly been almost completely ignored. Predominantly, this appears to be a result of what one might identify as an inherently political *modus operandi*, given birth to by a distinctively post-modern epoch, whose overt hegemony in present-day academic disciplines appears persistent in virtually every theoretical field in the arts and humanities.

¹⁰ Matthew Rubery, *The Untold Story of the Talking Book* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016).

¹¹ For Rubery, 'the history of recorded sound begins in verse'. *Ibid.*, 29. He identifies the inception of the audiobook with Edison's 1877 sound-recording technology, and references Edison's own recitation of the nursery rhyme *Mary Had a Little Lamb*—recorded on a sheet of tinfoil—as one of the earliest ever made. *Ibid.*, 1. According to Rubery, Edison had the ambition to record an entire Dickens novel on his wax cylinder invention. *Ibid.*, 21. He maintains that Edison even conceived of two kinds of potential consumers

sure, Rubery's study constitutes one of the only books dedicated to outlining the history of the audiobook. On the one hand, Rubery's study cites a number of recordings that he himself identifies as 'complex works of art worthy of sustained critical attention in their own right'.¹² On the other hand, as will be made clear from my own endeavour, his study does not necessarily focus on what it is precisely that *makes* these recordings 'works of art' to begin with.¹³ Notwithstanding, it certainly prevails as a remarkable and fascinating study, and to a large extent shares my own passion for its chosen field of investigation.

In addition to Rubery's effort, there is a small number of works that proved essential to my study—especially in respect of their implied consideration of the aesthetic nature of the audiobook. For instance, particular attention should be given to Helen Roach's *Spoken Records* (1970)¹⁴ whose insights appear to highlight the importance of appreciating and evaluating these kinds of recordings.¹⁵ Her objectives

for these kinds of recorded material: (a) one who seeks to relax at home after a long day's work, and (b) one who is blind, visually impaired or is on the verge of losing his/her sight. Ibid. 37–38. In the same vein, Lorna Tracy concludes that Edison was 'much less concerned with preserving musical performances than with capturing the voices of great men for posterity.' See: Lorna Tracy, "Echoes in a Bottle", In *Books at Iowa*, vol. 8 (Iowa: University of Iowa: 1968), 24, accessed 15 November 2016, <http://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1306&context=bai>. At the same time, citing John Cohen's *Human Robots in Myth and Science* (1967), Tracy asserts that it was in fact Giovanni Battista Porta (1542–1597) whom had conceived of conserving words in sealed leaden tubes long before Edison's men had conjured up the possibility of 'keeping as permanent a record of uttered speech as of words committed to print'. Ibid.

¹² Rubery, *The Untold Story of the Talking Book*, 5.

¹³ Rubery's endeavour in his book is to focus on both the historical and the aesthetic concerns that surround the 'talking book' phenomenon. By his own admission, 'three concerns find their way into almost every chapter: the audiobook's standing as a "book", its reception by a bemused public, and controversies over whether listening to books qualifies as a form or reading.' Ibid., 20.

¹⁴ Helen Roach, *Spoken Records*, 3rd ed. (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1970).

¹⁵ In her introduction, for example, Roach points out that 'Educators and students are aware of records as valuable oral complements to the study of drama poetry. Parents are familiar with records as a source of entertainment. But there are all kinds of records available today which would interest many adults if they knew about them. [...] As surprising as some of the inclusions in the repertory of spoken recordings that are now available are some of the omissions. One cannot come to this territory expecting to find what he wants, as is the case for music. [...] Perhaps not surprising in a pioneering field is the fact that many records have not been well done. New listeners have been turned away by poor recordings before hearing others which make for rewarding listening. Some records are indeed works of art. [...] There are

include 'to call attention to worthwhile achievement in this little known world and to indicate much that is well done which might otherwise be missed'.¹⁶ Similarly noteworthy are Susan G. Baird's *Audiobook Collections & Services* (2000)¹⁷ and Joyce G. Saricks' *Audiobooks: Reading Lists for Every Taste* (2011).¹⁸ Additionally, the perceptive essays compiled in Rubery's *Audiobooks, Literature, and Sound Studies* (2011)¹⁹—one of the single most substantial publications in recent years with regard to the medium of the audiobook—appear to demonstrate that the status of the audiobook is not only a legitimate but also a fascinating subject for research.²⁰ Indeed, these essays underline the fact that as a field of research, the audiobook has never been properly explored.²¹

Now, in my endeavour to apply aesthetic terms to the audiobook—i.e. to classify it as a unique kind of aural performance—I commence my study with the exploration of a particular theory concerning the philosophy of arts. As Chapter 1 will show, David Graves's New Institutional Theory of Art (NITA)²² prevails as the most updated version

basic elements present on any good recording. [...] A frequent case of poor recordings has been failure to adapt to the new medium. Even actors with considerable stage experience have not always made the adjustment.' Roach, *Spoken Records*, 9–10.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁷ Susan G. Baird, *Audiobook Collections & Services* (Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin: Highsmith Press, 2000).

¹⁸ Joyce G. Saricks, *Reading On ... Audiobooks: Reading Lists for Every Taste*, in *Read On Series*, ed. Barry Trott (Santa Barbara, California: Libraries Unlimited, 2011).

¹⁹ Matthew Rubery, *Audiobooks, Literature, and Sound Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

²⁰ Wittkower's essay, for example, is predominantly concerned with questions such as 'What is it like to listen to an audiobook?' or 'What are we listening to when we listen to an audiobook?' See D. E. Wittkower, "A Preliminary Phenomenology of the Audiobook", in *Audiobooks, Literature, and Sound Studies*, ed. Matthew Rubery (New York: Routledge, 2011), 216. I would argue that whereas the former idea alludes to some kind of aesthetic experience, the latter suggests—or rather, supports—what I contend is a necessity for some kind of an aesthetic category. At the very least, one should identify the need to establish some kind of context for defining what audiobooks actually are. Consequently, my proposed new aesthetic category should appropriately answer such queries.

²¹ With regard to literature that *has* alluded to the status of the audiobook, also noteworthy is Virgil L. P. Blake and Renee Tjoumas's (eds.) *Information Literacies for the Twenty-First Century* (1990). Blake's chapter, "Something New Has Been Added: Aural Literacy and Libraries", is particularly interesting as its exploration of the manner in which audiobooks influenced the policy and mission of libraries provides important information and insights in respect of their evolution as a concrete genre. See <https://archive.org/details/SomethingNewHasBeenAdded>, accessed November 12, 2015.

²² David Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art* (Champaign, IL: Common Ground Publishing, 2010).

of a theory whose theoretical infrastructure dates back to the mid-1960s. In brief, NITA offers four basic ‘rule-schemes’ for classifying what an artwork is and at the same time conveys a great deal of insight in respect of what makes an artwork aesthetically good.²³ My premise is that a proper theoretical application of this theory and particularly of its four rule-schemes can be utilized to literally *create* new aesthetic categories for different artistic media. As I will show, NITA articulates the particular context—i.e. the necessary circumstances—that define when something can be identified as a work of art. Effectively, I find that applying its rule-schemes to the field of aural recordings should likewise assist one in ascertaining when, whether or not and to what extent such recordings can be defined as aural performance. Indeed, as there appears to exist a remarkable variety of aural recordings that could—perhaps even *should*—be regarded as aural performances, the creation of a unique aesthetic category for them becomes imperative.

Correspondingly, in Chapter 3 I will demonstrate my application of NITA and explain the manner in which my proposed new category—which I have named Audio Performance (AP)—constitutes a distinct artistic institution in its own right, which in effect institutes (i.e. quite literally creates and determines) a particular kind of artistic praxis. As I endeavour to substantiate, once one closely follows the structure of NITA, applying a comprehensive understanding of the aforementioned notion of internal logic, the institution of AP can be utilised not only to classify its aural artefacts (i.e. its

²³ Chapter 1 is dedicated to the understanding of NITA—beginning with theoretical infrastructure, its original versions (dating back to the 1970s) which focused solely on classification, and its contribution to the field with regard to artistic evaluation.

artistic products) as ‘AP artworks’, but also to appreciate their aesthetic quality.²⁴ Consequently, when one engages with AP artworks, one should not only be able to ascertain what gives an AP artwork its artistic identity, but should also be able to evaluate whether or not a particular artwork is aesthetically good.

Now, although my chosen case studies for extended analyses are predominantly comprised of audiobooks, it is important to emphasize that they do not constitute the only kind of aural performance that complies with my proposed aesthetic category. Rather, they prevail as only one of its principal and standard aesthetic manifestations. Put simply, AP artworks include more than just audiobooks. Indeed, their most prominent counterparts are radio plays—which already constitute a distinct genre in their own right.²⁵ Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that while I may briefly address or reference certain radio works—explicitly, by way of illustrating the occasional argument—my intention is *not* to comprehensively scrutinize their dramaturgical complexities or analyse their artistry in respect of the medium itself.²⁶ Effectively, in focusing primarily on the realm of audiobooks, my intention is to demonstrate the manner in which they constitute an example of what an AP artwork is—and why they should thereby be analysed and evaluated as such. At the same time, it must also be

²⁴ Put simply, my intention was to follow the distinction that NITA offers between art and not-art, good art and bad art—and apply it to aural recordings of written text, effectively distinguishing between AP artworks and not-AP artworks, aesthetically good AP artworks and aesthetically bad.

²⁵ In a broad sense, the field of radio drama can be perceived as a distinct form of dramatic performance—one that is delivered to an audience via broadcast on the aural medium of radio. A radio play could consist of either (a) a text that was written specifically and purposefully for a designated medium, or (b) an adapted work, a radio dramatization, of an existing work (i.e. either a literary work or a dramatic work that was originally intended for the stage). The former, designed with full intention to comply with the properties of the medium; the latter, a pre-existing text which undergoes some process of translation so that it becomes properly suited for on-air broadcasting. In both cases, an audience experiences the performance through their ‘mind’s ear’. Indeed, their very nature as dramatic texts, performed in the confines of an aural medium, is predominantly what makes them comply with the workings of the institution. This too will become clear in Chapter 3.

²⁶ To be sure, as a widely acknowledged genre in the prominent discipline of media studies, the field of radio drama has already been researched quite extensively.

underlined that my intention is not to survey the entire range of existing audiobooks. Rather, in order to best articulate the aesthetics of the audiobook, my resolution was to draw from literary examples that highlight the form of the first-person narrative.

My major case studies will demonstrate an ascending degree of complication. Beginning with a concrete analysis of a number of different aural versions of Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884)—a nineteenth-century novel, whose narrator happens to be an adolescent boy—I will subsequently explore more obviously unconventional works. I will examine the audiobook versions of Samuel Beckett's *Molloy* (1955), a complex literary achievement, which questions the very concept of authorship, identity, and the self; and, finally, I will examine the nature of Barry Humphries's pseudo-autobiographical novels, published as the legitimate autobiographies of his own characters—who, in turn, are credited as their authors. In this respect, the varying degrees of complexity do not necessarily pertain to the literary nature of these works, but rather to their aesthetic qualities as AP case studies. In brief, the audiobook versions of Humphries's pseudo-autobiographical novels, as performed by Humphries—in character—all fundamentally prevail as individual autobiographies, each effectively performed by its own assumed personage. To one degree or another, these works in their original printed form appear to test the boundaries of the autobiography. At the very least, they all challenge the concept of the first-person narrative—and more explicitly, the first-person narrator. Consequently, in taking the form of an aurally performed version of the written text, and in their utilising literal and concrete human voices, audiobooks possess the ability to enhance one's aesthetic experience of these kinds of narratives in particular. Evaluating these recordings as key examples of what AP artworks are can effectively lead to new discoveries in respect of

both performance studies and aesthetic appreciation—particularly once having established the relation to and expanded application of NITA as an intrinsic point of reference.²⁷

Summarily, the direct speech and storytelling of Twain's first-person narrator (i.e. the character of the adolescent Huck) is arguably filtered through the author's own embedded irony—thereby evoking questions pertaining to the very nature of autobiographies and the identity of their protagonists. By the same token, the fragmented speech of Beckett's first-person narrator—who appears to be split not only within the so-called confines of one particularly labyrinthine novel (i.e. in the form of the characters of Molloy and Moran), but also across an entire trilogy—invites questions pertaining to the nature of narration and the embedded voice of author. With Humphries, one appears to be confronted with a surreal style of pseudo-autobiographical writing. The manner in which it is aesthetically experienced by his audience is enhanced by Humphries's subsequent aural performances of the autobiographies, in character, as the authors themselves. Effectively, as AP artworks, his audiobooks appear to ostensibly infiltrate an even deeper level of philosophical questioning than the already profound contemplations that are evoked by the audiobook version of Beckett's prose. As I will show, Humphries appears to be literally working on the edge—leaving one unable to ascertain whether the performed work can be identified as a novel, an autobiographical narrative, or fictional autobiography that is embedded with actual biographical elements. As my conclusions will reveal, one such discovery appears to be quite illuminating in respect of the craft of casting these kinds

²⁷ That fact that one may be inclined to quibble with certain subsections of this study—explicitly those pertaining to manners of interpretation and appreciation—appears to demonstrate the extent to which one is able to utilize NITA to ostensibly elasticise the articulation of institutional categories.

of aural performances.²⁸ Fundamentally, I consider the manner in which what I will identify in this study as implicit to the craft of casting—namely, informed intuition—corresponds with what is predominantly the manner in which one aesthetically evaluates artworks.

Having literally constructed a new aesthetic category, my intention is also to identify and illustrate additional pertinent kinds of AP artworks. In other words, my objective is to demonstrate what other kinds of aural recordings—which are neither audiobooks nor radio play—can be said to comply with the institution of AP. While these would arguably be more easily categorised as borderline, uncommon or special case studies, I find it more appropriate to consider them in terms of institutional categories—explicitly, by identifying the ‘sub-institution’ that prevails within the general ‘mother-institution’. As will be made clear, audiobooks and radio plays—in constituting the chief manifestations of AP artworks—are themselves, in fact, two individual ‘sub-(institutional)-categories’ that belong to the general mother-institution of AP.

To be sure, the identification of the additional manifestations of AP highlights why I contend that there exists an inherent need for creating the category to begin with. Indeed, I find essential for the overall argument of this thesis to demonstrate the manner in which what can be identified as institutional rules manifest in practice. I thus intend to utilize different examples, demonstrating the extent to which one is able to determine what does and what does not count as an AP artwork.

²⁸ As Rubery correctly points out, ‘Casting is the single most important decision made by an audiobook publisher. It is a truism that narrators can make or break a story.’ Rubery, *The Untold Story of the Talking Book*, 5.

1. Danto, Dickie, Graves: An Introduction to the New Institutional Theory of Art

1.1 Identifying the Work of Art: Arthur Danto and the Notion of the Artworld

In 1964, during what could be regarded as the ‘anything goes’ epoch of the 1960s, philosopher and art critic Arthur C. Danto entered the Stable Gallery in Manhattan, and encountered Andy Warhol’s *Brillo Box* for the first time. Confronted with Warhol’s plywood replica of the *actual* packaging of a Brillo Pad detergent product,²⁹ the young Danto found himself unable to detect any discernible difference between the two. Effectively, he could not explicitly identify just what it was that made it possible to regard Warhol’s *Brillo Box* as a legitimate ‘work of art’ at all. Intrigued, Danto—who had become one of the most influential figures in philosophical aesthetics—endeavoured to decipher how these two objects, while possessing the exact same aesthetic properties, could be defined separately, in two completely different ways. Danto recounts:

The problem, as I saw—and still see it—arose for me initially with Warhol and his *Brillo Box*, which was perceptually so like the workaday shipping cartons in which Brillo was transported from factory to warehouse to supermarket that the question of distinguishing them became acute—and this I took to be the question of distinguishing art from reality. I mean: distinguish them not epistemologically but rather ontologically—sooner or later one would discover that one was made of plywood the other not. The question was whether the difference between art and reality could consist in such discoverable differences. I thought not, but from the beginning my strategy was to find how there could be differences that were not perceptual differences. My thought was that there had to be a theory of art that could explain the difference. A handful of philosophers were on this track in the sixties.³⁰

²⁹ Brillo Pads, patented in 1913, were widely available at the time.

³⁰ Arthur Danto, *What Art Is* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 144–45.

At a time when ‘anything went’, experiments and exploration of the boundaries of fashion, art and behaviour were taking place. What can be identified as an obsession of sorts gave rise to works that address their own nature, becoming almost routinely self-referential, thereby making the medium itself the subject of the artwork.³¹ Indeed, the ‘anything goes’ attitude, alongside the modernist notion of creating art for art’s sake,³² evolved out of specific developments in the history of art, coupled with a changing understanding of the role of aesthetics and of the field of philosophy of the arts.³³ Consequently, to take on the problem of what *made* something into a work of art, Danto assumed a deconstructionist approach. For Danto, deconstruction ‘is taken to be a method for demonstrating the way in which society has advanced and reinforced the interests of special groups’.³⁴ His premise was that whatever it was, it would need to be

³¹ According to Jerry A. Fodor, Warhol’s *Brillo Box* signalled for Danto an embodiment of art converging with its own philosophy, and served as evidence to the existence of ‘works of art that are about *what works of art are*’ [emphasis in original]. Jerry A. Fodor, “Déjà vu All Over Again: How Danto’s Aesthetics Recapitulates the Philosophy of Mind”, in *Danto and His Critics*, ed. Mark Rollins (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 55–56.

³² Originally coined in the early nineteenth century, and particularly associated with the movement of Aestheticism, this slogan—translated from the French phrase *l’art pour l’art*—expresses the belief that art needs no justification external to the work of art itself. *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Art for art’s sake”, accessed November 17, 2015, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/art-for-arts-sake>. According to Gene H. Bell-Villada, ‘The phrase today [...] inevitably suggests Oscar Wilde and the epigrams he gave common currency in his preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. [...] however, [...] the idea neither begins nor ends with Wilde, [...] Art for Art’s Sake, after all, is an ideology; and like all ideologies it has a defensible setting and a history. [...] Aestheticism, in sum, is a theory with no major, vital resonances or academic standing outside Western (and Westernized) societies.’ Gene H. Bell-Villada, *Art for Art’s Sake and Literary Life: How Politics and Markets Helped Shape the Ideology and Culture of Aestheticism, 1790–1990* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 1–3.

³³ A distinction should be made between the philosophy of the arts and the study of aesthetics. Indeed, a line can be drawn between an artistic judgement and a general aesthetic one. For example, one can evaluate and appreciate something (aesthetic judgement) that is not a work of art. For a good analysis of this distinction, see Noël Carroll, *Philosophy of Art: A Contemporary Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1999), 156–59.

³⁴ Danto, *What Art Is*, 138. Danto explains that ‘philosophy has been almost immune to the impact of what, since the 1970s, has been called Theory—a body of largely deconstructionist strategies that has inflected nearly every other branch of the humanities—anthropology, archeology, literature, art history, film studies, and the like—all of which have been refracted through the prisms of attitudes that were scarcely visible before the 1960s and have since flowered into academic disciplines with canons and curricula of their own [...] driven by various activist agendas, which in the case of art scholarship, criticism, and practice, have endeavored to alter social attitudes, purging them of prejudices and perhaps injustices toward this or that group’. *Ibid.*, 137–38.

indispensable to any given artwork. Thus, he began by searching for an explanation to the nature of the question itself, manifest in the quandary posed by Warhol's *Brillo Box*.³⁵

The prevailing attitude of the time, as David Graves explains, was that an object was considered to have intrinsic qualities that rendered it an artwork:

In one way or another, we usually thought that some exhibited property or set of properties of the object was responsible for its being considered art. It is still commonly held that some visible, or audible, or somehow sensible quality of the object in question, be it a painting, a song or a poem, was the "art-making" feature. We normally call such features "aesthetic properties", and we commonly believe them to be responsible for the qualities that make an artefact a work of art. In the case of "Brillo Box", however, the piece exhibited no property that was significantly different from the non-artistic supermarket Brillo boxes. They all looked the same, and if one were shown a photograph of such a box, one would find it quite impossible to tell whether it was Warhol's artwork or supermarket stock. This is to say that the artwork "Brillo Box" and the supermarket Brillo box bore identical aesthetic properties.³⁶

Danto, however, soon came to the conclusion that that which defines art had in fact nothing to do with either the object in question or with any of that object's so-called properties (i.e. its aesthetic features). Danto's response to his initial encounter with Warhol's *Brillo Box* took the form of an essay entitled "The Artworld", which became one of the prominent influences on the formulation of the New Institutional Theory of Art (NITA)—the theory I will later utilise for the purpose of my study. In this essay, Danto

³⁵ Fodor illustrates Danto's frame of thinking by utilizing an example from Ludwig Wittgenstein: 'Wittgenstein famously asked: What more than my arm's rising is there to my raising my arm? [...] In effect, Wittgenstein imagines twin events both of which are instances of my arm going up and which are identical 'to all appearances.' [...] Wittgenstein asks what it could be that makes one but not the other event an instance of my raising my arm. In similar spirit [...] Danto imagines two objects, indistinguishable to all appearances, one of which is an artwork and the other of which is a 'mere thing.' What, Danto asks, could make this difference?' Fodor, "Déjà vu All Over Again", 55.

³⁶ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 10–14.

argues that aesthetic features *do not* define art, and that which *does* define art must be found elsewhere. Introducing the concept of an 'Artworld', he explains that 'to see something as art requires something the eye cannot descry—an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld'.³⁷ In effect, Danto pointed out that looking at the problem in terms of aesthetic features was a category error. He thus shifted the boundaries of the category in order to shed light on the concept. Stephen Davies explains Danto's 'atmosphere' notion in terms of a 'historical and social context'—one which is 'generated by the changing practices and conventions of art, the heritage of works, the intentions of the artist, the writing of critics and so forth'.³⁸ In so doing, Davies concludes, 'Danto's discussion of the Artworld shifted attention from the artistically relevant properties of artworks to the social context without which they could not take on and present such properties'.³⁹ The 'context' effectively establishes that which makes one able to identify and comprehend a particular object as a work of art. As a set of given circumstances, the context both surrounds the Artworld, and, at the same time, inhabits it. Appropriately, that which bestows on a particular object its identity as an artwork cannot be found in that object's exhibited properties, but rather in the given context of its place in the Artworld.

Danto's view is in direct contrast with that of the American aesthetician Morris Weitz, who maintained that it is simply not possible to speak about the essence of art.⁴⁰

³⁷ Arthur Danto, "The Artworld", *Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 19 (1964): 580. In his essay, Danto employs two spellings: namely, 'artworld' and 'Artworld'. In this study, I have chosen the latter—particularly as this is also the form used by Graves in his book. (As stated, my intention is ultimately to articulate the workings of NITA).

³⁸ Stephen Davies, *Definitions of Art* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 81.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Morris Weitz, "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 15, no. 1 (September 1956): 27–35.

A definition is, by definition, a closed concept. To *define* art effectively renders it a closed concept. As far as Weitz was concerned, however, art lacks the necessary and sufficient conditions that are required to define what it is. Thus, since it cannot be properly defined, Weitz maintained that art constitutes an open concept.⁴¹ Citing Wittgenstein's application of logical categories for the purpose of examining and understanding games, Weitz maintains that one should consider and examine works of art in terms of similarities and relationships.⁴² Drawing on Wittgenstein's advice to simply 'look and see', Weitz explains that while one might be able to identify a conceivable constant in a variety of similar games, one would nevertheless be unable to identify any one thing that is true about *all* games. He explicitly utilises the philosophical notion of 'family resemblance' to elucidate the need to find some kind of 'common trait' with which one can begin to construct any general definition.⁴³ Furthermore, he suggests that every time one encounters a new artwork, one can potentially adjust or altogether alter one's perception or understanding of the concept of art itself.

Consequently, if it is impossible to define or understand what art actually is—as art has no known set of 'properties'—Weitz finds it redundant to formulate definitions

⁴¹ As Boardman explains, 'A concept is open if its "conditions of application are emendable and corrigible." Specifically, when presented with a candidate *x* for inclusion in the set of objects α that fall under concept *A*, a decision must be made to either (i) apply existing criteria for inclusion in α to *x* or (ii) alter those criteria so as to insure *x*'s inclusion in α . (i) is a process of discovery, (ii) is a process of creation. [...] Though there is not much vocal support these days for Weitz's argument, it is commonly thought that it successfully rules out those theories that do not have some mechanism for accounting for art's openness.' Frank Boardman, "Weitz's Legacy", *American Society for Aesthetics Graduate E-Journal* 7, no 1 (January 2015): 1.

⁴² Weitz, "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics", 30–31.

⁴³ The idea of family resemblances implies that in addition to what a particular family manifests as similarities in respect of exhibited properties, such as visual similarities, they also possess non-exhibited properties, such as a shared DNA. With art, according to Weitz, there 'are no necessary and sufficient properties, only "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and crisscrossing," such that we can say of games that they form a family with family resemblances and no common trait'. *Ibid.*, 31.

or theories of aesthetic practice at all.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, in 1965, American philosopher Maurice Mandelbaum responded directly to Weitz's essay and to the theoretical 'dead end' it implies.⁴⁵ Mandelbaum argues that Weitz leaves one with nothing but an artwork's exhibited properties, namely its surface qualities, which are both aesthetic and stylised. Yet, while similarly referring to family resemblances, Mandelbaum maintains that one's attention should in fact be directed at an artwork's *non-exhibited* properties—for it is through them that one can begin to form a general definition of what art is or what it should be. Contrary to Weitz, Mandelbaum believes that forming a theory about art is indeed possible. Similarly to Danto, Mandelbaum argues that such a theory or definition has nothing to do with a particular artwork's aesthetic features. Although Danto reached the same conclusion a year earlier (following his encounter with Warhol's *Brillo Box*), and while Mandelbaum may not allude to Danto or reference him directly, I would argue that his essay offers a complementary perspective to Danto's conception of the Artworld.

The concrete existence of Danto's Artworld not only proposes an appropriate explanation for why Warhol's *Brillo Box* was indeed an artwork, but it also proves

⁴⁴ According to Weitz, despite 'the many theories, we seem no nearer our goal today than we were in Plato's time. Each age, each art-movement, each philosophy of art, tries over and over again to establish the stated ideal only to be succeeded by a new or revised theory, rooted, at least in part, in the repudiation of preceding ones. [...] theory—in the requisite classical sense—is never forthcoming in aesthetics [...] we would do much better as philosophers to supplant the question, 'What is the nature of art?', by other questions, the answers to which will provide us with all the understanding of the arts there can be. [...] Aesthetic theory—all of it—is wrong in principle in thinking that a correct theory is possible because it radically misconstrues the logic of the concept of art. Its main contention [...] is false. Its attempt to discover the necessary and sufficient properties of art is logically misbegotten for the very simple reason that such a set [...] such a formula [...] is never forthcoming. Art, as the logic of the concept shows, has no set of necessary and sufficient properties; hence a theory of it is logically impossible and not merely factually difficult. Aesthetic theory tries to define what cannot be defined in its requisite sense.' *Ibid.*, 27–28.

⁴⁵ Maurice Mandelbaum, "Family Resemblances and Generalization Concerning the Arts", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (July 1965): 219–28.

sufficient in solving a similar ostensible conundrum—one that had in fact surfaced almost fifty years *earlier*, when Marcel Duchamp famously submitted a urinal to the 1917 exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists. Duchamp’s work, titled *Fountain* and signed ‘R. Mutt 1917’, is to this day considered one of the most infamous, scandalous and groundbreaking works of art in recorded history. Amid what proved to be the first great period of self-referentiality in twentieth-century art, Duchamp’s very conception of such an artwork, to say nothing of actually submitting it for display, could be construed as pure provocation. As such, the urinal itself (i.e. the object) cannot, perhaps even should not, be regarded as art. Even in recent times, one hundred years later, to take such a common (and arguably offensive) artefact, and then, as Graves puts it, ‘present it to finely cultured persons in the high temple of civilization, the art gallery’, was not only unheard of but also, ‘simply going too far’.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, to the surprise of almost everyone involved—and, conceivably, primarily to the surprise of Duchamp himself—*Fountain* was consequently accepted as a legitimate work of art. As Graves explains,

It is reasonable to think that Duchamp did not intend for the urinal to be regarded as a “serious” work of art. It is quite reasonable to think that Duchamp did this as a shocking, therefore meaningful, gesture, so as to make some point about the state of the contemporary Artworld. To this day, some think that he did it as some sort of joke. [...] ‘*Fountain*’ did not become a serious work of art in the sense of a deep and engaging work, but it did become historically important, and very important at that.⁴⁷

As far as Danto was concerned, the important thing was Duchamp’s ‘philosophical discovery’, namely that there was—or rather, that there could, if not *should* be—such a

⁴⁶ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 12.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 13–14.

thing as art, and that one was in fact able to define it. It was clear to him 'that it required some special effort to identify works of art with the null degree of aesthetic interest'.⁴⁸ For Danto, the fact that art 'had no aesthetic distinction to speak of, at a time when it was widely believed that aesthetic delectation was what art was all about,' was what gave merit to Duchamp's approach to readymades.⁴⁹ As Danto concluded,

What in the end makes the difference between a Brillo box and a work of art consisting of a Brillo Box is a certain theory of art. It is the theory that takes it up into the world of art, and keeps it from collapsing into the real object which it is (in a sense of *is* other than that of artistic identification). Of course, without the theory, one is unlikely to see it as art, and in order to see it as part of the artworld, one must have mastered a good deal of artistic theory as well as a considerable amount of the history of recent New York painting. It could not have been art fifty years ago. [...] The world has to be ready for certain things, the artworld no less than the real one. It is the role of artistic theories, these days as always, to make the artworld, and art, possible.⁵⁰

Just as Warhol's *Brillo Box* was perceptually identical to the commercially available boxes containing the Brillo detergent product, Duchamp's *Fountain* was literally indistinguishable from any other urinal produced by the J. L. Mott Iron Works. Ultimately, the very existence of these kinds of artworks effectively entailed (a) that art and aesthetics do not necessarily go hand in hand, and (b) that one should be able to define the necessary and sufficient conditions that enable works of art to be just that.⁵¹

Danto considers his 1964 essay an 'immediate philosophical response' to his encounter with *Brillo Box*. He perceives his effort more as an attempt to figure out not

⁴⁸ Danto, *What Art Is*, 144.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Danto, "The Artworld", 581.

⁵¹ Danto, *What Art Is*, 143–44. In the same vein, if, as Mandelbaum suggests, the aesthetic is essentially perceptual, it could explain why the essence of an artwork should not be a subject of interest. Indeed, it would clearly illustrate his conjecture that the aesthetic aspect of an artwork is simply irrelevant.

only the given circumstances enabling one to see Warhol's work as an artwork but also to understand why indeed it should be perceived as such—rather than what precisely it was that made it a work of art.⁵² Noël Carroll's summary of Danto's account of his own theory—a summary 'endorsed by Danto himself'⁵³—seems to successfully recapitulate and highlight the theory's main points.⁵⁴ According to Robert J. Yanal, Danto reflects on art in terms of 'artrelevant predicates', which are unique and essential specifically in respect to their role in defining artworks. He argues that no matter how many of them one might consider to be *the* defining predicates of artworks, ultimately it is the artists who possess both the opportunity and power to suggest, determine and substantiate additional ones as relevant factors in the definition of artworks.⁵⁵ It is thus inferred that any object to which one would be able to apply a so-called 'new' predicate, could in effect be distinguished as a work of art in its own right as it will comply with the general definition. Consequently, Yanal argues that Danto's theory fails to explain why or how one's mere decision has the power to render one predicate more relevant than any other.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, although Danto's essay indeed does not address this explicitly, I would argue that Yanal seems to be focused on the wrong point. Just as something does

⁵² Arthur C. Danto, *Beyond the Brillo Box: The Visual Arts in Post-Historical Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 37.

⁵³ Diarmuid Costello, "Danto and Kant: Together at Last?", in *Danto and His Critics*, ed. Mark Rollins (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 159.

⁵⁴ Slightly paraphrasing Carroll, for something to count as artwork, it would first and foremost have to be 'about something' or have a particular subject. Its subject, in turn, would project some kind of notion or attitude, or would possess some particular 'style'. The subject should project its style 'by means of rhetorical ellipsis.' The audience, in turn, as they engage with an artwork, are required to interpret and understand it—effectively identifying some kind of an 'art-historical context'. Noël Carroll, "Essence, Expression, and History: Arthur Danto's Philosophy of Art", in *Danto and His Critics*, ed. Mark Rollins (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 138.

⁵⁵ Robert J. Yanal, "The Institutional Theory of Art", in *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, ed. Michael Kelly (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1–2, accessed November 17, 2015, http://www.publications.bobyanal.com/Robert_Yanal_Publications/Later_Articles_files/InstitutionalTheory.pdf.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

not become a work of art merely because one 'says so', it is surely not merely a matter of one's decision that renders 'predicate (a)' more relevant than 'predicate (b)'. Yanal's criticism can be addressed by examining the given circumstances enabled by Danto's conception of the Artworld's 'atmosphere'—as it is precisely that atmosphere which enables one to accept a certain predicate's relevancy. As Stephen Snyder points out, Danto's theory made it possible to form the distinction between 'art' and 'non-art'. In effect, he argues, the theory's strength resides in its ability to explain the artistic products that one encounters in a post-modern era, or what one would customarily regard as 'conceptual art'.⁵⁷ For Snyder, one of the engaging things about Danto's theory is that it successfully 'weaves philosophy, art history and art criticism together, merging his aesthetic philosophy with his extensive knowledge of the world of art.'⁵⁸

Over the years, Danto's view has changed to some degree. Whereas in the past he had argued that 'if the indiscernible objects—*Brillo Box* and the Brillo cartons—were perceptually alike, they must be aesthetically alike as well',⁵⁹ he later no longer found this correlation to be accurate. Drawing on the German philosopher Hegel,⁶⁰ Danto found that the very idea that there actually exists such a 'thing' (i.e. the Artworld) that quite literally *makes* something (i.e. a particular object) into something else (i.e. an

⁵⁷ Stephen Snyder, "Arthur Danto's Andy Warhol: The Embodiment of Theory in Art and the Pragmatic Turn", *Leitmotiv - Topics in Aesthetics and in Philosophy of Art* (2010): 135, accessed October 17, 2016, <http://www.ledonline.it/leitmotiv/Allegati/Leitmotiv-2010-0-Snyder.pdf>.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Danto, *What Art Is*, 147.

⁶⁰ Explicitly referring to Hegel's distinction between two kinds of 'spirit'—namely, one that is objective and one that is absolute—Danto explains: 'Objective spirit consists of all those things and practices in which we find the mind of a culture made objective [...] all that falls under les sciences humaines [sic], or what Hegel's followers called *Geisteswissenschaften*. Absolute spirit is about us, whose spirit is merely present in the things that make up our objective spirit. Harvey's boxes belong to the objective spirit of the USA circa 1960. So, in a way, do Warhol's boxes. But Warhol's boxes, being about objective spirit, are absolute: they bring objective spirit to consciousness of itself. Self-consciousness is the great attribute of absolute Spirit, of which, Hegel felt, fine art, philosophy, and religion are the chief and perhaps the only moments.' Ibid., 149.

artwork) appears to pose a major philosophical question—predominantly concerning one’s need to define art, and/or the possible futility thereof.⁶¹ Indeed, having considered alternate philosophical approaches, Danto realised, for instance, that the fact that the original Brillo cartons were devised and designed by an artist is not inconsequential. Rather, it was quite a meaningful fact—especially as it is *that* artist, James Harvey, commissioned by Brillo, who bestowed the commercial product with a certain kind of aesthetics—which otherwise would not have appeared in Warhol’s work of art. At the same time, Danto questioned whether or not *that* aesthetics is in fact an inherent aspect of Warhol’s work. In his own words:

I don’t know what aesthetic properties if any belong to Warhol’s *Brillo Box* itself. While the term itself did not exist in 1964, it was nevertheless a piece of Conceptual art. It was also a piece of Appropriation art, though this term was not to come into existence until the 1980s. Warhol’s box was a piece of Pop Art, so called because it was about the images of popular culture. Harvey’s box was part of popular culture, but it was not a piece of Pop Art because it was not about popular culture at all. Harvey created a design that obviously appealed to popular sensibilities. Warhol brought those sensibilities to consciousness.⁶²

⁶¹ Danto rejects notions proclaiming (a) that any attempt to define art is pointless, (b) that there is in fact no actual need to define art, and (c) that defining art goes against everything that art stands for, and therefore it should not be attempted in the first place. In his own words, ‘It is, of course, indispensable in Socratic discussions that all participants be masters of the concept up for analysis, since the aim is to match a real defining expression to a term in active use, and the test for adequacy presumably consists in showing that the former analyzes and applies to all and only those things of which the latter is true. [...] a theory of art, regarded here as a real definition of ‘Art’, is accordingly not to be of great use in helping men to recognize instances of its application. Their antecedent ability to do this is precisely what the adequacy of the theory is to be tested against, the problem being only to make explicit what they already know. It is *our* use of the term that the theory allegedly means to capture, but we are supposed able [...] ‘to separate those objects which are works of art from those which are not [...] to use the word “art” and to apply the phrase “work of art”.’ Theories, on this account, are somewhat like mirror-images on Socrates’ account, showing forth what we already know, wordy reflections of the actual linguistic practice we are masters in. But telling artworks from other things is not so simple a matter, even for native speakers, and these days one might not be aware he was on artistic terrain without an artistic theory to tell him so.’ [emphasis in original]. Danto, “The Artworld”, 571–72.

⁶² Danto, *What Art Is*, 148.

Danto's insights and contributions remain quite considerable. Predominantly, he seems to have put an end to all previously existing aesthetic definitions of art. Consequently, however, it was the fact that Danto shifted his attention to other aspects in the Artworld that prepared the ground for George Dickie's account of art as a *cultural institution*.⁶³ I will soon demonstrate the manner in which Dickie's Institutional Theory of Art both draws on and reinterprets Danto's perception of the Artworld in formulating a unique theory of his own.⁶⁴ Subsequently, I will show the manner in which David Graves further elaborates Dickie's theory (which Dickie himself revised a number of times) in his publication of NITA.

1.2 Classifying Art: George Dickie and the 'Institutional Theory of Art'

Applying his understanding of Danto's notion of the Artworld, Dickie began to develop his institutional definition of art in 1969 and worked on his initial version of the theory well into the 1970s. In order to appropriately grasp Dickie's theory, it should first be understood that, as Graves maintains, while Danto may have 'correctly concluded that it was not 'the aesthetic', or 'beauty', or indeed any other exhibited feature of works of art, which made them works of art', he failed to explain what it was that actually *did* make something into a work of art.⁶⁵ Put simply, Danto's theory identifies artworks as

⁶³ Davies, *Definitions of Art*, 81. In the same vein, according to Thomas Adajian, the fact that some artworks require a deeper analysis of their background in order to better interpret them is precisely what makes Danto's approach 'institutionalist'. Thomas Adajian, 'The Definition of Art', in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last modified October 9, 2012, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/art-definition/>.

⁶⁴ As far as Yanal is concerned, the 'first' institutional theory of art is in fact already outlined in Danto's "The Artworld". Yanal, 'The Institutional Theory of Art', 1.

⁶⁵ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 21–22.

artworks, in the given context of the Artworld. It does not, however, in any way explain what it is that *makes* an artwork an artwork. It is important to understand this distinction. Dickie's attempt was to formulate a definitive theory, panoramic in scope, aimed at defining art in all its various forms and manifestations. His objective was not only to help one understand, once and for all, what art is, but also to demonstrate what it is that quite literally *makes* something (i.e. an object, artefact or just about anything) worth being given the status of a 'work of art'.

Contrary to Danto, Dickie perceives the notion of the Artworld as a paradigmatic representation of what one would regard as a 'cultural institution'. To appropriately understand this notion, attention must be paid to the relationship between the overall purpose of cultural institutions and a distinct outlook pertaining to the various facts and values according to which one constructs one's life—namely that they are inherently bound to a given social structure's cultural institutions.⁶⁶ All cultural institutions are man-made. They fundamentally present one with an array of particular rules and regulations.⁶⁷ They all are devised and constructed in accordance with both what one (as an individual) finds important and what one (as a collective member of a cultured society) considers valuable enough to form a designated institution for. Institutions, as Graves puts it, 'institute the facts of the matter, they make facts'.⁶⁸ To be sure, they

⁶⁶ Cultural institutions pertain to the manner in which a particular social structure and/or cultured society aims to preserve and maintain particular aspects that it finds important to its existence, such as language, marriage, law and order, religion, education, games and—as Dickie suggested—art.

⁶⁷ As opposed to a mere 'bunch' or so-called 'cluster' of rules, a particular institution's rules have a distinct order about them. In fact, they essentially dictate the manner in which an institution is supposed to 'behave'. They 'work' in accordance with a well-thought-out logic. Thus, they set certain acts of conduct in a specific field. As a result, one's cultural institutions are in point of fact those responsible for bestowing meaning and value on one's life.

⁶⁸ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 22.

create facts. Ultimately, they are responsible for making a ‘thing’ into a ‘some-thing’, effectively endowing it with an *identity* of its own.

Drawing on the profound intellectual philosophical foundations established by Wittgenstein in the early 1920s,⁶⁹ British philosopher, G. E. M. Anscombe demonstrates this idea in her 1958 essay "On Brute Facts", in which she distinguishes between two different sets of facts in the world: namely ‘brute facts’ and ‘institutional facts’.⁷⁰ The brute facts, as their name implies, are characterised as brutal and cold. As Graves explains, ‘she calls such natural facts “brute facts”, mainly because they seem to have this brutish power about them, as they are what they are regardless of what we humans might think on the matter’.⁷¹ For the most part, one is accustomed to accept these facts as ‘given’ since they appear to be inflicted upon one by the world itself. As such, there is literally nothing one can do about it. To a large extent, they can essentially be perceived as deprived of any values or meaning whatsoever. Alongside them, there exists a so-called ‘opposite’ set of facts. These types of facts are created by one’s society. They are dependent upon one’s culture. Hence, these are regarded as ‘institutional facts’.⁷² Together, they function as given sets of facts to which one turns in one’s

⁶⁹ Consider the following passage from what is commonly regarded as Wittgenstein’s masterpiece, the *Logico-Philosophical Treatise*: ‘The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does happen: *in* it no value exists—and if it did exist, it would have no value. If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental. What makes it non-accidental cannot lie *within* the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental. It must lie outside the world.’ [emphasis in original]. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (1921, Reprint, London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2002) 86, accessed October 18, 2016, http://aramdhon.staff.uns.ac.id/files/2011/10/wittgenstein_tractatus_logico_philosophicus__routledge_classics_.pdf.

⁷⁰ G. E. M. Anscombe, "On Brute Facts", *Analysis* 18, no. 3 (Jan. 1958), 69–72.

⁷¹ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 22.

⁷² Since one belongs to a particular cultured society—which is in fact responsible for one’s cultural institutions—one will most likely choose to live one’s life in accordance with what that particular society finds important. After all, one’s society created its cultural institutions depending upon what it believes one should find important—in respect of the things according to which one should lead one’s life. The

everyday life. While it might seem somewhat counter-intuitive, one ultimately favours the institutional facts and considers them to be more important and more meaningful than those afforded to one by nature.

To further illustrate this point, I hereby paraphrase the example given by Graves: Consider one's 'natural' (or, to some, 'God-given') ability of 'running extremely fast' (i.e. a 'brute fact') as opposed to one demonstrating an ability of 'running extremely fast in an Olympic race' (i.e. 'institutional fact'). Both cases essentially concern the same manifestation: one's ability to run extremely fast. However, one values each case quite differently. Winning a medal in the Olympic Games, for instance, indicates quite clearly that the fact that one is simply able to run extremely fast is of no particular value without a cultural framework. In other words, without the context of the Olympics, 'running extremely fast' remains nothing more than a 'brute fact'—and as such, means absolutely nothing. It might be argued that this fact *does* have great value, in respect of the likeliness of its ensuring one's escape in the event, say, of one being chased by a tiger. Moreover, in the hypothetical scenario of a tiger chasing two individuals, if one possessed the ability to run much faster than one's counterpart, one's survival would quite probably be secured. However, following what he regards as Wittgenstein's response to Charles Darwin, Graves asserts that one's survival should be understood as a necessity. As a sort of built-in 'mechanism', for lack of a better term, one simply *needs* to survive. It therefore cannot be considered a value. In essence, the concepts of

cultural institutions are thus intended to assist one to do just that. As Graves points out, 'their very status as facts at all depends on the existence of a social institution which sets them up as such. [...] it becomes an impressive distinction of paramount importance. Our social-cultural institutions do institute facts, and those facts are usually very different from the brute facts of the matter.' Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 23.

meanings and values simply do not exist in the natural world.⁷³ Graves then utilises the famous scandal surrounding athletes Ben Johnson and Carl Lewis in the 1988 Olympics. He demonstrates the manner in which one prefers the institutional facts: he points out that Johnson being the fastest man in the race constitutes a rather unequivocal 'brute fact'. Notwithstanding, since it had been revealed that he did not play by the rules of the game (i.e. the rules of the given institution), he was subsequently disqualified and the gold medal was given to Carl Lewis, rendering *him* the 'fastest man' in the race, which effectively constitutes an unequivocal 'institutional fact'.⁷⁴ In the same vein, Ruth Lorand explains that cultural institutions possess both the power and authority to make literal changes in one's world. Thus, just as the papacy, for instance, has the power and authority to proclaim a man who has been dead for over 200 years as a saint, and just as the judicial system has the autonomy of acquitting one who has already been found guilty, art too—as a cultural institution—has the capacity to change the status of particular objects, i.e. declaring something that was previously 'not-art' to be an artwork.⁷⁵

Conceivably, one could identify Dickie's perception of Danto's notion of the Artworld as an attempt to bridge the gap between two sets of facts (i.e. the brute one

⁷³ David Graves, "Lir'ot shki'a ve'lamut" [To see a sunset and die], *Odyssey—A Journey Through Ideas*, issue #4 (July 2009): 33–34, accessed June 20, 2014, <http://odyssey.org.il/files/pdf/issue4/10.pdf>. As the essay is written in Hebrew, I present an abbreviated paraphrase of Graves's explanation: One's search for meanings and values commenced once one's perpetual fight for survival ceased consisting as one's main objective. As mankind evolved, one began perceiving oneself and one's peers as part of a cultured society, whose members sought after something other than, ostensibly making it through the day and not dying. Cultural institutions, fundamentally, are designed to bestow meanings and values to things that in their natural form are deprived of them. In brief, everything that happens in the natural world simply happens. Animals who eat the cubs of another pack are not 'evil'. A solar eclipse is not an 'ominous sign'. A tsunami does mean that nature is 'angry'. Indeed, nature has no 'will' of its own (and in this respect, according to this frame of thinking, it can also be said that neither does God). Nature simply happens. It just 'is'.

⁷⁴ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 23.

⁷⁵ Ruth Lorand, *Al tiv'a shel omanut* [On the nature of art] (Tel Aviv: Dvir Publishing House, 1991), 158.

and the institutional one).⁷⁶ While for Danto this gap was more about the two supposedly different objects possessing the exact same aesthetic properties, for Dickie it was about a so-called dissonance that supposedly exists in every given work of art. In effect, Dickie utilises Danto's term and perceives the Artworld as a referent to a 'broad social institution in which works of art have their place'.⁷⁷ Although Dickie did not consider Danto's effort as an attempt at formulating a general definition of art, he did consider "The Artworld" a 'provocative article' and a gesture in the right direction towards such a definition.⁷⁸ As will presently become clear, the manner in which Dickie formed his own definition demonstrates the extent to which Danto's conception of the Artworld influenced Dickie's thinking.⁷⁹ Indeed, both Danto and Dickie realised that the Artworld was a particular framework that establishes an artistic praxis. As such, it consisted of a setting of limitations. Effectively, it is the framework itself that dictates, decides and defines what would and would not be included within the framework. It is not, as Graves points out, an actual 'physical' place (such as a museum, a gallery or a theatre). Rather, it is an 'abstract' framework, which accounts for all the physical places oriented with the Artworld and its products.⁸⁰ Accordingly, the framework *institutes* a particular kind of activity: an artistic praxis—which exists within the framework in all its forms and practices. It is in essence the creative process through which all artworks are created.

⁷⁶ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 24–25.

⁷⁷ Steve M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin, eds., *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 429.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ As Davies points out, 'it is not surprising that Danto has been taken to be a proto-institutionalist to be discussed in the same breath as Dickie. [...] One would expect his views to be compatible, if far from identical with the institutional approach.' Davies, *Definitions of Art*, 81.

⁸⁰ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 19–20.

Over the years, Dickie made four attempts to formulate his definition of what art is, following his understanding that it should be regarded just as any other man-made socio-cultural institutional system—such as marriage, education, law and order, or religion. Dickie recounts that

in all formulations of the theory, I have tried to formulate what I [...] called a "classificatory" sense of "work of art". [...] I have always sought to define a value-neutral sense of art. [...] The general claim of the institutional theory is that if we stop looking at the *exhibited* (easily noticed) characteristics of artworks [...] and instead look for characteristics that artworks have as a result of their relation to their cultural context then we can find defining properties.⁸¹ [emphasis in original]

Dickie's first institutional definition offered a set of rules and guidelines pertaining to the act of classification.⁸² The theory argued that 'a work of art in the classificatory sense is (1) an artifact, (2) a set of the aspects of which has had conferred upon it the status of candidate for appreciation by some person or persons acting on behalf of a certain social institution (the artworld)'.⁸³ Evidently, in his initial endeavour to define what an artwork actually is, Dickie did not consider the appreciation of artworks necessary at all—a matter which seemed to provoke some confusion.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, the importance of evaluation and appreciation did subsequently surface and was alluded to in his later revisions to his own definition.

⁸¹ George Dickie, "The Institutional Theory of Art", in *Theories of Art Today*, ed. Noël Carroll (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 97.

⁸² His initial attempt at a definition took the form of a journal article, published in 1969, and in 1971 and 1974 he made two 'rather minor attempts at revision'. Dickie, "The Institutional Theory of Art", 93. Since his initial three versions basically differed only slightly in their wording, it is the 1974 version that is fundamentally considered Dickie's first version.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁸⁴ For instance, since it could be maintained that if one is able to make a distinction between 'art' and 'good art', should one therefore not discard that which does not constitute 'good art' as 'not art'?

All things considered, Dickie's initial definition was not entirely well constructed. According to Graves, 'it appeared to focus upon the wrong sorts of things'.⁸⁵ Danto, by his own admission, 'saluted Dickie for his bravura, but faulted his definition'.⁸⁶ Indeed, as a definitive theory about all things art—which is precisely what it set out to be—it seemed both limited and restrictive in the sense that one simply could not accept it as a valid theory that could be applied to each and every artwork in existence. In effect, it attracted quite a bit of criticism, if not outright 'attacks'—the most common of which, as Graves notes, 'relate to (a) the act of status conferral, (b) the person who acts on behalf of the Artworld, and (c) the circularity of the definition'.⁸⁷ Davies maintains that it had apparently 'struck some people as preposterous, as involving an elementary mistake'.⁸⁸ Similarly, as Graves points out, a common criticism held against Dickie's theory claimed his approach to be inherently elitist:

Art is a world unto itself, and one must know how that world works. As the Artworld in the West is one of our oldest ongoing cultural worlds, with a continuous history of two millennia and a half since Classical Greece, then it just so happens that there is a lot one has to know about art [...] A person who is ignorant of a particular artistic phenomenon should refrain from passing judgment on it, this is what really follows from Danto's principle.⁸⁹

Nonetheless, Graves proves this objection to be both misguided and misleading. It is essentially a result of an inaccurate understanding of what the theory sets out to do. While Davies insists that the charge of elitism is a serious one,⁹⁰ Graves, for his part,

⁸⁵ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 19.

⁸⁶ Danto, *What Art Is*, 145.

⁸⁷ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 25.

⁸⁸ Davies, *Definitions of Art*, 78.

⁸⁹ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 17.

⁹⁰ Even in recent times, after the rise (and assumed fall) of post-modernism, it would seem that being an 'elitist' is not only frowned upon but is also perceived as some sort of academic equivalent to committing 'foul play'.

maintains that this claim stands in contrast to the manner in which both Danto and Dickie characterise the nature of the Artworld: namely, as being 'democratic' or 'pluralistic'.⁹¹ At the same time, Davies argues that most reservations begin to surface once it becomes evident that more than a handful of artworks, and indeed artists, do *not* in fact comply with the seemingly restrictive confines of the Artworld. Hence, since it seems that the Artworld quite literally dictates what is and what is not worth being identified as art, one can hardly regard the Artworld as a democratic system of classification. Davies, admittedly, primarily attends to Dickie's initial account of his theory. He maintains in this respect that he is more concerned with what a general or definitive theory of art should be, in order to be convincing, rather than taking issue with any particular version.⁹²

Another major reservation concerned Dickie's 'candidate for appreciation'. Danto, for instance, argued that although Dickie never wanted to be too explicit, this clause may suggest aesthetic appreciation.⁹³ Dickie himself defended this objection, concluding that while his language might have sounded misleading, his explicit explanation of what the status of the 'candidate for appreciation' is—namely, that it 'must be conferrable by a single person's treating of an artefact as a candidate for appreciation'⁹⁴—demonstrates why a definition of art must account for the *actions* of an artist, constituting their creative process.⁹⁵ According to Davies, Dickie's 'version of

⁹¹ As will later become clear, forming a theory of art that manifests a sense of freedom while at the same time dictates strict rules of conduct appears to be one of the primary objectives of NITA: 'This, we believe, would be the ideal situation, even though it sounds somewhat paradoxical. Complete artistic freedom together with clear restrictions on what works and what does not'. Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 38.

⁹² Davies, *Definitions of Art*, 79.

⁹³ Danto, *What Art Is*, 145.

⁹⁴ George Dickie, "Defining Art", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (1969): 252.

⁹⁵ Dickie, "The Institutional Theory of Art", 93.

institutionalism' fails to account for either how the artistic status is conferred or how it is conferred by an exercise of authority. He asserts that Dickie's theory fails in delivering a 'truly institutional account' of what art is, and that it seems to invite objections rather than offer a defence against them.⁹⁶ Dickie, for his part, finds this quite 'unfounded'.⁹⁷ He maintains that most of the criticism raised against the institutional theory primarily refers to his initial version.⁹⁸ Ultimately, these and others are appropriately dealt with and respectfully rejected by Graves in his construction of NITA.

It was only in 1984 that Dickie attempted what he himself regards as 'a major overhaul of the theory'.⁹⁹ As before, Dickie's aim here was to formulate a classifying 'apparatus' rather than to engage with aesthetic evaluation.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, it was his intent to create a 'procedural' theory of art (as opposed to a 'functional' or historical one). Published as *The Art Circle*, this time around Dickie turned his attention towards the institution itself—primarily focusing on the distinct rules, roles and regulations that art, as a cultural institution, actually *institutes*. According to Graves, 'Summing up the new twist, Dickie suggests that art can be seen to be a complex of inter-related roles governed by non-conventional and conventional rules. The inter-relatedness of the institutional roles was the most important finding of the later version'.¹⁰¹ In brief, Dickie's new account suggested a group of five consolidating and inflective clauses that

⁹⁶ Davies, *Definitions of Art*, 84.

⁹⁷ Dickie, "The Institutional Theory of Art", 106.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 94–96.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁰⁰ As Dickie points out in *Evaluating Art*, 'In this book I present and argue for a theory of art evaluation. As far as I can tell this theory has no necessary connection with the institutional theory of art. The lack of connection should not be surprising, for the institutional theory of art is supposed to be a classificatory theory of art—a theory that explains why a work of art is a work of art.' George Dickie, *Evaluating Art* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), ix.

¹⁰¹ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 30.

form the definition of what art is. Effectively, the role of each clause in the definition is dependent upon every other individual clause.¹⁰² While the circular nature of the definition appears to be precisely where its deficiency lies, it was surely the *inflective* nature of his argument that had led Dickie, perhaps jokingly and with some degree of irony, to incorporate the word 'circle' in his chosen title. Dickie considers this version to be 'the single best account of the institutional theory of art'.¹⁰³ According to Hans van Maanen, 'when Dickie wrote *The Art Circle* he had the feeling that his institutional theory was ready and he was right: it was finished and sufficient; the circle was round and the statement had been made'.¹⁰⁴ However, Graves maintains that although Dickie's wording appeared to be very precise, it nevertheless remained misleading.¹⁰⁵ At the same time, Graves argues that though the definition is indeed circular (which could constitute a major flaw), it does not leave one uninformed.¹⁰⁶ Ultimately, the objectors to Dickie's theory remained unconvinced. To be sure, one of the reasons that Dickie reformulated his theory as many times as he did was to find the most appropriate wording to convey his insights. As Graves points out, 'as is often the case with Dickie, there is a lot more to it than his odd words tend to disclose'.¹⁰⁷ Consequently, he explains,

Dickie found himself going around a circle once again. Only this time, the circle appeared to be quite essential to the understanding of art, for one simply could not understand the concept of art, let alone

¹⁰² George Dickie, *The Art Circle: A Theory of Art* (New York: Haven, 1984), 80–82.

¹⁰³ Dickie; in Carroll, "Theories of Art Today", 108n13.

¹⁰⁴ Hans van Maanen, *How to Study Art Worlds: On the Societal Functioning of Aesthetic Values* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 28.

¹⁰⁵ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 25.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

create or receive a work of art, without an understanding and the presence of the other constituents.¹⁰⁸

Thus, understanding each clause simply *requires* an understanding of every other clause.¹⁰⁹ Drawing on a rather frequent analogy in philosophy, Graves compares the inflective principle in Dickie's institutional definition to how one grasps the core principle in chess. One simply cannot comprehend the purpose of the 'checkmate' position without possessing a comprehensive understanding of the role of the 'king', and *vice versa*. According to Graves, 'Institutions, like Chess, where the rules not only tell us what to do, but they verily create the very possibility of doing it, are properly called 'constitutive institutions'.¹¹⁰ Referencing John Searle's 1969 book, *Speech Act*—in which a typical constitutive system is described as one where 'X counts as Y, under circumstances C'—explains that 'the nature of a constitutive system is that it defines the realm, it constitutes it. The logic of a constitutive system is not one of problem-solving, as it is for a regulative system, but rather a logic of *creation*'. [emphasis in original].¹¹¹ Ultimately, Dickie's insights helped explain why is it that one is able to understand and experience a Jackson Pollock painting, for instance, as a divine artistic depiction of the spirit of man, while *simultaneously* observing the very same painting as nothing more than a large canvas riddled with spritzes and blots of paint, which might as well have been produced by a sugar-rushed four-year-old with a tendency for over-dramatics. Although an exaggerated depiction of Pollock's style of action painting, the latter view can be regarded as a rather common 'brute fact' that can be applied to the majority of such paintings. Similarly, one might also go so far as to argue that Duchamp's

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 30.

¹⁰⁹ This is true both in Dickie's case and, as I will presently demonstrate, in Graves's formulation of NITA.

¹¹⁰ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 33.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 34–35.

Fountain, once 'extracted' from the confines of the Artworld could be rendered, as a brute fact, an ineffective urinal.

According to Robert Stecker, if one is drawn to the institutional approach, one might find it quite interesting 'to explore other social aspects of roles existing within institutions to see if there really is some viable alternative to this approach'.¹¹² In a rather lengthy footnote, he states that though to his knowledge this has not been 'pursued beyond the point Dickie has taken it', he does know of one exception: namely, 'a recent Ph.D. dissertation by David Graves (1994)', which he finds 'promises to be marvellously useful in such matters as interpreting artworks'.¹¹³ Since Dickie's theory essentially establishes the circumstances under which a particular object would be defined as an artwork, it would entail that one is just as likely to encounter aesthetically bad artworks as one is sure to come across aesthetically good ones. Evaluating whether a particular work of art is or is not aesthetically good seems to be the next 'natural' step. Nevertheless, despite his focus on classification, Dickie's definition *does* allude to some notions of what a good work of art *should be*—albeit without explicitly intending to. Thus, Dickie did appear to find the appreciation and evaluation of artworks not only important, but also quite necessary. To paraphrase Lorand, not everything that is defined as an artwork is necessarily a *good* artwork.¹¹⁴ She asserts that a definition of that which one can call 'art' should apply to both good *and* bad artworks.¹¹⁵ Accordingly, in order to evaluate whether or not a particular object is a good or a bad artwork, one

¹¹² Robert Stecker, *Artworks: Definition, Meaning, Value* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 68–69.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* 69n2.

¹¹⁴ Lorand, [On the nature of art], 153.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 161.

must first and foremost consider that particular object as an ‘artwork’.¹¹⁶ She suggests, for instance, that just as one’s definition of a ‘citizen’ should apply to persons who do not obey the law, one’s definition of ‘art’ would similarly limit its own principles in respect of the evaluation and appreciation of artworks.¹¹⁷

With NITA, as I will explain in greater detail in the concluding section of this chapter, Graves demonstrates how the notions of both Danto and Dickie can be taken one step further. For example, the fact that Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* is conventionally considered to be one of the most important artistic achievements of Western art is not only an institutional fact, but it is also a fact that one is essentially expected to accept ‘on trust’. Indeed, as far as NITA is concerned, this painting can only be ‘properly’ seen if one looks at it through a specific atmosphere and by adopting the perspective of a fifteenth-century Italian art seeker.¹¹⁸ Effectively, it ‘is constituted as a masterpiece artwork by the institution of Neo-Platonic Renaissance painting in Italy’.¹¹⁹ Without an appropriate context to inform one’s aesthetic experience—implying that there is essentially only one appropriate manner in which one can aesthetically experience the painting—one remains in the realm of the painting’s brute facts, and might thereby never truly ‘get’ what all the so-called commotion surrounding it is all about.¹²⁰ Ultimately, however, Graves explains that since

The rule-system constituting and governing the Artworld at large must also be such that it can allow for the endless variety of art forms, [...]

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 153.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 161.

¹¹⁸ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 40.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 38.

¹²⁰ Arguably, one usually experiences the *Mona Lisa* as an unexpectedly small portrait of a somewhat masculine lady who possesses a rather enigmatic (if not downright odd) smile, and whose eyes appear to follow one around the exhibition hall in the Louvre. This, to be sure, is not a proper aesthetic experience of what the *Mona Lisa* is supposed to be.

the mother-institution of the Artworld itself is not constituted by specific rules [...]. Rather, the overall institution is constituted by *schematic* rules, or [...] rule-schemas. The rule-schemas defining and setting up the entire world of art are not specific rules, they place virtually no restrictions on the possible contents of the more specific rules that will follow from them.¹²¹ [emphasis in original]

For Graves, NITA constitutes an attempt to challenge the ‘anything goes’ spirit of the 1960s, which to his mind seems to have gone somewhat astray. In his own words, ‘we seem to have forgotten that art is something and not anything’.¹²² Furthermore, primarily as far as the ‘contemporary Artworld’ is concerned, NITA successfully suggests an urgently required new ‘appropriate attitude’ towards the tremendous variety of existing and ever-evolving works of art.¹²³ In this respect, NITA demonstrates quite clearly that the Artworld had gone well beyond the point of ‘anything goes’, accepting anything and everything as a legitimate work of art. Nevertheless, NITA also makes it overwhelmingly evident that at the same time ‘not everything works’.¹²⁴ The very notion that everything *can* work does not necessarily entail that everything *should* work. This is a crucial insight to understand what NITA is all about. Art, as Graves puts it,

is a cultural institution [...] a complex set of rule-systems which define and govern its practices, i.e. the practices of art. The new institutional theory regards these rule-systems as being of a constitutive nature, which is to say that they create the very practices that they govern. [...] [they] determine the goals, means, roles and products of the practice. The rules tell us *what counts*. The rule-systems define the goals of the various artistic practices [...] [they] specify the means to achieve such goals. [...] all works of art are understood only from within the workings of their constitutive practices.¹²⁵ [emphasis in original]

¹²¹ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 40. When regarding these rules, Graves employs three different spellings in his book: namely, ‘schema’ (or ‘schemas’, as above), ‘schemata’ and ‘schemes’. In this study, I have chosen the third and shall henceforth regard them as rule-schemes.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 37.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

1.3 Evaluating Art: David Graves and the ‘New Institutional Theory of Art’

Although it was finally published in 2010, Graves began developing NITA as early as 1994. Mentored in his postgraduate studies by philosopher and linguist Asa Kasher, with the guidance and supervision of Dickie himself, Graves credits them both in his 2010 publication of NITA and refers to the theory as their collaborative effort.

Fundamentally, NITA proposes that the Artworld consists of four basic rule-schemes, which would necessarily apply to all and any given instances of art. Appropriately, they both (a) constitute the Artworld itself, defining its rules, regulations and boundaries, and in effect (b) ‘institute the myriad of practices of art’.¹²⁶ NITA concludes what would count as an artwork or an artistic activity under the given circumstances enabled by the Artworld. In effect, it extends both its initial conception by Danto and its institutional understating by Dickie. Together, the four rules, addressed by Graves as ‘R1–R4’, appear to form a ‘constitutive’ system, in which each individual rule-scheme functions as something of a self-contained definition of a particular elementary component, without which art cannot exist.¹²⁷

The following is the constitutive core rule-system, as it appears in Graves’s book.

By his own admission, these are based on Dickie’s five interlocking definitions.¹²⁸

R1: A practice counts as an Artworld-system if, and only if, it is a framework for the presentation of artworks by artists to an Artworld public.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ In his own words: ‘*there are four basic, universal constituents of art, and they are: An artist, a work of art that he/she produces, a public unto which the work of art is presented, and a framework (an Artworld-system) in which all this takes place. [...] this humble set is where it all begins*’ [emphasis in original]. Ibid.

R2: An object counts as an artwork if, and only if, it is an artifact created by an artist, and presented to an Artworld public, within an Artworld-system.

R3: A person counts as an artist if, and only if, he or she participates with understanding in the creating of an artwork, to be presented it to an Artworld public, within an Artworld-system.

R4: A set of persons counts as an Artworld public if, and only if, its members are prepared in some degree to understand an artwork, created by an artist, which is presented to them in an Artworld-system.

Summarily, these four core elements imply that certain persons create certain artefacts—by way of which they attempt to convey some meaningful and insightful notion—and they present these artefacts before some other persons. Indeed, without R1–R4, one who might wish to be regarded as an artist, ‘would not know what to do, why to do it, nor how to go about doing it’.¹²⁹ Likewise, a potential audience will not know how to comprehend what they have been presented with or why what they have been presented with should be perceived as artwork at all. Together, R1–R4 appear to convey ‘virtually nothing about these all-important aspects of what, why, who and how’.¹³⁰ This is precisely what NITA sets out to do.

It must be also understood that the Artworld is in fact *not* restrictive at all.¹³¹ Effectively, as a schematic definition, NITA is essentially restriction-free. At the same time, as shall be further elaborated upon in the forthcoming chapter, this is only the case as long as one observes all the rules (R1–R4). In brief, while they surely establish the object, the artist and the audience as necessary minimum requirements, these rules are simultaneously indiscriminate, and, indeed, completely open to what might count

¹²⁹ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 44.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 45.

as an object, or who the artist and his/her/their audience can be. Consequently, practically anything can count as an object, and indeed anyone can be either an artist or a member of an audience—as long as each role accords with the requirements of the general institutional category.

The following is the structure of the artistic institution, as it is presented by Graves in his book:

AW Level: The Artworld: The mother institution, the set of all artistic institutions. The rules at AW level are precisely the rule-schemata R1–R4. They are the most general rules.

M-b Level: Medium-based institutions: Painting, Literature, Film, Sculpture, Poetry, Music etc. The rule-systems we will find on this level are rules governing the “material” aspects of art practices, selection of material as medium, use of medium, and the like. They are also of a general nature, but they are more specific than AW level rules in that they place constraints upon the material aspects for each M-b institution.

BT Level: Big Theory institutions: Realism, Expressionism, Romanticism, Idealism, Cubism, etc. The rule-systems we will find on this level are rules governing the “ideological” aspects of art practices, (which is why they are usually denoted by “isms”). [...] [W]e do not mean political ideology, necessarily, even though those may be acceptable as well, in certain local cases, if so constituted by the Artworld-system in question. Rather, we mean a very general attitude of the practitioners of the system regarding what they hold to be the nature of art (or of their art). [...] As a general guideline, BT institutions are *Artworld* theories of art, as distinguished from Artworld-external theories, such as philosophical, psychological or sociological theories of art. To be sure, Artworld Big Theories are influenced by the external theories, and have some influence over them, as well. The important point is that they are the general theoretical stances which artists actually assume in their work.

WT Level: Working Theory institutions: Pointillism, Action Painting, Futurism, French Impressionist Painting, Film Noire [sic], etc. This is the bottom of our institutional hierarchy, this is where the theories of the higher levels are actually put to practice, where material meets up with ideology, as it were. At this level, the rule-systems governing the

institutions will be most specific, both with regard to the material aspects and with regard to the ideological aspects of the practice, and the relationships between material and ideology. [...] Thus, [...] what is applicable to all and any artist is that they work within some sub-institution which specifies both the material and the ideological aspects of their art practice, i.e. some Working-Theory-institution. Hence, as far as [NITA] is concerned, as a general theory of art, the WT level is the most specific level. [...] the products of the Artworld are always produced, strictly, within an institution of the lowest level, i.e. within some WT institution, the domain of activity where a specific set of rules (which is actually a body of theory) is actually practiced by artists to actually produce works of art.¹³²

According to Graves, the mistaken notion that one is able to specify considerations regarding the 'what, why, who and how' of all the Artworld's products and procedures has in the past resulted in theories about art being overthrown. He argues that the mistake was not in questioning whether one *could* define art, but in identifying the *kind* of definition art requires.¹³³ In a sense, it is R1–R4 that force considerations such as why, what and how upon the Artworld—and it is within the Artworld that they 'find their structural expression in these institutional levels'.¹³⁴ The structure of the Artworld demonstrates that these considerations essentially require practical decision-making and responsibilities—on the part of both the artists and the audience. As Graves explains,

Medium-based institutions mainly deal with the "what?". What sort of artifact is to be made, what materials are to be used? Big Theory institutions mainly deal with the "why?". Why make art in the first place, why create and use an artifact to do what one wishes to do? Finally, Working Theory institutions deal with the "how?", focusing on one of the key questions of all artistic activity: how does one employ one's chosen material means so as to manifest one's chosen artistic ideology? WT institutions are geared to answer that key question,

¹³² Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 51–52.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

providing one of the most fundamental principles of art criticism and evaluation, that of technique.¹³⁵

Consequently, it would seem that NITA fully complies with what one expects of a comprehensive theory or a definition of art: namely, that it identifies the elements that all art must have, in that anything possessing them is art.¹³⁶ Indeed, it appears as though NITA does just that.¹³⁷

Although Stecker engages in his study with Graves's PhD dissertation—no doubt an early attempt at outlining what would later become his publication of NITA—some of his insights can still be applied to the fully formed theory. For example, he notes that Graves's conception of art as an institution implies and includes a variety of 'sub-institutions' (i.e., the different genres or sub-categories of art), which are derived from and comply with the general rules of the larger institutional system. Additionally, Stecker argues that the rules of the institution in Graves's approach 'not only (purportedly) determine which items are artworks, but also determine principles of interpretation and [...] principles of artistic value'.¹³⁸ Accordingly, he finds that they contribute, at least to some degree, to what one would perceive as 'principles of artistic value'.¹³⁹ He thus considers Graves's approach innovative not only in respect of interpreting artworks but also *apropos* their evaluation.¹⁴⁰ In an essay defending artistic

¹³⁵ Ibid., 53–54.

¹³⁶ Stephen Davies, *The Philosophy of Art* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 26.

¹³⁷ While he does not in fact engage with NITA explicitly, as it had not yet been published, Davies seems to remain unconvinced about the effectiveness and/or efficiency of the institutional approach to account for all and any artwork. He finds that it lacks the ability to explain the earliest artworks due to the simple fact that 'institutions imply the existence of established traditions, and none were in place when the first artworks were created.' Ibid., 39. Nevertheless, his understanding of the institutional approach—in respect of NITA—seems to be wrong and misleading.

¹³⁸ Stecker, *Artworks: Definition, Meaning, Value*, 69.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 259.

¹⁴⁰ While the classification of artworks has been scrutinised since the dawn of art, their evaluation seems have established itself as a completely separate field of interest. In these respects, Graves was surely among the handful of philosophers to explore the institutional approach of *both* classification and

value, Stecker maintains that what one might consider to be valuable artworks may have aesthetic value, and that even the artistic value of artworks that *do* have aesthetic value 'is not exhausted by their aesthetic value'.¹⁴¹ In brief, he argues that artworks should have a kind of value that is 'not identical with, but that may include, aesthetic value'.¹⁴² Consequently, as far as Stecker is concerned, 'artistic value derives from what artists successfully intend to do *in* their works as mediated by functions of the art forms and genres to which the works belong' [emphasis in original].¹⁴³

To be sure, NITA equips one with 'clear theoretical mechanisms for carrying the major activities involved in theorizing about art: how to classify a work of art, how to interpret a work of art, and how to evaluate a work of art'.¹⁴⁴ Ultimately, no other theory to date has succeeded in 'mapping out' with such precision and elegance what it is that actually *makes* something into an artwork—and in doing so suggests the *necessity* of both one's engagement with an artwork and of bringing forth the question of aesthetic value.¹⁴⁵

Now, does an artwork *have* to be aesthetic? In respect of NITA and its conception of the Artworld, the answer appears to be that it most definitely does *not*. Art, in fact, can be quite literally deprived of so-called 'beautiful' qualities. 'Beauty', to be sure, does not define art. Nonetheless, NITA seems to re-direct the question of necessity, and

evaluation. Thus, as Stecker puts it, 'Something is an artistic value only if a principle of artistic value derived from an artworld institution says it is. Hence artistic value invariably comes from within the artworld, for Graves, and is unique to artworks'. Stecker, *Artworks: Definition, Meaning, Value*, 69.

¹⁴¹ Robert Stecker, "Artistic Value Defended", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 70, no. 4 (Fall 2012), 355.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 357.

¹⁴⁴ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 57.

¹⁴⁵ This, in essence, is why I find that one can potentially apply NITA to any given artistic genre.

frame it in the context of appropriateness: whether or not a work of art *should be* aesthetic. As Graves points out,

[T]he standard theory of aesthetics *assumes* that art is embodied meaning. That assumption is false, as an assumption [...] The institutional theory, on the other hand, made no such aesthetic assumption. We defined art quite conclusively in purely institutional terms, and assumed only as much: an artifact created by an artist, and so on. As we focused upon art as a cultural practice, we got our reward for our theoretical diligence: the institutional theory *showed* us what art is, when actually and properly practiced. The very structure of the institution showed us that art is a matter of embodied meaning. The logical difference is absolute—we did not assume that art is embodied meaning, we *concluded* it. [...] "art is embodied meaning" is a conclusion about art, not an assumption. [...] a conclusion of the institutional theory [...] Embodying the meaning of a work of art so as to get it across, means to use the sensate, concrete, feeling-oriented and intuitively understood aspects of the medium to manifest that meaning. This entails aesthetics. This is why aesthetics is so important to art, even if not definitive. If art is embodied meaning, and the point of embodiment is to involve sensate cognition (aesthetics) as well as intellectual cognition, then we get the most intriguing conclusion: What the institutional theory is in fact telling us is that art need not necessarily be aesthetic, but it *should be*.¹⁴⁶ [emphasis in original]

Thus, when examining the workings of NITA 'vertically',¹⁴⁷ the idea of 'embodied meaning' appears to become essential to the artist's responsibilities.¹⁴⁸ Put simply, an artist endeavours to convey some kind of idea to his/her audience, and effectively attempts to embody that idea within a concrete object. The audience, in turn, experiences that object (i.e. the artwork) predominantly through one's senses. Likewise, when reviewing NITA 'horizontally', it becomes evident that an artwork is a vehicle for communicating ideas or thoughts that could not otherwise be expressed. Effectively, as both the vertical and horizontal perspectives seem to form a necessary depiction of

¹⁴⁶ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 86–87.

¹⁴⁷ For a better sense of the answer, it is recommended to refer to the visual diagram provide by Graves in his book. See *Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁴⁸ The role of embodied meaning will be addressed in detail in the following chapter.

what the artistic process is, in its core, NITA demonstrates that art could be perceived as a form of ‘inter-subjective’ communication.

As will become clear in a later chapter, my application of NITA will demonstrate the wide-ranging implications that this theory offers in the field of aesthetics: explicitly, the potential it contains in respect of identifying—and literally *creating*—new aesthetic categories. My application of NITA, re-forming its constitutive rule-system (R1–R4) will formulate a new distinctive artistic institution in its own right. It, in turn, will establish that the roles of the artists, their artwork and their audience all ‘converge’ under the given circumstances of the artistic framework governed by my suggested new genre. Yet before attending to this application of NITA, there is an additional philosophical notion that cannot remain unaddressed. I find that it is both deeply rooted within NITA, and also quite inherent in the aesthetic appreciation of artworks. As will presently be made clear, these notions pertain to the existence of what will be regarded throughout as the ‘internal logic’ of an artwork. It, in turn, will play an integral role in my suggested new aesthetic category. As the forthcoming chapter will explain, the notion of internal logic is not explicitly addressed in NITA. Yet its implied allusion to the importance of aesthetic evaluation and appreciation (thus, extending itself well beyond the ‘classificatory confines’ of original theory) renders this notion inescapable.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ As I will demonstrate in the forthcoming chapter, the notion of ‘internal logic’ will play a dual role in the evaluation and appreciation of the artworks I will examine in my newly formulated aesthetic category. Indeed, one will be required to consider two different *kinds* of internal logic.

2. The Notion of 'Internal Logic'

2.1 Phrase or Term?

In his aforementioned essay, "To See a Sunset and Die", Graves defines the term 'beautiful' as follows: 'A particular object is deemed beautiful, when, and to the degree that, it embodies and exhibits the internal logic of its own world'.¹⁵⁰ This unique definition of beauty pertains to the very core of what it means for something to be 'beautiful'. It not only captures what the idea of artistic beauty should be, but also introduces a conception of beauty that extends well beyond the so-called confines of the Artworld.

Although Graves did not include this definition in his publication of NITA, I find it to be one of the theory's major conclusions—particularly in respect of the manner in which he employs the phrase 'internal logic'.¹⁵¹ Notwithstanding, it must be pointed out that at present this phrase remains no more than a mere notion, a philosophical idea. As a so-called 'proper' term, it has not yet been explicitly defined. At the same time, the phrase itself *does* appear in Graves's publication of NITA only once. It is mentioned in

¹⁵⁰ Graves, [To see a sunset and die], 34.

¹⁵¹ Graves appears to allude to a particular quality that inheres as a property of objects. As this quality should be visible (or since it appeals to one's *senses*), it applies to artworks and experiences, including those situated in the realm of aesthetics. All objects (and *a fortiori* all artworks) by their nature possess (or *should* possess) a unique and distinct 'internal logic' of their own. Appropriately, when confronted with a particular object, one must first and foremost identify its distinctive internal logic. At the very least, one should come to grips with what it should be, accepting it as a given. As I will later demonstrate, it is one's minimum responsibility when engaging with works of art—and especially when one wishes to evaluate and appreciate them. In other words, nothing exists in a vacuum. It is only once one knows what a particular artwork's internal logic should be that one will be able to determine whether or not that artwork succeeds in manifesting it. This essentially entails the process of both attaining an understanding *and* at the same time being able to experience a realised and concrete manifestation. This will later be addressed in detail.

passing and employed in respect of his discussion on ‘really identifying a work of art’, which Graves demonstrates through an explanation of Cubism.¹⁵² Its interpretation is thus established as a ‘given’—one which the reader surmises from the context. The following is the passage as it appears in Graves’s book:

The Cubists, taking their lead from Cézanne, set out to create a new order, an artistic world which behaves in accordance with its own logic, as the natural world behaves in accordance with its logic. The logic of the natural world has to do with the very constituents of nature, thus, they say, the logic of an “art world” must have to do with the constituents of an art form. If it be painting, then that world abides by the internal logic of the line, the angle, the plane, the hue. [...] The Cubists most purposefully set out to show us a world never seen before, one that *could* not be seen before, because it is a Cubist world.¹⁵³ [emphasis in original]

The phrase is then contextualised by Graves’s explanation of what the theory of Cubism is.¹⁵⁴ Albeit in somewhat broad strokes—and on what he regards as an ‘intuitive level’—Graves explicitly articulates the ‘logic’ that is manifested by the Cubist style: ‘the logic of the painting itself determines how the forms and colors are to be arranged on the plane, and not, say, the logic of physical nature’.¹⁵⁵ Despite his declared intention to subsequently term his ‘intuitive’ conclusion as ‘the internal lawfulness of the painting’, this is in fact the final instance where Graves employs this phrase.¹⁵⁶ He does, however, utilise it earlier—when considering what it is that one sees when one encounters

¹⁵² Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 66.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Cubism, as Graves puts it, ‘is entirely based on the theory of equivalents: an equivalent for volume, an equivalent for aerial perspective, an equivalent for form. [...] the cubist [sic] painter does not translate reality, any more than he evokes or interprets it, but takes his inspiration from the objects about him and coordinates them on the plane surface of his canvas, not according to the laws of nature, but according to the laws proper to that surface. Just what are those “laws proper to that surface” is something which cannot be specified in advance of actually creating the painting. It is something which arises of the painting itself, once the painting starts to bear a character of its own.’ Ibid., 68–69.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 69.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

Picasso's *Three Musicians* (1921).¹⁵⁷ Consequently, the manner in which Graves employs the notion of internal logic as a philosophical concept in his definition of beauty suggests that it is *indispensable* to the evaluation of artworks—and therefore would necessarily accord with NITA.¹⁵⁸ Surmising that an artwork possesses an 'internal logic' of some kind—and indeed, that there even exists such a thing as a particular painting's 'lawfulness'—both appear to derive from a similar premise. Both notions seem to be pertaining to a particular quality—one which is inherent to the 'world' inhabiting the artwork.

Consider the following comment, made by the multi-talented English comedian John Cleese in a 1986 interview with Melvin Bragg. Having stated that he considers himself in possession of a 'logical mind' (which, by his own admission, has contributed both to his writing and to the formation of his particular comedy style),¹⁵⁹ Cleese alludes to his friend and collaborator Marty Feldman, recounting that

He [Feldman] went on at great length about what he used to call the 'internal logic' of a sketch—which is that you can have everybody sitting in dustbins or dressed as carrots, but if somebody walks into the room who isn't dressed as a carrot or isn't wheeled in in a

¹⁵⁷ As Graves explains, 'They are *Artworld* musicians, instruments and dog, not *natural* ones. They abide by different laws than do natural ones. They are synthetic signs for a lawfully ordered reality which can exist *only* in the Artworld institution of Cubism. That is the heart and soul of the Cubist endeavor. The ten blue and ten white patches, arranged among the black and brown, establish a good deal of that internal lawfulness, by establishing a rhythm and sense of highly-contrastive balance of that particular and synthetic "world" of the *'Three Musicians'*. Could that internal lawfulness of the *Musicians'* world be expressed otherwise, as, say, an equation or deductive argument? Picasso raises a bewildered brow, for he knows that there is only one way to be able to identify that particular sense of order, only one way to understand that particular lawfulness. [...] We can follow the Cubists as they take ordinary everyday objects and rework them in accord with an internal lawfulness of breaking it down (analysis) into more basic geometrical forms, extracting it from physical space, removing it from natural light and color, and then recreating that ordinary object into a vision the likes of which no one could have imagined prior to its actually being done' [emphasis in original]. *Ibid.*, 64–65.

¹⁵⁸ As stated earlier, even if not explicitly expressed, it would seem that NITA advocates that the evaluation and appreciation of artworks is not only as important as classification but also unavoidable.

¹⁵⁹ In his own words, 'this has given me in the past the ability to get the structure of things right'. *The South Bank Show*, ITV/LWT, January 12, 1986, edited and presented by Melvin Bragg.

dustbin—then you have to *explain why not*. [...] So you start with anything, and no matter how crazy, but that it's got to be founded on that in solid logic.¹⁶⁰

Its anecdotal nature notwithstanding, I find Feldman's paradigm rather illuminating in respect of my own application of what the notion of internal logic is supposed to be. Not only does it suggest that one can identify (and indeed *create*) an internal logic in a variety of different fields but it also appears to imply that appreciation, almost consistently, goes hand in hand with one's comprehension of an internal logic. Being able to appreciate what *makes* a particular sketch funny is grounded on the same process that enables one to evaluate what makes a particular artwork beautiful (or aesthetically good). Nevertheless, that one is able to merely intuit what it means cannot be enough. Indeed, that all artworks possess, or at the very least *should* possess, a distinctive internal logic of their own is paramount. My endeavour in this chapter therefore focuses on suggesting an appropriate explanation of the notion of internal logic—especially as I subsequently employ it throughout this dissertation and regard it as essential to properly appreciating artworks.¹⁶¹

2.2 A Precursor to a Suggested Definition

In his explanation of the term 'deconstruction', Kanavillil Rajagopalan employs the phrase 'internal logic' twice:

The idea that one can define one's terms once and for all rests on the assumption that there are such things as meanings that can remain stable over a period of time and which could be captured and

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Put simply, the objectives of this chapter, on the whole, are (a) to underline the importance of this phrase in the context of this study, and (b) to make it absolutely clear what I mean when I reference or employ it as a practical term.

'imprisoned' in the form of rigorous definitions. Well, among other things, deconstruction is, as we have seen, concerned with reminding us that there are no such stable meanings to begin with, and so the quest for definitions is a wild goose chase. Rather, the meaning of a given text is [...] that which comes out different every time one repeats it, as bizarre as this might indeed appear at first blush. It is [...] an amalgam of deferral and difference. Derrida maintained throughout that deconstruction is a form of close reading, where all that one needs to mobilise is the text's own *internal logic*. In other words, texts deconstruct themselves as it were when subjected to relentless close reading. All that a reader needs to do is to press ahead with its own *internal logic*. That logic, Derrida insisted, is built around the notion of logocentrism, the belief that there are stable meanings out there and that it is the business of the reader to tease it out of specific texts. The process of unravelling a text's putative meaning begins the moment one notices that the dichotomies that a text's author posits in order to construct his arguments are actually relations of hierarchies, often ingeniously camouflaged in order to be presented as symmetric. In other words, it is invariably the case that, in a dichotomous pair, one side is privileged to the detriment of the other.¹⁶² [my emphasis]

Much like Graves, Rajagopalan makes no effort to explain what 'internal logic' actually means. The reader is ostensibly forgotten, and left to deduce it for his/herself. Nonetheless, Rajagopalan does appear to contextualise the phrase very well in respect of the general argument.

In an insightful, lengthy footnote, Daniel Herwitz draws a line between Derrida and Danto.¹⁶³ Derrida's forte predominantly emphasised the subversive reading of texts.¹⁶⁴ As I have already drawn the line between Danto and Graves, having now suggested that a line can be drawn between Graves and Derrida, I find that Herwitz's

¹⁶² Kanavillil Rajagopalan, "Deconstruction", in *Key Ideas in Linguistics and the Philosophy of Language*, ed. Siobhan Chapman and Christopher Routledge (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 46.

¹⁶³ Daniel Herwitz, *Making History: On the Authority of Avant-Garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 340–41n25.

¹⁶⁴ According to Stuart Sim, Derrida based his notions of textual analysis on the assumption that 'texts, like language, are marked by instability and indeterminacy of meaning' and that therefore 'neither philosophy nor criticism can have any claim to authority as regards textual interpretation'—which should be regarded as 'a free-ranging activity more akin to game-playing than to traditional analysis'. Stuart Sim, "Deconstruction", in *A Companion to Aesthetics*, 2nd ed., ed. Stephen Davies, Kathleen Marie Higgins, Robert Hopkins, Robert Stecker, and David E. Cooper (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 229.

insights can further contextualise Rajagopalan's passage in respect of the notion of internal logic:

Paradoxically, Danto's strategy of opening up a world of readings without constraint aligns with Derrida's strategy of exploding the canons of reading by presenting a near infinity of possible alternative readings of a picture (or of a text generally). [...] his postmodern rhetoric for challenging all canonizations of reading, all principles of how to read, and all assertions of meaning has its own good reasons. But Derrida, too, dispenses with the questions of visual constraints on these readings, with questions about their relative degrees of their plausibility, about [...] how far we must go in accepting one reading as opposed to the other. There are no easy answers to such questions, yet few are prepared to accept the equal plausibility of all his readings.¹⁶⁵

Art, as far as the premise of this dissertation is concerned, constitutes a cultural institution.¹⁶⁶ As such, extending the previous discussion of NITA, it could be perceived as a kind of general category—an overarching sociocultural system or structure—which consists of an elaborate system of signs and meanings. When confronted with such a system, it is one's responsibility to identify what kind of system it is. Subsequently, one should interpret what it *means*.¹⁶⁷ Art, therefore, like any other such 'system', includes and comprises its own distinctive system of signs and meanings. These include, for instance, a particular artwork's style or genre, its philosophical and sociocultural contexts, its contents and the 'story' that it endeavours to tell, its medium, and so forth. Once one grasps the various signs and their putative meanings, one should be able to

¹⁶⁵ Herwitz, *Making History*, 340–41n25.

¹⁶⁶ Unlike what he identifies as its 'major competitor' (referencing the 'neo-Wittgensteinian' approach), Carroll maintains that the institutional theory places 'the significance of social context on the agenda of contemporary philosophy of art.' Noël Carroll, "Dickie, George", in *A Companion to Aesthetics*, 2nd ed., ed. Stephen Davies, Kathleen Marie Higgins, Robert Hopkins, Robert Stecker, and David E. Cooper (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 249.

¹⁶⁷ For Danto, interpretation of artworks counts as a constitutive feature of any judgement concluding that a particular artwork is just that—a work of art. Arthur Danto, *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 39–46.

identify not only what kind of artwork one is confronted with (e.g. mimetic, realistic or abstract-impressionistic), but also the purpose for which it had been created (i.e. the core ideas and insights that the artist wished to instil it with). Works of art could therefore be considered just like any kind of 'text'.¹⁶⁸ As such, drawing on Dickie's notion of the 'candidate for appreciation', they constitute a candidate for deconstruction. Consequently, one would be required to identify and interpret the various meaningful elements inhabiting the 'world' of a particular artwork, as well as the relationship that exists between them.

All cultural institutions necessarily possess a distinctive and individual internal logic of their own.¹⁶⁹ As culture can be characterised as dynamic, most cultures are endowed with the tendency to sprout and create corresponding 'sub-institutions'. These, in turn, prescribe different kinds of internal logic which are unique to them.¹⁷⁰ Accordingly, whereas the Artworld at large can be perceived as Art's 'mother institution', Art's 'sub-institutions' appropriately comply with the various artistic genres and different forms of artistic media.¹⁷¹ Thus, when attending to the appreciation of

¹⁶⁸ This appears to correspond with Derrida's notion of a reader's 'active interpretation' (demonstrating the perception of deconstruction as a 'style of literary criticism'). As Sim explains it, 'the point of deconstructive reading is to destroy the illusion of stable meaning in texts. [...] Signs that are without fault, truth, or origin are signs whose meaning has not been fixed in advance [...] Their meaning at any given point will depend on the ingenuity of the reader's 'active interpretation.' Reading becomes a creative process rather than an exercise in the recovery of meaning.' Sim, "Deconstruction", 229.

¹⁶⁹ In order to succeed in fulfilling the purpose for which they were conceived and constructed to begin with, cultural institutions must work in accordance with some kind of internal logic. In other words, a cultural institution deprived of an internal logic is redundant.

¹⁷⁰ As implied earlier (see section 1.3), the 'sub- institutions' pertain to and elicit various sub-categories (or sub-genres). While the individual internal logic of a 'sub-institution' may correspond (at least to some degree) with the particular internal logic of the 'mother institution' (or the 'general category'), it is consequently expected to follow its own accord, complying with the discrete nature and distinctive prescriptions of *its own* 'world'.

¹⁷¹ NITA, in this respect, assists one in identifying and selecting the structural elements that can be deemed meaningful and relevant both to the particular artwork in question and subsequently to its aesthetic evaluation.

paintings, for instance, one would be required to consider what the general internal logic of paintings is, while also taking into account their place in the Artworld at large. At the same time, one must be aware that appreciating, for example, Jackson Pollock's *Convergence* (1952), requires being acquainted with a different kind of internal logic than is needed to appreciate, say, Raphael's *Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist* (1507), Rembrandt's *The Night Watch* (1642), Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog* (1818) or Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (1882)—even though all works are, to all intents and purposes, generally identified as paintings.¹⁷² Similarly, even paintings created by the same artist—which one might expect to exhibit similar themes or at least corresponding aesthetic properties—could very well possess different kinds of internal logic. Consider, for instance, Picasso's *The Old Guitarist* (1903–04) as opposed to his *Girl with Mandolin* (1910), *Harlequin with a Guitar* (1917) or *Still Life with Guitar* (1921).¹⁷³ Indeed, one is required to aesthetically appreciate each one of these paintings in accordance with its *own* internal logic.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Similarly, and in respect of Cleese's account of Feldman's insight, it can be established that different comedy sketches abide by different kinds of internal logics. Feldman's notion of a sketch featuring characters dressed as a carrot, who are subsequently confronted with a character who is not likewise attired, possesses a distinct internal logic of its own—which conceivably requires some form of built-in explanation within the sketch itself. It constitutes a different kind of sketch compared to, for instance, an ostensibly generic 'Pete and Dud' skit—the internal logic of which both springs from and is constructed around the unique dynamic that existed between legendary English comedians, Peter Cook and Dudley Moore, conducting ('in-character') a largely improvised debate about nothing in particular and anything at all. Thus, although both cases answer the minimum requirement (or, rather, institutional definition) of what a comedy sketch is supposed to be (i.e. they are both *supposed* to be funny and elicit laughter), they meet that requirement in two different ways (i.e. they are not both funny for the same reasons).

¹⁷³ Similarly, Cook and Moore's 'Pete and Dud' possess a completely different kind of internal logic from that of their somewhat darker and intentionally cruder ostensible alter-egos, 'Derek and Clive'. Although both sets of characters constitute a fundamentally unscripted double-act—ignited by the same unique dynamic between Cook and Moore—the two are almost polar opposites. In brief, while both creations exist as comedy sketches, and are thereby meant to elicit laughter, the reason for and manner in which they do so is *not* one and the same. Rather, they are rooted in different approaches to what might enter the cultural and institutional definition of what counts as funny. This, to a large extent, is what informs the distinct internal logic of each set of characters.

¹⁷⁴ To some extent, this alludes to how all the various elements inhabiting the overarching system (or general category) interconnect with one another—while at the same time manifesting the manner in

Games also constitute examples of a unique cultural institution. Art, much like games, abides by certain rules. In order, for instance, to play a game of chess, it would not be enough to merely possess an understanding of the 'laws of chess'. Ultimately, the rules of the game can only specify what the goal of the game is, and they govern the game in that they define what possible moves a player can make. Art works in a similar manner.¹⁷⁵ Both art and chess abide by something other than their inherent rules. In chess, it can be identified to a large extent as the proverbial 'spirit' of the game. As such, it counts as an inherent element of its internal logic. At the same time, while it is something that one is surely able to identify and grasp by employing one's *senses*, one is arguably unable to distinctly *define* what it actually is.

A computer, for instance, quite simply cannot comprehend, or rather sense, the 'spirit' of a game of chess. Inevitably, although one is able to 'teach' a computer the 'laws of chess', a computer (no matter how advanced or intelligently designed) would never *really* be able to play. Likewise, if one knows how to play chess (i.e. merely in respect of what one can and cannot do during the course of a game), but at the same time one simply 'doesn't *get*' the 'point' of the game, then it can safely be said that one is in fact not actually *playing* the game either. Similarly, while a computer might indeed be programmed to 'play' sheet music, it would not be able to 'properly' play any

which they accord with and abide by the system itself. This could also explain Danto's aforementioned insight in respect of a particular object's aesthetic properties *not* being what defines that object as an artwork. Accordingly, when paintings are perceived as the products of a cultural institutional system, their aesthetic quality, as Graves suggests, would manifest in the degree to which a particular painting succeeds in exhibiting the internal logic of its own world. Thus, engaging with artworks requires one to constantly adjust the 'lens' through which a particular internal logic is perceived.

¹⁷⁵ As Graves points out, 'The rules do not formulate something that we already know about art any more than the rules of Chess formulate something that we already know about Chess. The rules of art *are* what we know, when we know what art is. [...] The rules of art are no more expendable for us, than the rules of Chess are for the Chess master. Without the rules, we say, the realm simply does not exist.' Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 43.

particular piece.¹⁷⁶ In the same vein, as Graves points out, when considering a game of football, to claim that it consists of nothing more than a social activity involving one ‘kicking a ball into a framed net’ (i.e. a ‘brute fact’), would constitute the description of one who simply does not ‘get’ football.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, it might even count as a rather unfair depiction of one who actually *does*.¹⁷⁸

Despite what might arguably be construed as a self-consciously analytical description, if one wishes to classify and evaluate artworks, and if one follows NITA with the notion of the internal logic in mind, then the due process one undergoes is as follows. One is required to identify not only the particular ‘medium-based’ level utilised

¹⁷⁶ Arguably, and the problematic comparison notwithstanding, the same can be said in respect of even the most musically gifted autistic savant: While a musical savant might be able to produce an absolutely pitch-perfect manifestation of a particular *partitur*, his/her achievement would, for the most part, be missing the undefined ‘something’ that has to do with the so-called ‘spirit’ of the piece. By way of illustration, consider the *60 Minutes* (CBS) profile story, “Catching Up With Rex”, dedicated to the prodigious American musical savant, Rex Lewis-Clack, accessed April 30, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCF1xSgyKXg>. Particular attention should be paid to what is stated 08:20 minutes into the programme by David Pinto, founder of the Academy of Music for the Blind (AMB), and Lewis-Clack’s music teacher. In brief, Pinto argues that Lewis-Clack’s greatest challenge as a musician presents something of a paradox: his gift as a savant—which is what endows him with his prodigious talent—is also the very thing which appears to deprive him of one of the core aspects that make music so powerful: namely, real emotion. According to Pinto, elements such as loudness and softness in music *require* emotion. They entail ‘conveying meaning on an emotional human level’. Lewis-Clack, as Pinto explains it, ‘doesn’t naturally take to those things’, and while he may indeed hear them, he simply appears to find them ‘unimportant’.

¹⁷⁷ As Graves puts it, ‘What is actually happening here is a two-fold act of cultural creation. First, we are taking a certain fact, and changing it into a different fact. [...] We change the brute fact of kicking a ball into a net to the institutional fact of scoring a goal [...] We turn the pointless act of kicking a ball into a net, and turn it into the very heart and soul of one of mankind’s most beloved of cultural pastimes. In this way, we create a world of culture, in which things matter, in which values and meanings are realized, and come alive in a most impressive way.’ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 35.

¹⁷⁸ If one indeed ‘gets’ football (i.e. possesses a comprehensive understanding of the game—both of its rules *and* of its spirit), one will be able to experience a football game, as a spectator, and appreciate it. That is to say, one will be able to determine whether or not (and to what extent) a particular football match succeeds in embodying and exhibiting the ‘internal logic’ of the distinctive ‘world’ of football. Likewise, if one becomes a so-called ‘expert’ in this field, one should also be able to identify whether or not a certain player succeeded in achieving what can be described as a brilliant move, or alternatively, a ‘stroke of genius’. Potentially, one might even be able to identify and evaluate a player’s move in real time—and arguably, at least in some cases, even before the player actually made the move him- or herself. By the same token, consider, for example, occasions in which one is able to ‘predict’ the response of a particular character in a film or a play—especially in respect of distinctive genres or when one is well acquainted with the characters in a particular series.

by an artwork (i.e. painting, theatre, literature, music, dance, etc.), but also what ‘big theory’ or what ideology and/or philosophy the artist wished to convey in his/her artwork (i.e. Realism, Impressionism, Romanticism, and so forth). Accordingly, one must be aware that each artistic style or movement constitutes an individual ‘sub-(institutional)-category’ of the Artworld, and is thus inhabited by its own distinctive internal logic. Subsequently, one should evaluate whether or not and to what extent *that* particular internal logic is exhibited in the artwork. In effect, the ‘working theory’ level establishes the artist’s need for a *technique*—that is to say, the manner in which one employs the tools of one’s chosen medium for ‘showing’ that which cannot be ‘said’ or expressed any other way. This should not be confused with a so-called mechanical application of instructions or rules. Rather, this should be understood as a depiction of how the Artworld, as a cultural institution, can explain the creation of artworks. Artists seldom employ deductive reasoning. Intuition—a term I will address at length in the second section of this chapter—is predominantly at work when artworks are created. Nevertheless, even as an intuitive process, an artist should be able to figure out how to utilise different media in order to convey different concepts and ideas.¹⁷⁹

All things considered, there does remain an inherent theoretical and philosophical problem with the phrase ‘internal logic’ which cannot remain un-addressed: logic, by its nature, is ‘internal’, and will always remain so. The phrase might

¹⁷⁹ Potentially, an artist should be able to justify, at least to some degree, either the choice of a particular medium, or the use of a particular medium’s tools, for conveying an idea in the form of the putative artwork. In this respect, the ‘working theory’ level assists one in identifying the manner in which something theoretical has been rendered into something concrete. (In general terms, it can also be said to describe the very notion of ‘embodied meaning’—which, as will presently be explained—is deeply rooted within what internal logic is supposed to be).

therefore be construed as a tautology.¹⁸⁰ Some scholars even have argued that not only should the notion of an ‘internal’ logic be null and void, but there could not in fact be such a thing as an *external* logic either.¹⁸¹ These notions, however, can be negated.¹⁸² Furthermore, one might argue that the French notion of *raison d'être*¹⁸³ alludes precisely to what the idea of an internal logic is all about. They both appear to stem from a similar conjecture, pertaining to some kind of an ‘internal purposiveness’. Nonetheless, the two differ from one another particularly in respect of their philosophical attempt to form an explicit *definition*.¹⁸⁴ This conundrum notwithstanding, the notion of internal logic should certainly be precisely articulated.

Since the concept of internal logic is crucial to the elaboration of my thesis—and because it has never been properly defined as a philosophical term—I feel obliged to explain precisely what I mean when I use these two words. In doing so, I aim to explain

¹⁸⁰ If, in effect, one were to replace the phrase and to describe it without actually naming it, particularly in respect of the manner in which it is referred to in the confines of this dissertation, the notion of internal logic would be depicted as follows: The internal organization of elements within a sensuous manifold, appearing in the form of an aesthetic object. It, in turn, would count as something in the same vein as Dickie’s ‘candidate for appreciation’.

¹⁸¹ See, for instance, V. A. Smirnov, "Internal and External Logic", *Bulletin of the Section of Logic* 17, no. 3/4 (1988): 170–76, accessed November 20, 2015, http://www.filozof.uni.lodz.pl/bulletin/pdf/17_34_9.pdf.

¹⁸² As Ralph Wedgwood’s evaluation of Timothy Williamson’s arguments against ‘the idea that cognition can be factorized into internal and external components’ concludes, ‘these arguments fail to cast any doubt either on the idea that cognitive science should be largely concerned with internal mental processes, or on the idea that cognition can be analysed in terms of the existence of a suitable connection between internal and external components. [...] There is every reason to think that at least a large part of cognitive science will consist in the study of these purely internal causal processes.’ Ralph Wedgwood, "The Internal and External Components of Cognition", in *Contemporary Debates in Cognitive Science*, ed. Robert J. Stainton (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 307.

¹⁸³ The notion of *raison d'être* (first used in 1864) calls for some kind of a justification for a particular thing’s very existence. Similarly to the notion of internal logic, it seems to pertain to the necessity of an inherent ‘ingredient’, as it were, that is able to explain what a particular thing is by way or articulating the manner in which that particular thing works appropriately to some kind of distinct accord.

¹⁸⁴ In the attempt to define what the necessary ‘ingredient’ is supposed to be, it seems as though the idea of *raison d'être* alludes to the fact that it can be defined ‘empirically’—whereas, with internal logic an overall empirical definition would in fact be missing the point. This will be made clear in the forthcoming discussion of the role of intuition in the notion of internal logic.

it as both a philosophical term and a practical evaluative tool: the notion of ‘internal logic’ pertains to the organization of its sensible constituents. It primarily applies to cultural institutional systems. Every particular cultural institution manifests an individual internal logic of its own. Since cultural institutions are subject to change (i.e. complying with the changes that one’s culture undergoes), the organizational properties of the internal logic can be described as ‘elastic’ in that they, too, can change along with the nature of a particular cultural institution.¹⁸⁵ The manner in which the internal logic manifests its organizational quality should correspond with the set of values and frames of reference that both inhabit and are in essence valorised by the particular cultural system. It should appropriately conform to its socio-chronological cultural acceptance. To support this explanation, consider the following passage—from the abstract of a recent lecture by Graves—whose insights highlight the connection I find between NITA and what the notion of internal logic appears to allude to:

[J]udgments of correctness and incorrectness in cultural practices like art or the law are, essentially, logical judgments. [...] logical understanding itself is the ability to understand necessity. [...] the conclusion of a logically valid argument is not merely true if the premises are, it is necessarily so. This concept of necessity [...] is understood by sense. It is a deep-seated and fundamental *intuition* [...] construed as necessity. This basic sense [...] is then carried over to other cultural endeavors. *Any field governed by a system of rules will bear its own unique internal logic.* In fact, that internal logic is precisely what makes the system a system. Hence, all such cultural practices, like art, the law, games etc., will, in a crucial respect, behave the same way: *logically*. When one is engaged in the practice of such a field [...] that very same “intuition of necessity” that logic expounds is at work.

¹⁸⁵ For a particular cultural institution to change, it would entail a change in the framework which governs and dictates the praxis associated with the cultural institution in question. Consider, for instance, the institutions of education, marriage and religion. As ‘frameworks’, they have undergone various changes over time. In turn, they have included or excluded different ideas and values. The same thing can be said about the Artworld. As NITA demonstrates, it appears to be the most ‘pluralistic’ of all cultural institutions—in respect of what its ‘framework’ is willing to include. Arguably, the internal logic is principally responsible for constructing a governing framework. Thus, it, too, should accordingly demonstrate whatever change an institution undergoes.

[...] an aesthetic judgment, for instance, as to the correctness or incorrectness of a particular feature in a work of art is, in essence, a logical judgment.¹⁸⁶ [my emphasis]

Now, to elaborate my understanding of the notion of internal logic, I turn to a more detailed analysis of how ‘embodied meaning’ and ‘intuition’ help shape one’s understanding of its role—explicitly in respect of evaluating and appreciating artworks. (As will presently be made clear, I find them both to possess essential philosophical meanings that not only directly correspond with what the notion of internal logic should be, but also contribute to a fuller understanding of how it appears to ‘work’ in respect of aesthetic evaluation and appreciation). Subsequently, I will argue that there is an additional aspect at work when one evaluates artworks, which requires one to employ a sense of what I will regard as ‘informed intuition’, which, in brief, can be explained as a qualifying property that plays a role in the aesthetic evaluation of artworks.¹⁸⁷

2.3 The Role of Embodied Meaning in the Notion of Internal Logic

Danto’s insights, particularly those he achieved later in his career, emphasised the inherent importance of the role of embodied meaning in the field of aesthetics:

In a crude way, my definition had two main components in it: something is a work of art when it has [sic] a meaning—is about something—and when that meaning is embodied in the work—which usually means: is embodied in the object in which the work of art

¹⁸⁶ David Graves, "Logic and the Sense of Necessity", in *Book of Abstracts*, the 15th Congress of Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science (aka CLMPS) 2015, 225, accessed November 20, 2015, http://clmps.helsinki.fi/materials/CLMPS_LC_book%20of%20abstracts%2029.7.2015.pdf.

¹⁸⁷ Chapter 3 will illustrate the manner in which this property corresponds with the construction of my proposed new aesthetic category. As will be explained in detail, my aim is to identify and evaluate aural performances as artworks, which I will subsequently demonstrate via the extended analyses of my case studies. I will later propose that one’s ‘informed intuition’ can consequently be utilised for explaining the craft of casting aural performances.

materially consists. My theory, in brief, is that works of art are embodied meanings.¹⁸⁸

While it is precisely due to works such as Warhol's *Brillo Box* that he could not include aesthetics in his definition of what art is, Danto does not deny that aesthetics play a major role in what art should be.¹⁸⁹ Nevertheless, the conclusion that art *is* embodied meaning, or that one should even perceive it as such, does not originate from Danto.¹⁹⁰ Rather, it is an idea which is at least as old as Aristotle's notion of art being a 'materialized idea'.¹⁹¹ In brief, it exists as a literal and concrete manifestation of an abstract idea or concept.¹⁹² For Graves, the notion of embodied meaning should be identified as the distinct *logic* of the Artworld as a 'structured institution'.¹⁹³ As such, the 'inner workings' of the Artworld 'institute art as embodied meaning'.¹⁹⁴ Graves argues that 'this in itself would be sufficient to reinstate the aesthetic as being internal to the enterprise of art'.¹⁹⁵ At the same time, as alluded to earlier, the Artworld is quite open and pluralistic: that is to say, despite the particular parameters that it sets, as a structured institution, it does *not* in fact hold any specific aesthetic requirement from any of the putative artistic manifestations.¹⁹⁶ In her study of the aesthetic properties of

¹⁸⁸ Danto, *What Art Is*, 149.

¹⁸⁹ Danto argues, for instance, that 'most of the art being made today does not have the provision of aesthetic experience as its main goal. [...] On the other hand, there is unmistakably an aesthetic component in much traditional and in some contemporary art. [...] I think it is true that when there is an intended aesthetic component in art, it is a means to whatever the point of the art may be. [...] In brief, the reconsideration of aesthetics, whether in philosophy or in aesthetics, can tell us a great deal worth knowing about art, whatever our approach to it may be, as well as about the social world or — the world as objective spirit.' *Ibid.*, 149–51.

¹⁹⁰ David Graves, "Art and the Zen Master's Tea Pot: The Role of Aesthetics in the Institutional Theory of Art", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 60, no. 4 (Autumn 2002): 351n18.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² Graves, by his own admission, concludes that NITA does not 'reinvent' what art is, but rather endeavours to 'describe' *what* it is. *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 345.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 347.

artworks, Madeleine Schechter considers the place of embodied meaning explicitly in respect of Danto and Graves, and addresses their different approaches to aesthetics.¹⁹⁷

Regarding Danto, for instance, she maintains that

from a Hegelian point of view (in Danto's version), the artwork as a symbolic expression that embodies its meaning, although not conveying metaphysical knowledge, does provide an understanding of cultural context. [...] In close relationship with its interdependence of form and content in expressing meaning by embodying it, Danto shares with Hegel a predilection for an expressionist theory of art, rather than a representational or a formalist one [...]¹⁹⁸

Graves, as Schechter explains it, proposes a 'new stage' of the institutional theory, emphasizing the essential role of aesthetics, and in effect 'returns to the essential connection between the meaning of and the 'body' of the artwork, otherwise neglected by the contextual approach'.¹⁹⁹ In favouring aesthetic contextualism, and thereby taking on what she defines as a 'formalist slant', Schechter argues that Graves's interpretation of the institutional interest in aesthetics renders the notion of embodied meaning its conclusion rather than its assumption.²⁰⁰ Graves himself maintains that once Danto's conception of the embodied meanings of artworks is placed in the context of Dickie's institutional approach to the Artworld, one is able to justify the application of a set of universal constraints upon any work of art.²⁰¹ Fundamentally, the notion of an embodied meaning could be perceived as dependent on the existence of a distinctive

¹⁹⁷ Schechter predominantly addresses the possibilities one has at one's disposal for discovering the various meanings that are inherent in artworks. She considers the notion of embodied meaning pertaining to the terms 'symbol' and 'imagination'. Her study journeys through the Romantic view on the theory of aesthetics, meaning and truth—and leads to Immanuel Kant, Umberto Eco and Danto. See Madeleine Schechter, *Semiotics and Art Theory: Between Autonomism and Contextualism* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2008), 96–109.

¹⁹⁸ Schechter, *Semiotics and Art Theory*, 162.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 17–18.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ Graves, "Art and the Zen Master's Tea Pot", 349.

and inherent internal logic. The two notions complement each other. By identifying a particular internal logic, one is able to determine the discrete meaning which is embodied. Graves breaks down the 'logic of the artworld' into three distinctive 'components', namely, the artefact one sets out to make, the idea one wishes the artefact to exhibit, and the manner in which one would go about doing just that. As Graves points out, the very idea of utilizing art in order to embody meaning constitutes 'one of the West's oldest and most venerated conceptions of art. It maintains that there are certain sorts of things that need be said, but cannot be said in simple words'. He then explains that

[s]ince we cannot explain them using our good ole scientific concepts, we do something else. We *show* them. [...] using means that appeal to our senses (as well as our intellect) [...] *whereas western culture has assumed that art is embodied meaning for thousands of years, the institutional theory has demonstrated it.*²⁰² [emphasis in original]

2.4 The Role of Intuition in the Notion of Internal Logic

According to Oxford Dictionaries online, the term 'intuition' is defined both as 'the ability to understand something immediately, without the need for conscious reasoning' and as 'a thing that one knows or considers likely from instinctive feeling rather than conscious reasoning.'²⁰³ The online version of Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary defines the term as 'a natural ability or power that makes it possible to know something without any proof or evidence', 'a feeling that guides a person to act a certain way without fully understanding why', and 'something that is known or understood without

²⁰² Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 85-86.

²⁰³ *Oxford Dictionaries Online*, s.v. "intuition", accessed October 29, 2015, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/intuition.

proof or evidence'.²⁰⁴ Wikipedia concludes, quite appropriately in fact, that intuition refers to one's 'ability to acquire knowledge without inference or the use of reason'.²⁰⁵

Intuition, according to Noddings and Shore, is a "function that contacts objects directly in phenomena. This direct contact yields something we might call 'knowledge' in that it guides our actions and is precipitated by our own quest for meaning".²⁰⁶ According to Jerome Bruner, the term refers to 'the act of grasping the meaning, significance, or structure of a problem or situation without explicit reliance on the analytic apparatus of one's craft'.²⁰⁷ Baylor suggests that intuition comprises three components: (a) immediacy,²⁰⁸ (b) an ability to sense relationships, and (c) reason (or rather, a certain 'mode of reasoning that ironically incorporates analytical processes while functioning in contrast to them').²⁰⁹ Her insights follow a 'comprehensive review of the published literature' available to her at the time. Referencing Arthur Koestler's *The Act of Creation* (1964), Baylor notes that 'the act of intuition is generally considered to be a moment of truth, or the sudden emergence of a new insight.'²¹⁰ In her suggested 'model of intuition', Baylor considers these three suggested components to be both interactive and influential in the identification of what intuition is.²¹¹

²⁰⁴ *Merriam-Webster Online*, s.v. "intuition", accessed October 29, 2015, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intuition>.

²⁰⁵ *Wikipedia*, s.v. "intuition", accessed October 29, 2015, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intuition>.

²⁰⁶ Nel Noddings and Paul J. Shore, *Awakening The Inner Eye: Intuition in Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1984), 57.

²⁰⁷ Jerome S. Bruner, *The Process of Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 60.

²⁰⁸ Amy L. Baylor, "A Three-Component Conception of Intuition: Immediacy, Sensing Relationships and Reason", *New Ideas in Psychology* 15, no. 2 (August 1997): 188.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 188–89.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 185.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

Ultimately, while there are quite a few conceptions of what intuition is, when considering the notion of intuition with specific regard to that of internal logic and focusing on its role in the Artworld, it seems to correspond almost directly to the manner in which intuition had been conceived and developed by thinkers such as Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten and Immanuel Kant.²¹² The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries customarily mark the periods in which modern science and analytical thinking began acquiring an almost unprecedented popularity amongst scholars, scientists and the general public alike. (Empirical science, for instance, which entails the presentation of evidence and the process of analysis, gradually became the field one would turn to in order to understand the distinct given properties of almost any given object in the world). So rapidly have these fields developed that soon enough science (i.e. as an ostensible 'agency' in its own right) not only categorically opposed anything 'non-scientific' (e.g. art and other such 'unimportant' and arguably 'weak' disciplines), but also began 'brewing' an overwhelming desire to 'monopolize', conceivably, every given field of study one can think of.²¹³ Nevertheless, both Kant and Baumgarten seemed to

²¹² Baumgarten was an eighteenth-century German professor and scientist who worked in the fields of philology, logic, history and psychology. He coined the term 'aesthetics'. Kant was a nineteenth-century German philosopher. His extensive works proved illuminating in respect of the field of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline. His insights made a paramount contribution to understanding the manner in which one acquires knowledge and attains reason. His studies (particularly his critiques) concerning the concept of taste and the manner in which one employs judgement can to a large extent be linked to appreciating artworks. Nonetheless, it is not my intention to present an expanded analysis of either of their works. Rather, I wish to utilise their contribution to the understanding of human perception in order to draw a line between the notion of internal logic (as a conclusion of NITA), aesthetic evaluation and what I will later explain as one's 'informed intuition'.

²¹³ Advocated primarily since Sir Isaac Newton gained his renown, and no doubt influenced by the ideas of eminent scholars such as René Descartes, this premise seems to stem from the notion that empirical science can be used to explain every single 'thing' (i.e. object) in the world or essentially any given phenomenon one might come across. It would seem that the very existence of the field known as psychoanalysis demonstrates the extent to which this is believed to be true even to this day. One is essentially supposed to use one's cognitive analytical tools for understanding and deciphering 'objects'. Applying those tools for the purpose of understanding human psyche—which, essentially, and to a great extent, is something which belongs to a different 'realm'—just should not 'work'.

have arrived at the conclusion that there will always remain certain fields or phenomena in the world that fall under the category of that which *cannot* be explained by science.

According to Elizabeth Prettejohn,

[i]n his Master's dissertation of 1735, Baumgarten introduced the term "aesthetic" (which he devised from a Greek word for "things perceived by the senses", as opposed to "things known by the mind"), and called for the establishment of a science of aesthetics—a science that would deal with human perception, something different from the well-established science that dealt with logical knowledge. Unlike previous philosophers who considered sensory perception to be nothing but undigested raw material, Baumgarten introduced the possibility that perception might have its own excellence—that a vivid sensory experience (say the sight of the starry sky at midnight) might offer something special that would not be improved by analysing it rationally (say by calculating the exact distances of each of the stars from earth). The something special—what perception offers that logical thought does not—can be called the beautiful. [...] By 1790, when Kant published his major discussion of aesthetics in *The Critique of Judgement*, the enquiry into the beautiful adumbrated in Baumgarten's dissertation had become a recognized branch of philosophy. [...] Aesthetics in its earliest stages as a philosophical discipline was radical and oppositional, closely associated with the Enlightenment political ideals of liberty and equality, and resolutely opposed to aristocratic cultural traditions that prescribed rules and precepts for the arts.²¹⁴

Notwithstanding the almost supreme power of modern science, and despite its proven potential (i.e. first and foremost, in explaining, preserving and prolonging humankind's life-expectancy), Baumgarten proposed that aside from one's so-called 'analytical' mental faculty (which is ostensibly 'in charge' of one's power to grasp such things as mathematics and science), one also possesses an *additional* cognitive 'tool'. Effectively alluding to what could be construed as intuition—or what is more colloquially regarded as one's ubiquitous 'sixth sense'—Baumgarten regarded it as a kind of 'sensitive

²¹⁴ Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Beauty and Art: 1750–2000*, Oxford History of Art Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 40–41.

knowing', which he termed *Ars combinationis*.²¹⁵ In brief, it manifests one's capacity to amalgamate, unify or 'fuse' the types of knowledge that one acquires via one's senses.²¹⁶

While the capacity for analytical thinking serves us as the tool for explaining and deciphering 'objects' (i.e., for the purpose of this argument, 'things possessing certain given properties'), intuition serves as a tool for comprehending and understanding 'subjects' (i.e. ostensible agents possessing certain characteristics).²¹⁷ Fundamentally, these two forms of understanding can be perceived as two sides of the same coin as they represent parallel cognitive abilities. Intuitions, on the one hand, are usually dismissed as nothing more than a 'hunch' or a 'gut feeling'. Indeed, they are seldom considered to be truths and are usually frowned upon.²¹⁸ On the other hand, the fact

²¹⁵ These two aspects of a person's consciousness are understood to make one a sentient being. They each represent mutually exclusive ostensible sources of knowledge, possessed by everyone. In essence, they are utilised in order to understand the sensible world that one inhabits. Drawing to some extent on Plato's notion of *noesis* (in brief, one's perceptual cognitive capability), Baumgarten set out to decipher how one attains an understanding about things that cannot be explained by empirical science. He focused on phenomena that cannot be understood by way of mathematical equations or 'taken apart' (i.e. analysed) in a laboratory. In other words: things that exist in the world, and yet, cannot be *defined*. Baumgarten's notion of 'sensitive knowing' pertains to the manner in which one grasps precisely these kinds of things: namely, by way of *sense*. Consequently, they can only be understood in the 'here and now', through first-hand experience. And *this* is done intuitively.

²¹⁶ Meeting a friend for lunch in a new restaurant, for instance, could constitute a first-hand experience of what Baumgarten regarded as a 'complex sensory compound'. In such an instance, one would no doubt 'take in' his surroundings. In doing so, one may factor in the smile of the hostess, the live music playing in the background, the pink flamingo ice sculptures, the lustre of the cutlery, the typography design in the menu, the exotic names given to the courses, the obscenely overpriced asparagus and truffle oil risotto, the '*We apologise, sir, but we do not serve tap water*' policy, and so forth. Attempting, in effect, to 'figure out' what precisely this restaurant is 'all about', one may very well realise, in a sudden burst of recognition that the new restaurant is quite 'pretentious'. Now, such thing as a 'pretension barometer' does not exist. A sense of 'pretentiousness' cannot *really* be measured. Although one might not be able to prove this *feeling* 'empirically', one nevertheless can definitely sense it. Arguably, as far as Baumgarten would be concerned, whether or not one's sense of the restaurant's pretentiousness is correct is unimportant. Rather, what is important is that one *sensed* it.

²¹⁷ Subjectivity, for instance, should not—as it often is—be conflated with or understood as a matter of personal opinion. Rather, it should be perceived as the process through which one judges (i.e. evaluates) the nature of a particular agent's characteristics and properties. Thus, this kind of evaluative judgement is rendered as a sort 'subjective truth', which is arrived at by employing intuition.

²¹⁸ Science essentially has absolutely no idea what 'to do' with gut feelings. Its tools for discovery and analysis do not apply. At the risk of stating the obvious, there is a very good reason why an intuition,

that one cannot empirically prove one's intuitions (i.e. as so-called objective truths) does not necessarily mean that these intuitions are less true as something that one *can*.²¹⁹ Effectively, the employment of logical thinking—that is to say, the innate (and arguably universal) ability to grasp and deduce something logically—can be perceived as an *intuitive* process.²²⁰

In his acclaimed book, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*,²²¹ Israeli-American psychologist, and winner of the 2002 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences, Daniel Kahneman appears to have achieved similar insights in respect of this dichotomy.²²² In brief, Kahneman depicts the two modes of thinking through which one attains conclusions and consequently employs judgement. He regards these two modes as 'System 1' and

fundamentally, cannot be proven empirically. Summarily, empirical science *cannot* 'understand' or cope with the process through which intuition 'works'. As opposed to what the advocates of modern science and analytical thinking may lead one to believe, one is sure to come across certain phenomena that cannot be explained or understood by applying 'analytical' tools. Indeed, there are certainly occasional experiences which are inherently 'subjective', and therefore belong to the realm of intuition.

²¹⁹ Kant, so it seems, did not identify any kind of 'hierarchy' between these two parallel perceptive faculties. Baumgarten, however, evidently considered one's 'sensitive knowing' inferior to one's capacity for analysis. (As a scientist, he also appears to regard aesthetics as a distinct 'scientific' field). Indeed, the idea of acting on an 'emotional decision', for instance, is customarily perceived as taking action without, as it were, *really* thinking. (Conceivably, it is for precisely this reason that intuition was—and, regrettably, still is—usually 'discarded' as an inherently 'feminine' trait. By contrast, the realms of science and analytical thinking were always perceived as predominantly masculine). Nevertheless, to regard either one of these innate faculties as being in some way 'better' than the other would be somewhat misguided. Rather, the prevailing dichotomy between the two should predominantly entail that they each serve as a different cognitive tool for comprehending different kinds of things (i.e. phenomena). Thus, one is used to acquire knowledge analytically, whereas the other is used to acquire knowledge intuitively.

²²⁰ Logic, contrary to common conception, does not merely belong to the realm of science. Despite what might be described as a so-called 'prejudice' prevailing against it, scientists do in fact employ intuition (even if they might, arguably, not wish to admit it). Andrew Johnson, for instance, notes that Western culture has traditionally 'valued logic and reason and devalued intuition and emotion' and maintains that both '[i]ntuition (and emotion), have been seen as weaknesses in the problem solving and decision-making process'. Andrew Johnson "Creativity and Intuition" (excerpt), in *Education Psychology: Theories of Learning and Human Development* (2014). Accessed 6 June 2016, https://www.academia.edu/8274065/CREATIVITY_AND_INTUITION.

²²¹ Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011).

²²² As Andrei Shleifer points out, the book 'summarizes, but also integrates, the research that Kahneman has done over the past forty years, beginning with his path-breaking work with the late Amos Tversky. The broad theme of this research is that human beings are intuitive thinkers and that human intuition is imperfect, with the result that judgements and choices often deviate substantially from the predictions of normative statistical and economic models.' Andrei Shleifer, "Psychologists at the Gate: A Review of Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking, Fast and Slow*", *Journal of Economic Literature* 50, no. 4 (2012): 1–12.

‘System 2’. The latter is characterised as slow, analytical, deliberate, infrequent, effortful and conscious. The former, by contrast, is fast, intuitive, frequent, guided by association and metaphor, and predominantly dictated by one’s unconscious mind. Whereas System 1 proposes, System 2 disposes. Nevertheless, it would still appear that although one system may indeed be faster in Kahneman’s view, it is not necessarily ‘better’ than its counterpart.²²³ Of course, as with many of what might commonly be identified as ‘modern’ or contemporary insights, Plato and Aristotle were there first.²²⁴ Consider, in this respect, the classic Platonic idea pertaining to intuition as one’s ability to ‘see something clearly’.²²⁵

²²³ As Jim Holt explains it, System 1 produces ‘a quick and dirty draft of reality, which System 2 draws on to arrive at explicit beliefs and reasoned choices. So System 2 would seem to be the boss, right? In principle, yes. But System 2, in addition to being more deliberate and rational, is also lazy. [...] Too often, instead of slowing things down and analyzing them, System 2 is content to accept the easy but unreliable story about the world that System 1 feeds to it. ‘Although System 2 believes itself to be where the action is,’ Kahneman writes, ‘the automatic System 1 is the hero of this book.’ System 2 is especially quiescent, it seems, when your mood is a happy one. [...] Are they actually a pair of little agents in our head, each with its distinctive personality? Not really, says Kahneman. Rather, they are ‘useful fictions’—useful because they help explain the quirks of the human mind.’ Jim Holt, “Two Brains Running”, *New York Times*, November 25, 2011, accessed November 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/27/books/review/thinking-fast-and-slow-by-daniel-kahneman-book-review.html>.

²²⁴ R. E. Allen, for instance, notes that some philosophers find ‘a strain in the Socratic dialectic, a tension between intuition and logic.’ He illustrates his point by citing R. G. Collingwood for noting that Plato’s ‘methodology splits philosophy into two parts: one an arid waste of ingenious logic-chopping, the other an intuitive vision of ultimate reality.’ R. E. Allen, *Plato’s ‘Euthyphro’ and the Earlier Theory of Forms: A Re-interpretation of the Republic* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2013), 104–5. In the same vein, Carlo Cellucci notes that ‘Aristotle considers two concepts of truth, truth as correspondence and truth as intuition of the essence. [...] Aristotle concludes that his concept of truth cannot be used in practice, and hence ‘must be set aside’ [...] according to Aristotle, we do have a faculty—intuition—capable of apprehending the essence of things.’ Carlo Cellucci, *Rethinking Logic: Logic in Relation to Mathematics, Evolution, and Method* (New York: Springer, 2013), 51–52.

²²⁵ As John Cottingham notes, ‘the term ‘intuition’ has ancient roots in philosophy. The Latin verb *intueri* means to see, or to look upon. And as used in the seventeenth century, for example in Descartes, intuition refers to the intellectual faculty whereby I see certain truths hold, or that certain things are good or to be pursued. The underlying metaphor, which goes back to Plato, is one of seeing something clearly in the light of day, right there in front of you. Curiously enough, Descartes, like Plato before him, actually thought that the ordinary sense of sight (seeing with the eyes) was problematic and unreliable as a guide to reality. But both philosophers were nevertheless happy to use the corporeal vision as an analogue for the process of direct intellectual intuition.’ John Cottingham, “Intuition and Genealogy”, in *Intuition, Theory, and Anti-Theory in Ethics*, ed. Sophie Grace Chappell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 9.

Artworks constitute things that can be understood intuitively.²²⁶ In effect, one's so-called 'intuitive understanding' is rendered a necessary part of the process through which one grasps and acknowledges internal logic. Particularly in respect of the aesthetic evaluation of artworks, intuition alone is not enough. Rather, the notion of employing what can be identified as 'informed intuition' seems more appropriate and indeed more useful.²²⁷ While achieving a logical conclusion requires one to employ one's intuition, evaluating the validity of a logical conclusion (that is to say, assessing to what extent intuition can be established as true) would require something more than 'pure' intuition (which arguably may not even exist). At the same time, one's intuition—as a level of awareness, contextualised only through sense and one's first-hand experiences—is also likely to be informed by insights and conclusions attained via theoretical analysis and understanding. Likewise, there might also be certain things that could prevent one from achieving a correct intuition—or, alternatively, lead one to be wrongly informed—thereby eliciting an inaccurate intuitive conclusion. The manner in which one would be able to substantiate an intuition does not involve the same analytical tools that one would usually utilise when endeavouring to prove something empirically. When considering the Artworld, knowing 'intuitively' whether or not a particular artwork is *necessarily* good would require one to possess a certain degree of

²²⁶ Nevertheless, as NITA demonstrates, to fully understand artworks—to *see* them, in both senses of the word—one requires both sides of the proverbial coin: that is to say, to understand the work intuitively while at the same bearing in mind the analytical deconstruction of what the work *should* be.

²²⁷ While it may still be 'intuition', one surely does intuit something 'out of nowhere' and does not just 'suddenly' sense it. A deeper examination of Kahneman's work would assist one in better understating this notion. In the same vein, one might also find it illuminating to explore some of the insights attained by Koestler in his 1949 book *Insight and Outlook*. Consider, for instance, the following passage: 'As to the equation of science with logic or reason, art with intuition and the unconscious, this is one of the oldest popular fallacies. [...] no discovery was ever made by logical deduction; each original scientific achievement is a bisociative act on the same mental pattern as the creation of wit and—as the following section seeks to prove—the creation of art.' Arthur Koestler, *Insight and Outlook: An Inquiry into the Common Foundations of Science, Art and Social Ethics* (New York: Macmillan, 1949).

knowledge about that particular work. For instance, one should know what is considered a so-called 'good example' of that particular artwork's 'genre'—that is to say, what should make that particular artwork a good work of art. According to Eddy M. Zemach, for instance, in order to classify anything at all, one must first go through the process of appreciating the very thing one wishes to classify. As the title of his essay suggests, there is 'no identification without evaluation'.²²⁸ Ultimately, for Zemach, one should identify what makes something a 'good instance of its kind'.²²⁹ In other words, before one classifies an artwork, one evaluates it. Thus, classifying an artwork *as* an artwork becomes the second stage in the process. Only once one evaluates and appreciates something is one able to both identify and understand what that something actually is, and how to categorise it.²³⁰ By the same token, only when confronted with an artwork would one be able to employ one's 'informed intuition' appropriately. Thus, attaining an understanding of an object's internal logic would entail recognizing, logically, what that something *necessarily* should be. In Art, one would thus acquire knowledge informing one's intuition by grasping a particular artwork's distinctive internal logic.

²²⁸ Eddy M. Zemach, "No Identification Without Evaluation", *British Journal of Aesthetics* 26, no. 3 (Summer 1986): 239–51.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 242.

²³⁰ Despite the fact that Zemach does not reference Dickie's theory or any variation thereof—even though Dickie's original version had at that time been around for over 10 years—I consider his approach to be distinctly institutional in nature. This is quite evident from what appears as his general idea, and the illuminating examples and frames of reference he employs in his essay. As Zemach himself asks in the opening lines of his essay, 'should not identification precede evaluation? It seems that one needs, first of all, to identify the object one intends to evaluate in order to evaluate it.' *Ibid.*, 239. In similar respects, Graves argues that when one interprets a work of art, seeking out its meanings and messages, one essentially assembles a 'package' that consists of the particular 'artworld systems' which are deemed 'relevant' to the particular work in question. This 'package' which one assembles contains the very essence of what enables one to classify the work of art and determine its identity. Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 80.

3. The Institution of Audio Performance: Defining a *New Aesthetic Category*

3.1 Audio Performance: A ‘Mother-Institution’ for Classification and Appreciation

To define Audio Performance (AP)—as both an artistic institution and aesthetic category—I begin by following the structure of NITA, paying close attention its four basic rule-schemes (i.e. R1 through R4). As stated earlier, they reside in the very core of NITA. Together, they *define* the artistic institution itself, constituting its aforementioned ‘inflected’ nature,²³¹ thereby articulating what can and cannot be identified (and subsequently evaluated) as art. As Graves points out, ‘this humble set is where it all begins. [...] unpacking it, as we will, should reveal the surprisingly rich and complex institutional conception of art that we seek.’²³² Appropriately, since the institution of AP should fundamentally be rendered an Artworld system in and of itself, one arguably cannot begin explaining what AP is without first establishing its own set of basic rule-schemes. With my application of R1–R4, I wish to demonstrate the manner in which one is able to utilise NITA for articulating new institutional rules—thereby identifying, and potentially creating, completely new artistic genres. These, in effect, would constitute previously undefined aesthetic categories—and thereby unique artistic institutions in their own right.

In brief, as a classificatory apparatus—complying with what the original versions of NITA set out to achieve—the institution of AP should enable one to identify what counts as an ‘AP artwork’: that is to say, it sets the context—the given circumstances—

²³¹ Ibid., 30–32, 43, 56, 58, 69, 94.

²³² Ibid., 40.

under which one is able to regard a ‘recorded text’ as an aural performance.²³³ Audiobooks, for example—as alluded to in my introductory chapter—should be identified as unique AP artworks. Indeed, they should not merely be regarded as aurally recorded written texts—that have simply been transferred from the printed page into a recording device—but rather they should be perceived as part of a singular artistic genre. Furthermore—as has also been pointed out earlier—while they constitute one of the major examples of what an AP artwork is, audiobooks are not the only form of aural performance that can be identified as such. Rather, they should be classified as a ‘sub-(institutional)-category’, belonging to a larger ‘mother institution’ of AP.

Correspondingly, as an evaluative tool—highlighting the unique contribution of NITA to the artistic appreciation, and at the same time demonstrating the manner in which this approach can be applied to further artistic fields—the institution of AP can be employed for demonstrating what makes a particular AP artwork aesthetically good, or, indeed, aesthetically deficient. In essence, this process of evaluation would entail three stages of analysis: First, one would evaluate the performance in its own right—that is to say, a performance *of* a given work—as a work of art in and of itself. Next, one would evaluate its own distinct nature as an aural performance—considering the internal logic of the medium. Finally, one would be required to examine the unique

²³³ Just as NITA fundamentally distinguishes between ‘art’ and ‘not art’, the institution of AP essentially forms the distinction between a *performed* text and the mere reading of text into a tape recorder. Indeed, establishing what counts as AP answers a number of questions, all pertaining to the very nature of the aesthetic category itself. For example: What is it that quite literally *makes* an audiobook a product of the Artworld (and thereby an artwork in its own right)? When is an audience expected to understand or perceive a particular so-called ‘spoken word’ recording as an aural performance (i.e. rather than a mere ‘reading’ or nothing more than a mere recording of the original text)? When, if at all, can the person(s) featured on such a recording be regarded as an artist? Alternatively, one could ask whether or not one should distinguish between the ‘performing artist’ and ‘*the*’ artist, the latter—a director, for instance, or a casting director—being the creator of the artwork. Indeed, an argument could also be made that the role of the performing artist might in fact be akin to the role of the artist with regard to NITA’s R3.

internal logic inhabiting the *original* text being performed—as it would to a large extent determine the manner in which the text *should* be performed.²³⁴ Thus, to properly evaluate a particular AP artwork, one is effectively required to follow *two* different sets of internal logic: that of the original work *and* that of its aural performance.

In focusing my attention on the realm of audiobooks, it is my intention to utilise my forthcoming case studies for illustrating the manner in which the study of AP artworks can contribute to a better understanding of the actual process of aesthetic evaluation. As expressed in my introduction to this study, I endeavour to illustrate this matter by highlighting the unique craft of casting aural performances, which I find to be inherently related to the particular intuition that informs it. As Rubery points out, ‘Fit between speaker and script [is] a delicate matter’, and the task of ‘finding a suitable narrator’ entails ‘matching the speaker to the fictional character’s [...] audible markers of identity’.²³⁵ As alluded to earlier, I would argue that assigning a specific text to a particular performer is essentially informed by having already evaluated in one’s mind’s ear whether or not the putative performance should be aesthetically good.²³⁶

²³⁴ Fundamentally, the first and final stages would be carried out almost simultaneously, and both stages are arguably guided by or derived from one’s informed intuition. Now, in light of what will later in this chapter be referred to as the classic ontological distinction between ‘types’ and ‘tokens’—which is usually applied when regarding performances as works of art in their own right—one might be tempted to argue that the final stage contradicts the first. Nevertheless, as I will show, this apparent contradiction can in fact be resolved by abandoning this distinction and adopting a different perspective—which, in brief, is rooted in the assertion that one is required to take on the responsibility of attaining a comprehensive understanding of the very thing that one wishes to evaluate. As Graves puts it, ‘in the context of evaluating a work of art, [...] ‘if one does not understand, one should not judge’’. Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 71.

²³⁵ Rubery, *The Untold Story of the Talking Book*, 98.

²³⁶ In what will eventually form part of this study’s conclusions, this not only appears to be in the core of the craft of casting, but it also demonstrates a dynamic relationship between casting, informed intuition and aesthetic appreciation.

3.2 Audio Performance: A New Aesthetic Category Defined

As aforementioned, I find that a close reading and comprehensive understanding of the core institutional structure of NITA facilitates an extended application of its four basic rule-schemes (R1–R4), which one can effectively utilise for identifying and creating new artistic genres and aesthetic categories. Thus, presented herein is my proposed set of applied rule-schemes—that, in effect, establish the inner-workings of AP as a distinct artistic institution. It, in turn, *institutes* the criteria and parameters for what does and what does not count as an AP artwork.

[R1] Audio Performance (AP) counts as an Artworld-relevant system of rules if, and only if, it creates the framework for the governing of a very specific practice: namely, one which (a) entails the recording of written texts by a performer, and (b) presents them as solely aurally-oriented artworks, to a designated Artworld public who consume AP artworks.

[R2] A written text counts as an **AP Artwork** if, and only if, the written text is (a) recorded by a performer, solely for an aural format, and (b) presented (in its recorded incarnation) to a designated Artworld public within an Artworld system.

[R3] A(n) **(audio)-performer** is one who participates, with understanding, in creating AP artworks and presenting them to a designated Artworld public within an Artworld system.

[R4] An **AP audience** is a set of persons who count as the section of the Artworld public who consume AP artworks if, and only if, its members are prepared to take upon themselves a minimum degree of responsibility of understanding when to regard and

experience an aurally recorded text as an AP artwork. Correspondingly, it should be created by an audio-performer, and presented to an AP audience within the framework of an Artworld system.

Although these predominantly set the context for classification, it cannot be stressed enough that aesthetic evaluation is just as crucial. While NITA surely demonstrates its strength in classifying particular objects as distinct artworks, it also implies that classification is not enough. Rather, as stated, in order to fully comprehend what a particular artwork is all about, that act of evaluation cannot be set aside. As Graves explains it,

[T]he institutional theory of art provides us with clear theoretical mechanisms for carrying the major activities involved in theorizing about art: how to classify a work of art, how to interpret a work of art, and how to evaluate a work of art [...] We have decided to offer a presentation of the institutional theory of art's major theoretical mechanisms along the traditional lines of the main activities involved in the theoretical study of works of art: classification, interpretation, and evaluation. Each activity is designed to answer a basic question concerning the work of art: "what is it?", "what does it mean?", and "is it good?". We tend to think that these are three different sorts of activities, since these are three distinct questions which make good sense, and we can expect three distinct answers.²³⁷

To be sure, one of the most popular and commonly held theories about art asserts that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder'. However, it should be quite clear by now why this is a gross misconception. In brief, while this statement may tell one a thing or two about the beholder, it conveys absolutely nothing about art or about what the beholder beholds. In essence, a 'beholder'—who might hold the role of the audience in respect of NITA and the Artworld—is required to be 'prepared in some degree to understand'

²³⁷ Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 57.

the very thing that one is beholding, rather than merely stating what one finds to his/her liking.²³⁸ Appropriately, as alluded to earlier, an AP audience is expected to be prepared to fully understand what they are listening to.²³⁹ Moreover, just as a performer is expected to know how to perform a particular written text *as* an AP artwork—in accordance with the internal logic of the original text *and* that of the aural medium—an AP audience is expected to determine whether or not, and to what extent, a performer has succeeded in doing his/her job.²⁴⁰ Helen Roach, for instance, points out in this respect that ‘many records have not been well done’, which results in ‘new listeners’ being ‘turned away by poor recordings before hearing others which make for rewarding listening.’ She asserts that ‘some records are indeed works of art’ and that ‘a frequent

²³⁸ By way of illustration, consider one’s first-ever encounter with a typical Vincent van Gogh ‘Cypress’ painting. If, when asked one’s thoughts on such a painting, one would assert that it is not a good painting—and when asked why, one would reply something along the lines of ‘because it doesn’t look like an actual tree’—one’s answer cannot be justified by stating that ‘beauty is in the eye of the beholder’. Indeed, such a statement would demonstrate that one had not taken the minimum responsibility of acquiring even the slightest degree of learned knowledge about Van Gogh’s painting—explicitly, that a typical Van Gogh ‘Cypress’ painting is simply not supposed to be a painting ‘of’ an actual tree. In effect, one would be required to examine such a painting through the lens of its appropriate artistic institution, and thereby in accordance with its own distinctive internal logic. Indeed, since it is most definitely *not* a realistic painting, examining to what extent it may or may not look like an *actual* tree, one that exists ‘out there’ in some concrete forest, constitutes a completely extraneous effort. In other words, examining a non-realistic artwork in terms of ‘how realistic’ it is might lead one to conclude that it is a bad artwork. Nonetheless, if one knows the internal logic of the artwork one happens to engage with—in this case, Post-Impressionism (or, as some might argue, Expressionism)—one would be able to appropriately evaluate its aesthetic quality in the right terms.

²³⁹ In other words, one is essentially required to identify whether or not a particular recording can be listened to and experienced *as* an AP artwork. Indeed, as will presently be explained in the succeeding section of this chapter, listening to an audiobook constitutes an aesthetic experience in its own right—and it should not be perceived as an alternative to reading.

²⁴⁰ Consider, for example, the craft of stand-up comedy, and imagine an encounter with a stand-up comedian who either has no sense of comic timing or is incapable of appropriately delivering a joke. Even if one may not necessarily fail in these two aspects—which arguably constitute the two minimum requirements of any stand-up comedian—the very notion of a stand-up comedian who is simply not funny is more than a contradiction in terms. Indeed, when one engages with a stand-up comedy act that does not succeed in exhibiting the internal logic of stand-up—that is to say, when one experiences something that *should* be funny, but in fact is *not*—it would imply one of the following: either the performer did not do his/her job correctly, or, alternatively, the audience, simply put, did not ‘get it’. The former may justify what was once the tradition of bringing one’s rotten vegetables to live performances (just in case). The latter justifies that if one does not ‘get it’ then it is one’s responsibility to discern the reason why. Although this would surely require a study in its own right, I would argue that this demonstrates, potentially, that the fact that something is ‘funny’ is, at its core, an institutional fact.

case of poor recordings has been failure to adapt to the new medium. Even actors with considerable stage experience have not always made the adjustment'.²⁴¹ Consequently, just as certain objects may on the one hand comply with what NITA defines as art, yet on the other hand may not necessarily comply with what constitutes good art—certain recordings of aurally-delivered written texts might accord with what an AP artwork is supposed to be, but at the same time might not be considered particularly good.²⁴²

3.3 What Counts as Audio Performance: Complying with the Aesthetic Category

In her exploration of the recorded materials found in libraries—to which she refers broadly, rather than explicitly to audiobooks—Tracy asserts that since scholars in fields such as 'languages, medicine, zoology, political science, history, literature, drama, and anthropology' can surely all be regarded as the potential users of these recordings, she was surprised to discover that academic libraries have customarily been slow to collect such recorded material, and 'particularly in non-musical areas of investigation.'²⁴³ She concludes that there has been a tendency

[a]mong librarians in academic and research institutions [...] to regard phonograph records as mere entertainment, like paperback detective novels, and therefore more appropriately collected by public libraries. [...] Such indifference toward a new medium for preserving human

²⁴¹ Helen Roach, *Spoken Records*, 3rd ed. (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1970), 8.

²⁴² Referring, for instance, to what at the time was the 'new crop' of spoken records released by Caedmon, J. Peter Bergman asserts that while they all constitute great works of literature, they are 'not all great aural literature, for not all the readers bring to our ears the best intentions of the authors they represent'. J. Peter Bergman, "British Nostalgia/Spoken Word Issues", *Association for Recorded Sound Collections Journal* 13, no. 3 (1981): 133, accessed October 27, 2016, <http://www.arsc-audio.org/journals/v13/v13n3p131-136.pdf>.

²⁴³ Tracy, "Echoes in a Bottle", 24–25.

thought, history, and personality cannot endure very long against the general electronic revolution now upon us.²⁴⁴

In point of fact, despite the intense and prosperous proliferation of 'aurality' in a number of interdisciplinary fields, audiobooks are seldom listed amongst other artistic genres or practices.²⁴⁵ Consider, for instance, the following heartfelt letter by veteran American audiobook narrator George Guidall, submitted in 2011 to the *New York Times*:

To the Editor: Discussing the popularity of audiobooks, James Parker notes that they "are on the rise" ("The Mind's Ear," Nov. 27). But are they "on the rise" because they've just been discovered, or is it that *The New York Times* has finally conceded their importance after years of denying them the status they deserve? Having narrated more than 900 unabridged novels over the past 20 years, I can attest to the fact that audiobooks long ago rose to achieve a most respected place in the minds and ears of those who appreciate the narrative art form along with the beauty of classic literature. Letters thanking me for bringing Proust, Dostoyevsky, and Cervantes to life; for "telling" the stories of Tony Hillerman, Wally Lamb and Lilian Jackson Braun; and for heightening the experience of books previously read speak to a facet of audiobooks' success that seems to have been overlooked: the relationship generated between narrator and listener. The relationship is based on an unspoken intimacy, matching empathy and the emotional honesty the narrator provides. It's not a fad. It's not something with which to pass the time, although it helps. It's an art form and, when well executed, should be appreciated as such.
GEORGE GUIDALL²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 25.

²⁴⁵ As Hibbitts explains it, 'Slowly, sound began to have a discernible impact on a variety of different disciplines and undertakings. In linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure departed from then-conventional academic wisdom to argue that true language was speech, as opposed to some combination of speech and writing. [...] A variety of European and American poets abandoned the visualist analogy between poetry and painting (ut pictura poesis) that had held intellectual sway since the eighteenth century and instead began to explore the inherently aural relationship between poetry and music. [...] Sound even had an impact on the visual arts. [...] artists like [...] Kandinsky openly likened the process of painting to musical composition [...] A few artists even ventured into the relatively untested waters of "performance" where sound could be directly manipulated in the context of other media.' Hibbitts, "Making Sense of Metaphors", [3.14]. In the same vein, Tracy asserts that while one cannot 'put off thinking about changes until the century has actually turned', attention should be paid to the then 'present state of things.' She argues that although aural recordings appear to be 'infiltrating academic library collections, [...] it is often impossible to tell what kind of recordings a given institution is collecting, since no distinction is generally made between musical and nonmusical recordings in annual reports or in the professional literature.' Tracy, "Echoes in a Bottle", 25.

²⁴⁶ George Guidall, letter to the editor, *New York Times*, December 23, 2011.

Indeed, Guidall's frustration and disappointment are not unreasonable. Consequently, by establishing an appropriate aesthetic context—the given circumstances for understanding these aural performances as art—one is not only able to classify (and, subsequently, evaluate) both audiobooks and radio plays *as* AP artworks, but also to identify additional cases of aural performance. In other words, the criteria and parameters prescribed by the general aesthetic category—the institution of AP—should assist one in recognizing and appreciating any phenomena that can be said to comply with the institution itself. As I will later show, in addition to these two so-called standard and predominant cases (i.e. audiobooks and radio drama), there appear to be a number of 'non-standard' artistic manifestations of the same general aesthetic category.²⁴⁷

Borrowing from Rubery, one might well be inclined to categorise audiobooks somewhere 'on the borderline between performance and adaptation'.²⁴⁸ In considering the latter, while audiobooks may indeed exist as adaptations of literary works (or, alternatively, as something akin to performative interpretations), I would argue that they nonetheless do not entirely comply with the routine kind of adaptations one might be accustomed to.²⁴⁹ Indeed, as opposed to most literary adaptations for stage and screen, audiobooks customarily include *all* of the words in the original printed work.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ As will be further elaborated upon in Chapter 6—in which I further investigate the parameters for what counts as an AP artwork by way of illuminating what effectively does *not*—these cases include what is regarded as *audio-vérité* recordings and the concept of the audio commentary track on DVDs.

²⁴⁸ Matthew Rubery, introduction to *Audiobooks, Literature, and Sound Studies*, 13.

²⁴⁹ Referencing a term that inherently corresponds with Bolter and Grusin's ambitious study pertaining to the 'mediality' of representations, James Jesson argues that 'adaptations of works between media are not necessarily remediations'. James Jesson, "A Library on the Air—Literary Dramatization and Orson Welles's Mercury Theatre", in *Audiobooks, Literature, and Sound Studies*, ed. Matthew Rubery (New York: Routledge, 2011), 46. For a detailed reflection on the notion of 'remediation', see Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).

²⁵⁰ In brief, the text is adapted by the printed words being transformed into spoken words, thereby becoming an aural performance. Indeed, the fact that the spoken words are conveyed by a performer, as a mediator of sorts, and that the performance is in effect filtered through the performer's artistic choices

While complete and unabridged recordings conventionally prevail as the gold standard, one is sure to come across *abridged* recordings as well.²⁵¹ Although abridgements fully meet the definition of what an audiobook is—and thus may also potentially comply with what an AP artwork should be (i.e. in respect of R1–R4)—they nevertheless constitute a somewhat different kind of audiobook, as they do not consist of the complete printed version of the text. Prevailing as something of a sub-(institutional)-category of the audiobook genre—in itself a sub-category of the larger mother institution—abridgements appear to be more easily categorised as adaptations than unabridged audiobooks since the original written text is not only transformed into spoken word but also undergoes a literal reformation. For this reason, abridgements arguably constitute a somewhat easier target for criticism.²⁵² Nevertheless, their apparent existence as a shorter version of an original work should *not* factor into the equation of evaluation.²⁵³

Cost-effectiveness and economizing shelf-space notwithstanding, abridged audiobooks should be perceived as having been created within the specific context of

(including those conceived by the director or the production’s creative team) surely count as essential aspects of an adaptation.

²⁵¹ In November 2013, I interviewed British casting director Patrick McQuaid at his office at ID Audio Ltd in London. (A recording is provided on the USB flash drive). According to McQuaid, abridgements were initially created for two main reasons: cost-effectiveness and shelf-space. He points out that audiobooks gained their popularity at a time when audio cassettes were the standard-issue available format. Hence, if producing a single unabridged audiobook would require one to spread it over, say, fourteen cassette tapes, one would be unable to sell it to a consumer for fourteen times the price of what one cassette tape used to cost. He argues that retailers, in effect, preferred selling a number of abridged audiobooks, usually spread over two or four cassette tapes each, rather than one unabridged 14-cassette box set.

²⁵² One could argue, for instance, that their apparent existence as ostensibly incomplete representation of the original literary work essentially prevents one from experiencing the *actual* work, thereby potentially affecting one’s aesthetic evaluation of the work itself. One might even go so far as to argue that the very act of shortening an existing complete work in effect ‘butchers’ the original book.

²⁵³ Although one might sympathise to some degree with the criticism rejecting them, I would argue that this matter should not necessarily pose an aesthetic conundrum. Overall, the exploration of abridgements—as a phenomenon—might benefit from being investigated in terms of the moral implications of ostensibly intervening with the given aesthetics of a particular work.

the Artworld—thereby constituting deliberately designed abridged versions of a written text. In fact, quite a significant number of authors have not only approved the abridgement of their own work for the purpose of releasing it as an audiobook, but have also themselves participated in making the assumed necessary cuts and edits. Moreover, some recordings even feature an author him/herself narrating the abridged version of his/her own work. This demonstrates that authors no doubt understand that (a) listening to an audiobook is not a substitute for reading the original book, and that (b) an aural performance, under certain circumstances, might require employing some so-called adjustments to the original printed work. Consequently, abridgements prevail as interpretations of the original written work—and the fact that an audiobook happens to be an abridged version of the original text should simply necessarily affect the process of aesthetically appreciating an audiobook as an AP artwork.²⁵⁴

3.4 Reading vs. Listening: Identifying the Aesthetic Experience

To understand audiobooks as AP artworks—in the context of the applied four rule-schemes—attention must be paid to distinguishing two kinds of experiences: listening to an audiobook and reading an original printed work. To be sure, listening to an

²⁵⁴ When considering an abridged audiobook in terms of what NITA regards as a ‘candidate for appreciation’, one should examine the aural performance itself rather than the quality or aesthetic properties of the abridgement. At the same time, one should *not* altogether ‘ignore’ the fact that any audiobook consists of an original work, which possesses a unique and individual internal logic of its own, and that it, in turn, would predominantly *determine* the aesthetic nature of its putative aural performance. Even when, for whatever reason, a particular work undergoes some form of change (e.g., an adaptation or edit), its original internal logic would essentially underscore the manner in which that particular text *should* be performed. Conceivably, the very same internal logic would likewise inform the aesthetic nature of an *abridgement*. (Hypothetically, evaluating an abridged version of the original work as an aesthetically good abridgment does not necessarily entail that abridged audiobook would in turn be evaluated as an aesthetically good aural performance).

audiobook constitutes a considerably different experience than that which one undergoes when reading a book. Despite the apparent presence of the exact 'same' text, which one merely encounters through two different forms (i.e. in its original printed form on the one hand, and as its aural performance on the other), these two experiences are different in more ways than one. First and foremost, one does not experience the text in the same mode. It must therefore be made clear that listening to an audiobook is *not*, nor should it be, regarded as something one does as a so-called alternative to actually reading the printed book.²⁵⁵ The act of reading a book should similarly not be considered as supposedly better (i.e. culturally higher and more important) than the act of listening to an audiobook. As T. M. Luhrmann points out,

We tend to regard reading with our eyes as more serious, more highbrow, than hearing a book read out loud. [...] The great linguist Ferdinand de Saussure thought we treated writing as more important than speaking because writing is visual. Speech is ephemeral—you hear a word, and then it is gone. The word written down remains, and so we attach more significance to it. Saussure wrote that when we imagined text as more important than speech, it was as if we thought we would learn more about someone from his photograph than from his face. [...] The ability to read has always been invested with more importance than mere speech. When only a small priestly elite could read, books were sacred mysteries. When more people could read, literacy became a means to move forward in the world. These days,

²⁵⁵ KJ Dell'Antonia, for instance, poses the question of whether or not listening to audiobooks counts as what is regarded as a 'school reading', and if so, under what circumstances. According to Dell'Antonia, 'Adults debate the point often, with lovers of print sometimes deriding audio-biblio-philés [...] and lovers of audio books defending their choice [...]. For literary purposes [...] listening versus reading the words may be a matter of preference (a somewhat dated study, published in 1990, found no significant differences in comprehension in those who read as opposed to those who listened), but for gaining fluency and speed in the act of reading itself, as well as increased familiarity with punctuation and spelling, listening is, indeed, no substitute for reading. [...] Cultural literacy can be increased by listening; literacy with respect to the mechanics of the written word cannot.' KJ Dell'Antonia, "When Audio Books Do and Don't Count for School", *Motherlode* (blog), *New York Times*, September 7, 2012, accessed July 20, 2016, <http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/07/when-audio-books-do-and-dont-count-for-school>.

the ability to read is a prerequisite for full participation in the social order.²⁵⁶

By the same token, it would be wrong to dismiss audiobooks as a purportedly easier task to tackle since it appears to excuse one from having to endure actually reading a book oneself.²⁵⁷ Indeed, an overt misconception appears to prevail in respect of the so-called intellectual challenge involved in both activities—developing, in turn, an evident hierarchy that clearly lends itself to printed books, and thereby generating a predominantly heated debate with regard to the nature of their recorded incarnations.²⁵⁸ According to Sara Knox, audiobook critics and listeners alike appear to vigorously dispute the notion that listening to audiobooks, as opposed to reading, constitutes ‘a more passive interpretive activity [...] precisely because the interpretive act of voicing has already been surrendered by the listener’.²⁵⁹ In the same vein, Rubery frequently points out that questions pertaining to the authenticity of audiobooks—that is to say, their status as so-called ‘real’ books—have always been in the centre of the criticism against them:

The alleged passivity of audiobook reception is largely responsible for suspicions that it is "not really reading." [...] The defensiveness of

²⁵⁶ T. M. Luhrmann, "Audiobooks and the Return of Storytelling", *New York Times*, February 22, 2014, accessed July 20, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/23/opinion/sunday/luhrmann-audiobooks-and-the-return-of-storytelling.html>.

²⁵⁷ Just as it surely would not suffice to merely view the film version of a certain novel rather than actually read it, one most definitely should not listen to an audiobook version of a particular book instead of engaging with the original work. In this respect, just as one should not evaluate the original novel based on one’s experience of a stage or screen adaptation, one should not, for the most part, evaluate a novel based on its audiobook version. Moreover, if, for instance, one happened to engage with a particularly *bad* audiobook—in that it does not, for the sake of argument, successfully exhibit the internal logic of its world—one might be tempted to criticise the entire concept of audiobooks, and consequently discard them as an art form altogether.

²⁵⁸ As Rubery observes, ‘readers who express discomfort toward hearing printed books read aloud seldom express the same unease toward reading oral scripts in print’. *The Untold Story of the Talking Book*, 35. Conceivably, it was the novel’s fundamental ‘association with print [...] [that had] set it apart from other genres originally intended for aural reception’. *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁵⁹ Sara Knox, "Hearing Hardy, Talking Tolstoy: The Audiobook Narrator’s Voice and Reader Experience", in *Audiobooks, Literature, and Sound Studies*, ed. Matthew Rubery (New York: Routledge, 2011), 128.

audiobook listeners is evident in their frequent apologies for listening to rather than reading a book. [...] A nostalgic preference for the material book underpins the discomfort many readers feel toward an act of reception involving no tangible manuscript. Listening to a book is not a sensuous experience in the same way as is holding a book in one's hands, with the heft of its binding and the texture of its pages. The proximity of the audiobook to the printed book is unsettling because it threatens the very identity of reading in a way that is not true of other forms of adaptation easily set apart as secondary to the printed text.²⁶⁰

Ultimately, listening to an audiobook should be identified as an *aesthetic* experience in its own right—one which entails engaging with the *performed* text as an audience member, accepting it as an AP artwork.²⁶¹ As Knox puts it, 'a listener meets each reading as a distinct textual encounter, both in terms of the personality of the reader and the auditory space of listening.'²⁶² Arguably, once listening to audiobooks is recognised as an aesthetic experience—effectively establishing audiobooks themselves as a unique kind of artefact—the concern that they might make reading obsolete (i.e. by providing idle persons with a so-called excuse not to engage with 'real' books) can be said to be quite preposterous. Indeed, to experience an audiobook as an AP artwork is most definitely not a passive (and thereby arguably easier) activity than reading a printed work. It does not—indeed, should not—supersede reading. Fundamentally, it should be considered in respect of its own terms, as a particular kind of activity that is inherently concerned with the aesthetic experience.

²⁶⁰ Rubery, introduction to *Audiobooks, Literature, and Sound Studies*, 11–12. Albeit somewhat anecdotal, I wish to quote one Ms. Amy Stodola, who in 2011 submitted a letter to the editor of the *New York Times*, referencing an essay by John Schwartz, and expressing her annoyance with Schwartz's assertion that listening to audiobooks can be considered a kind of 'reading'. In what clearly demonstrates the kind of critical reactions that audiobooks seem to evoke, Ms. Stodola quite casually remarks that, 'while it can be enjoyable and stimulating, listening to audiobooks is no more a kind of reading than riding a train is a kind of walking.' Amy Stodola, letter to the editor, *New York Times*, December 23, 2011.

²⁶¹ Again, this will become evident through my forthcoming formulation of the institution of AP.

²⁶² Knox, "Hearing Hardy, Talking Tolstoy", 139.

3.5 Audiobooks as (Aural) Performances

Rubery's allusion to audiobooks as performances no doubt supports my decision to employ the word 'performance' when naming my suggested new aesthetic category. Indeed, it highlights the notion that performances can be perceived as works of art in their own right. As Hilde Hein, for instance, points out, performances should be perceived as an 'aesthetic phenomenon of primary significance', and therefore *require* a new aesthetic category of their own.²⁶³ Although the spectrum of what is considered performance continuously broadens, and performance praxis progressively evolves—since its inception, in fact, scholars and artists alike have proposed a variety of explanations, understandings and interpretations pertaining to what a performance actually is²⁶⁴—the meaning of the term itself, as stated in my introduction to this thesis, should be considered a given. Fundamentally, a performance constitutes a behaviour that has been consciously created for an audience. Arguably, this concise definition also appears very much akin to the frame of thinking established by NITA—as it essentially forms a distinction between the brute and the institutional facts pertaining to the particular behaviour in question.²⁶⁵ Thus, in order to regard a particular type of

²⁶³ Hilde Hein, "Performance as an Aesthetic Category", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 28, no. 3 (Spring 1970): 384.

²⁶⁴ Marvin Carlson, for instance, regards performance as an antidiscipline and argues that it 'resists conclusions, just as it resists the sort of definitions, boundaries, and limits so useful to traditional academic writing and academic structures.' See Marvin Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1996), 206. At the same time, certain scholar-practitioners, such as Richard Schechner, have even gone so far as to argue that essentially anything and everything can be perceived or studied as an ostensible performance. Nevertheless, this approach appears to go well beyond what might be regarded as theatrical performance, as it appears to be focused more on identifying aspects of performativity in different fields—which are not necessarily artistic and thereby cannot comply with NITA.

²⁶⁵ Drawing on Max Herrmann's assertion that performance is 'a game in which everyone, actors and spectators, participates', Erika Fischer-Lichte identifies four central elements that constitute a performance (namely: mediality, materiality, semioticity and aestheticity). Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Routledge Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies* (London: Routledge, 2014), 18. These, she maintains, 'exist in *all* kinds of performance'. [emphasis in original]. *Ibid.*, 44. Fischer-Lichte herself defines performance as 'any event in which all the participants find themselves in the same place at the

behaviour as a performance one would be required to identify the given (institutional) circumstances under which a particular behaviour counts as a performance.²⁶⁶

Audiobooks—as AP artworks—can be identified as the aural performances of written texts. At the same time, audiobooks are distinct in that the written text which constitutes the basis for the aural performance already exists as a literary work of art in its own right. As Knox points out,

[t]hat major audiobook distributors [...] offer alternative recordings of canonical works [...] follows the basic commodity logic of the provision of buyer choice: voices and performance styles for a listener to choose from. Certainly the “narrator wars” of the listener reviews [...] attest to this: there’s a definite pattern of buyer-beware advice [...] about the perils of making the wrong choice [...]. Explaining the Naxos production of the unabridged *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, the producer Roy Macmillan invokes the altruism of service to excellence (“Tess . . . is one of the great English novels, and that would have been reason enough for Naxos audiobooks to record it”), then moves to the nitty-gritty: the need to compete: “Even if other publishers have recorded it in the past, or will do so again, it was important to [the managing director] of Naxos Audiobooks, to have the title in bookshops, record stores and on their virtual shelves.”²⁶⁷

It is commonly agreed in the studies of aesthetics that there can only be *one* single work of art. Now, in light of what I earlier regarded as the necessity to articulate the two different sets of internal logic when aesthetically appreciating an AP artwork—i.e. that of the original work *and* that of its aural performance—one appears to be faced with something of an ontological and philosophical obstacle. Thus, one could argue that a

same time, partaking in a circumscribed set of activities. The participants can be actors or spectators, and the roles of these actors and spectators may switch, so that the same person could fulfill the part of an actor for a given period of time, and then turn into an observer. The performance is created out of the interactions of participants.’ Ibid., 18. By her own admission, this definition can be applied to ‘a wide variety of events’ that are not all necessarily performative in nature. Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Likewise—in the context of the Artworld at large—once one identifies performances as artworks, an argument could be made that every performance should in effect possess its own unique kind of internal logic, and could thereby potentially comply with different kinds of sub-(institutional)-categories.

²⁶⁷ Knox, “Hearing Hardy, Talking Tolstoy”, 137.

particular work of art (e.g. a novel) and the performance thereof (i.e. a particular novel's audiobook version) can never be perceived as one and the same.²⁶⁸ To distinguish between a 'performance' (i.e. as a singular artwork in its own right) and a 'performance of' an already existing work (i.e. which is in itself singular and unique) effectively becomes imperative.²⁶⁹

In these respects, if one follows what is customarily considered the classic ontological distinction between 'types' and 'tokens', evaluating a performance *of* an already existing work—especially a performance that is established as an artwork in its own right—would effectively require refraining from referring to the original work.²⁷⁰ In

²⁶⁸ Scholars and artists alike have long contemplated the ontological identity of *the* work itself. In considering a novel, for instance, one might question precisely where the artwork that one engages with in the mere form of the novel actually resides. Indeed, one might regard the author's manuscript, the original first edition, or, alternatively, the very inception of the idea that the author had in his/her mind as valid prospects. Fundamentally, it is commonly agreed that there can only be one such possibility. Since *the* work itself is unique, it simply cannot assume any kind of alternative version.

²⁶⁹ As David Davies explains, 'the primary purpose of the performing arts is to prepare and present 'artistic performances' [...] that either are themselves the appreciative focuses of works of art or are instances of other things that are works of art. [...] The performance may *itself* be [...] the 'focus of appreciation' of an artwork, an artistic vehicle whose observable features directly articulate, perhaps in association with contextual factors, the representational, expressive and formal properties that make up the artistic content of the work. [...] The performance may play an essential part in the appreciation of *something else* that is an artwork through being one among a possible multiplicity of instances of that work. [...] [Thus, it is rendered] a performance *of* an independent work. In such cases, we can term the artwork appreciated a *performed work* and the instance through which it is appreciated a *work performance*. An artistic practice in which acknowledged artworks are designed to be performed works can be termed a *performed art*. [...] [Ultimately,] certain qualities of those works, relevant to their being appreciated as the particular works that they are, are only realizable, and thereby made available to receivers, in those performances. The need to experience a performance of a performed work in order to properly appreciate that work is thus the analogue, in the performed arts, of the need to perceptually engage with a particular visible surface in order to properly appreciate a visual artwork. Drama, music and dance are traditionally taken to be performed arts in this sense. [...] It is assumed that the model applicable to such examples—what we may term the 'classical paradigm'—also applies, with very few exceptions, to performances in other musical genres and to performances in other performance media.' [emphasis in original] David Davies, "Work and Performance in the Performing Arts", *Philosophy Compass* 4, no. 5 (September 2009): 744–45.

²⁷⁰ Summarily, the 'type-token' paradigm identifies a so-called 'general law' *contra* its particular concrete instances (the latter being, in other words, the particular cases demonstrating the praxis of how the general law actually *works*). In effect, one is required to distinguish between *the* work of art (i.e. the singular type or prototype) and its literal or concrete manifestations (i.e. the various tokens of that one particular type). Recommended for further reading is David Osipovich's account of what he identifies as the 'literary theory' of theatrical performance—following its re-formulation by the eminent scholars Noël

the performing arts, as John Dilworth explains it, one would customarily regards plays, pieces of music, dance choreographies, and so forth, as 'types'—and the particular performances of these kinds of works as 'tokens' of those types. According to Dilworth, 'such "type" views are also common for non-performing arts such as literature and film, and even as applied to apparently particular artworks such as paintings'.²⁷¹ Consequently, when embarking on aesthetically evaluating audiobooks as AP artworks, one might assume that one should completely ignore the original text, and accordingly focus solely on the nature of the *performed* work.

As I will presently demonstrate, although this matter appears to render my suggested prerequisite of identifying two different sets of internal logic as somewhat problematic, it nonetheless merely poses an intellectual hurdle that can in fact be defeated. In brief, in order for one to attain a better understanding of (a) the institution of AP, and (b) the phenomenon of audiobooks as its artistic product, a different approach should be taken—one that can subsequently serve as a more appropriate evaluative tool for aesthetic appreciation. As Dilworth maintains,

plays, symphonies and other works in the performing arts are generally regarded, ontologically speaking, as being *types*, with individual performances of those works being regarded as tokens of those types. But [...] there is a logical feature of type theory which makes it impossible for such a theory to satisfactorily explain a "*double performance*" case [...] one in which a single play performance is actually a performance of two *different* plays. Hence type theories fail, both for plays and for the related performing art of music as well.²⁷²
[emphasis in original]

Carroll and Richard Wollheim. See David Osipovich, "What Is a Theatrical Performance?", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art* 64, no. 4 (Fall 2006): 462–63.

²⁷¹ John Dilworth, "Theatre, Representation, Types and Interpretation", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (April 2002): 201.

²⁷² John Dilworth, "A Counter-Example to Theatrical Type Theories", *Philosophia* 31, nos. 1–2 (2003): 165.

In conjunction with modern semiotic theories—and particularly the distinction made by Patrice Pavis between a ‘written text’ and a ‘performance text’—it can be established that virtually every text possesses two ostensible identities.²⁷³ As a ‘written text’, it exists as a scenario for performance, and thereby it inherently contains instructions for a performance—determining, at least in part, what the ‘performance text’ should consequently be. As a ‘performance text’, it is predominantly based on a reading of the written text—which may involve the act of interpreting it, translating it (or certain aspects thereof) into performative terms, as well as editing or cutting it.²⁷⁴ To be sure, although this distinction may appear to parallel the aforementioned notion of types and tokens, it in fact contradicts it. Explicitly, it does so in its insistence that every written text essentially embodies a particular and unique range of various possibilities for performance, which, in turn, prevail as the fullest realization of the text’s embodied potential. In terms of this dissertation, the fullest realization of a particular text’s potential can be identified as the internal logic of its own world. Thus, a performance text should effectively embody and manifest its own internal logic—or at least certain aspects thereof.

In an online video masterclass, American screenwriter Aaron Sorkin presents an eloquent analogy between dialogue and music. He explicitly expresses his conviction

²⁷³ For further reading, see (i) Patrice Pavis, *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1992) and (ii) Patrice Pavis, *Contemporary Mise en Scène: Staging Theatre Today*, trans. Joel Anderson (New York: Routledge, 2013).

²⁷⁴ A performance text is predominantly influenced by one’s reading of the written text as a candidate for a specific production. The work of and relationship between a particular director and an ensemble of actors can surely inform the reading of a written text as one of the initial stages in creating a performance. Although written texts in these respects might be perceived as incomplete—in that they constitute a pre-text for a performance—regarding a written text as a work of literature would entail being mindful of the possible performance texts it elicits (i.e. all the various productions of the play that can be generated by the written text). Effectively, regarding Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, for instance, as a ‘performance text’ would both entail and be dependent upon a production-specific consideration.

that the task of writing a screenplay entails writing for the purpose of performance. Implicitly, I would argue, Sorkin's insight expresses one of the distinct aspects of the internal logic of both the craft of screenwriting and that of performing these kinds of written texts. In his own words:

It's not just that dialogue sounds like music to me—it actually *is* music. Any time someone is speaking for the purpose of performance [...] all the rules of music apply. Cadence, and tone, and volume [...] So, when I'm writing, what the words sound like [...] is as important to me as what the words mean. It's a lot about rhythm. The actors will know if they have dropped a syllable or added a syllable accidentally, they'll know that something was wrong. The same way [...] if you're playing music, and there's a time signature at the beginning of it, it says *four-four-time*—that means there are four beats in a measure and a quarter-note gets one beat—there can't be five beats in a measure, there can't be three beats in a measure. And the actors know if they've dropped something [...] and I know when I'm writing if that [...] didn't quite work, what I was doing. [...] If you look at the whole piece—say, a two-hour play, a two-hour movie, a one-hour episode of television— [...] it has a lot of the same properties as a long piece of music like a symphony does or an opera. It's got solos and duets, it's got allegros and adagios, it's got arias— and sometimes they're good and sometimes they're bad, but it is music nonetheless.²⁷⁵

Fundamentally, although the written text is separate from the performance text—thereby constituting a blueprint for a performance or a working script—when one aesthetically evaluates a performance, the original written text simply cannot be rendered irrelevant. Indeed, no matter how a putative performance text turns out, it would always be in reference to the written text.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ Aaron Sorkin, "Writing Captivating Dialogue", in *Masterclass: Aaron Sorkin Teaches Screenwriting* (2016) Week 5, Lecture 21, 01m54sec–03m50sec. See URL: accessed February 12, 2017, <https://www.masterclass.com/classes/aaron-sorkin-teaches-screenwriting>.

²⁷⁶ As written texts, play are ostensibly incomplete or un-finished works, which can fulfil their artistic end only once they become staged or produced performance texts. As a blueprint, it might effectively be rendered as a non-artistic text that requires an artistic interpretation. Similarly, AP artworks conceivably do not 'exist' until they are heard and experienced by an audience. Indeed, they too—just like plays, scripts or sheet music—appear to *necessitate* a literal performance. The can only fulfil their purpose once they are actualised and thereby attain their aesthetic identity.

Reading a written text effectively includes an awareness of the various theories associated with the written text, its historical connections and connotations, and indeed both its past and putative possibilities (and limitations) for performance—all of which, to one degree or another, can be identified as the various parts that together construct a particular text's internal logic. A performance text necessarily includes the written text—or at least the segments of it that a director finds necessary. It effectively incorporates a director's conceptual commentary on the written text—that is to say, his/her interpretation of the aforementioned embodied potential for realization.²⁷⁷ This, predominantly, is what requires one to analyse and appreciate performances as distinct works of art in their own right. Appropriately, to evaluate a performance text, one utilises his/her interpretation and understanding of the written text as a guideline, effectively ascertaining whether or not (and the degree of success to which) a performance actualises the written text. Since any written text inherently elicits either a singular putative performance or a whole series of possible putative performances, the distinction between types and tokens no longer poses an intellectual hurdle.²⁷⁸

Consequently, there prevails a perpetual interaction between the written text and performance text. As a result, the latter should be identified, interpreted and

²⁷⁷ An audience, in turn, experiences the manner in which a certain written text—which they may or may not be acquainted with—has been embedded within the performance, thereby constituting an aspect of the performance text. In other words, an audience may be aware, to some degree, of the certain set of instructions that a particular play would require its performance text to consist of. To be sure, an audience might even have their own idea about what an aesthetically good performance should be.

²⁷⁸ According to Hein, one of the most significant properties of performances can be identified as change and process. This, she argues, is a missing feature in most traditional concepts of what aesthetics is—since aesthetic categories have predominantly been analysed by way of highlighting either their 'static features' or their 'end points'. Hein, "Performance as an Aesthetic Category", 384. As an aesthetic category, different performance texts—of the same written texts—would thus need to be evaluated differently, each as a unique work in its own right. At the same time, however, precisely because of the shared original written text, evaluating a performance text would necessarily have to consider the written text and the internal logic which it embodies.

evaluated as merely one among a number of many possible versions. Arguably, in considering Zemach's aforementioned assertion that the act of evaluation precedes that classification, one implied challenge appears to involve the identification, interpretation and evaluation of the version that counts as a 'good instance of its kind'. Indeed, doing so should effectively establish an ostensible hierarchy with regard to (a) the range of various possibilities for performance (that are embodied in the written text) and (b) whether or not the performances themselves succeed in fully realizing that particular range. This, in essence, would demonstrate the extent to which a particular performance succeeds in manifesting the internal logic of that text's own world, or at least certain essential aspects thereof. At the same time, it must be emphasised that if a performance does not constitute an overall faithful rendering of the written text into performative terms, it would not necessarily be evaluated as an aesthetically bad artwork. To be sure, some performances purposely set out to create, embody and manifest a new kind of internal logic—which, in turn, would constitute an inherently different one from that embedded in the original written text. To properly evaluate such a performance—that is to say, in accordance with its own terms—one would be required to identify the particular internal logic of its world. Nonetheless, as stated earlier, even a performance that embodies its own so-called new internal logic—although it should surely be regarded as a work of art in its own right—will forever remain rooted in the internal logic of the original work. To some degree or another, the performance would constitute a comment on, an interpretation of, or deconstruction of the internal logic embodied within the pre-existing written text.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁹ Even the most uncompromising playwright should know full well that each production is unique, and should therefore be willing to consider his/her play a so-called blueprint that may indeed be subjected to change. A play (or at least certain aspects thereof) could be argued to have implicit suggestions for a

It is precisely in these respects that I would argue that although the medium of the novel does not constitute a written text intended for performance, a particular novel's iteration in the medium of the audiobook *does* constitute a performance text. Effectively, as an aesthetic category for defining aural performances, audiobooks encompass the two different sets of internal logic: the internal logic of the original work on the one hand, and the internal logic of its particular aural performance on the other. As a rule, I find that when aesthetically appreciating AP artworks—and particularly when dealing with canonical texts and well-recognised artworks—the original internal logic not only cannot be ignored, but, in fact, *must* be taken into consideration.

3.6 Audiobooks as Artworks: the Aural Artefacts of a Distinct Artistic Genre

The distinction between the printed word and its performed equivalent can also allude to the particular manner in which the written text *should* be spoken. As Wittkower points out,

[i]n the written word, the particular modes of relevance of one word upon another are not communicated through grammatical roles alone but also take place through the occult actions of punctuation marks. In the spoken word, similar signals are given through precisely timed pauses and changes in tone. The commas used to offset modifying or explanatory clauses, such as those surrounding this aside, are intended to be heard differently, and to construct meaning differently, than those within a list. [...] The modifying or explanatory clause—set off by commas or em dashes, like this—is lowered in pitch relative to the primary “timeline” of the sentence.²⁸⁰

putative performance, rather than explicit instructions. Yet, having said so, I am confident that every play is nevertheless required to express a precise and determined internal logic that cannot (indeed, should not) undergo a change.

²⁸⁰ Wittkower, "A Preliminary Phenomenology", 221.

I am reminded by this of some insightful remarks made by renowned English theatre director, Peter Hall, in respect of the manner in which Harold Pinter—surely one of the most important and influential English playwrights of his time—customarily employed punctuation to indicate the differences between silences and pauses in his plays.²⁸¹ Pinter himself jokingly alluded in one of his speeches to the manner in which his critics and interpreters have scrutinised his apparently different use of a ‘dot, dot, dot’ as opposed to a dash.²⁸² On the one hand, if the two are not one and the same, one can argue that they would surely *sound* quite different from one another when ‘spoken’ aloud. On the other hand, one could argue that the difference between them is quite irrelevant, and that investigating what each one is supposed to sound like is ultimately nothing more than nitpicking. Nevertheless, I would maintain that Hall’s insights do appear to explain the manner in which Pinter’s text can inform one about the preferred kinds of pauses that a performance should elicit.²⁸³

²⁸¹ ‘There is a difference in Pinter between a pause and a silence and three dots. A pause is really a bridge where the audience thinks that you’re this side of the river, then when you speak again, you’re the other side. That’s a pause. And it’s alarming, often. It’s a gap, which retrospectively gets filled in. It’s not a dead stop—that’s a silence, where the confrontation has become so extreme, there is nothing to be said until either the temperature has gone down, or the temperature has gone up, and then something quite new happens. Three dots is a very tiny hesitation, but it’s there, and it’s different from a semicolon, which Pinter almost never uses, and it’s different from a comma. A comma is something that you catch up on, you go through it. And a full stop’s just a full stop. You stop.’ Peter Hall, “Directing Pinter”, in *Harold Pinter: You Never Heard Such Silence*, ed. Alan Bold (London: Vision Press Limited, 1984), 26.

²⁸² ‘I’ve had two full-length plays produced in London. The first ran a week and the second ran a year. Of course, there are differences between the two plays. In *The Birthday Party* I employed a certain amount of dashes in the text, between phrases. In *The Caretaker* I cut out the dashes and used dots instead. So that instead of, say: ‘Look, *dash*, who, *dash*, I, *dash*, *dash*, *dash*,’ the text would read: ‘Look, *dot*, *dot*, *dot*, who, *dot*, *dot*, *dot*, I, *dot*, *dot*, *dot*, *dot*.’ So it’s possible to deduce from this that dots are more popular than dashes and that’s why *The Caretaker* had a longer run than *The Birthday Party*. The fact that in neither case could you hear the dots and dashes in performance is beside the point. You can’t fool the critics for long. They can tell a dot from a dash a mile off, even if they can hear neither.’ Harold Pinter, “Writing for the Theatre”, in *Various Voices: Sixty Years of Prose, Poetry, Politics, 1948–1998* (New York: Grove Press, 1998), 19–25.

²⁸³ Conceivably, this aspect constitutes part of the internal logic of Pinter’s writing. In drawing a line between Pinter and Samuel Beckett, Hall explains that ‘a pause in Pinter is as important as a line. They are all there for a reason. Three dots is a hesitation, a pause is a fairly mundane crisis and a silence is some sort of crisis. Beckett started it and Harold took it over to express that which is inexpressible in a

Following a comprehensive exploration of Western acting and performance praxis since the nineteenth century, and in establishing a panoramic comparative survey of their socio-historical evolution and relationship to one another, Robert Gordon suggests six definitive categories, all of which, I would argue, can surely be identified as aesthetic.²⁸⁴ Each category appears to demonstrate a distinctive internal logic of its own.²⁸⁵ In effect, each category can be identified as a discrete style of acting—particular and individual genres—that correspond with each other within a larger framework. With respect to my own study, it in turn can be identified as a general aesthetic category—demonstrating the internal logic of performance praxis and acting—and can likewise be allocated within the artistic institution of the theatre and stage arts. Indeed, Gordon's illuminating study constitutes a synthesis of all the principal theories of dramatic performance that have influenced and informed the past two centuries. If Gordon's book could be seen as an apparatus for practitioners—which, I would argue, it most definitely can be—it appears to successfully contextualise and concretise the types of knowledge one would be required to possess in order to enrich one's praxis. In essence, different kinds of texts would require different kinds of theories, approaches

very original and particular way, and made them something which is his.' Peter Hall, "Interview with Catherine Itzin and Simon Trussler", *Theatre Quarterly* 4, no. 16 (1974/5): 130.

²⁸⁴ Slightly paraphrasing, Gordon's categories are as follows: (a) the notion of acting as the realistic characterization of a kind of psychological truth; (b) the perception of the actor as a scenographic instrument, and the notion of performance as artifice; (c) the identification of theatre-making and performance praxis as play—i.e. a manifestation of notions pertaining to games and improvisation; (d) the notion of theatre as a political tool, and the identification of rehearsal as a medium for creating social change; (e) the notion of performance and acting as a vehicle for both self-exploration and an encounter with the other; and (f) the notion of performance as cultural exchange and an opportunity for playing (or 'becoming') that which one is not. Robert Gordon, *The Purpose of Playing: Modern Acting Theories in Perspective* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 6.

²⁸⁵ Accordingly, (a) corresponds with the notions and theories of practitioners such as Konstantin Stanislavski, Yevgeny Vakhtangov, Lee Strasberg and Michael Chekhov; (b) with those of Adolphe Appia, Gordon Craig and Vsevolod Meyerhold; (c) with Jacques Copeau, Michel Saint-Denis, Rudolf von Laban and Jacques Lecoq; (d) with Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal; (e) with Antonin Artaud and Jerzy Grotowski; (f) with Peter Brook and Eugenio Barba.

and praxes. Gordon's book demonstrates that one should be sensitive to the different types of texts one works with. Acting in a play by Chekhov, for instance, while following the praxis of Brecht will simply not exhibit the internal logic of either one.²⁸⁶

Consequently, one could very well identify a Pinteresque 'dot, dot, dot' and arguably hear—on the page—what it is supposed to sound like. Likewise, one could also be able to identify the Pinteresque dash, which possesses its own distinctive sound, in respect of the particular kind of pause it is supposed to elicit.²⁸⁷ Now, *Various Voices* was also released as an abridged audiobook, featuring Pinter himself performing a selection of the works incorporated therein. "Writing for the Theatre" opens the recording. As Pinter himself was a professional actor, listening to him performing his own writing constitutes quite a unique aesthetic experience—not so much as this recording presents one with an opportunity to hear an author reading his work, but rather as Pinter's vocal dramatization is exceptional. He appears to be performing his own instructions, almost musically, reading as a director—and in effect delivering what one could identify as the 'performance text' form of his written texts.²⁸⁸ Even in his aforementioned remark, poking fun at the different meanings one finds in his punctuation, one is still able to hear the different punctuations in his delivery.²⁸⁹ Overall,

²⁸⁶ Alternatively, one could also consider the different approaches to performing Shakespeare. For example, while John Gielgud or Laurence Olivier may have been considered the authorities in their time, if one compares their approaches to those of, say, the RSC or Kenneth Branagh, one could, potentially, begin identifying which approach, and to what extent, might be said to better 'serve' the internal logic of a particular work. Ultimately, one would need to identify the two sets of internal logic: namely, that of the work in question, and that of the praxis that would conceivably comply with it.

²⁸⁷ In other words, one can distinguish between the ostensible brute fact of Pinter's punctuation (i.e. employed as a grammatical tool used for separating sentences and clarifying their meaning) as opposed to its institutional fact (i.e. rendering it Pinteresque—and thereby potentially making it mean something different than it would in other dramatic texts).

²⁸⁸ Harold Pinter, *Various Voices: Prose, Poetry, Politics: 1948–1998*, read by the author, Faber/Penguin Audiobooks (ISBN: 0-14-086846-1/978-0-14-086846-3), 1998, 2 audio cassettes. See USB flash drive for Pinter's recording of "Writing for the Theatre". Ibid., 01m14sec–02m02sec.

²⁸⁹ Arguably, when the same play is performed through two different types of media, even the distinctive Pinteresque 'dot, dot, dot' (or 'dash') would not sound exactly the same. Indeed, while it should sustain

the recording clearly demonstrates the manner in which Pinter succeeds in sketching out his interpretation of his own writing specifically for the aural medium, bestowing on his words the intended pace for creating his desired meaning, as he is speaking to a designated audience who is not actually there.

The aural medium, so it seems, constitutes an inherent aspect of the internal logic of audiobooks. Notwithstanding, since both audiobooks and radio plays should be identified as belonging to the *same* aesthetic category, certain insights pertaining to the latter can surely be applied to the former. What Knox, for instance, regards as the audiobook's 'auditory space of listening',²⁹⁰ appears to be in the same vein as Frances Gray's assertion of what makes one's experience listening to radio so unique. In describing the aesthetics of the medium, Gray maintains that

the stage of the radio is darkness and silence, the darkness of the listener's skull. On it the dramatist can bring anyone or anything without the trouble and expense of a scenic artist. This is the first stage that most of us encounter, the stage of the bedtime story in which we create, with assistance, an alternative reality. The process of building it is simple; the words are spoken, and we become designers, producers, scenes shifters and the theatre itself.²⁹¹

Explicitly alluding to one's experience when listening to radio plays, John Drakakis argues that 'the process of *listening* became analogous to that of reading' [emphasis in original].²⁹² This, I would argue, should not be understood necessarily as a comparison between two kinds of activities *per se*. Rather, the analogous process resides in what might be identified as their aesthetic significance. Indeed, reading a book, hearing an

its own internal logic, one would need to know how to convey it in accordance with the internal logic of each *medium*. The same can be said about most any given genre.

²⁹⁰ Knox, "Hearing Hardy, Talking Tolstoy", 139.

²⁹¹ Frances Gray, "The Nature of Radio Drama", in *Radio Drama*, ed. Peter Lewis (London: Longman, 1981), 48–49.

²⁹² John Drakakis, *British Radio Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 113.

audiobook and listening to a radio play are all, at their core, mutually exclusive aesthetic experiences. As Gray points out, 'as soon as we hear a word [...] we are close to the experience it signifies; in fact the sound is literally inside us.'²⁹³

In order for one's aesthetic experience as an audience member to prevail, the reader/narrator (who, as aforementioned, essentially holds in AP the institutional role of the artist) *must* be aware that s/he is performing for an implied listening audience.²⁹⁴ In the realm of audiobooks 'the narrating voice', as Knox puts it, 'is explicitly addressing a listener'.²⁹⁵ This to a large extent demonstrates why audiobooks should be perceived as performances, as well as why they deserve an aesthetic category of their own.²⁹⁶ According to Roach, when one speaks for one's own ear one 'adjusts the tone in terms of already present vibrations' that already exist in one's own head,²⁹⁷ and one thereby 'produces a different sounding voice from the normal one of speech directed to another's ear'.²⁹⁸

²⁹³ Gray, "The Nature of Radio Drama", 51. In the same vein, Tammy La Gorce refers to Donald Katz, founder of Audible Inc.—cited as 'the world's largest seller and producer of audiobooks'—and to his notion of the 'sound of literature'. La Gorce maintains that this is precisely what Katz has succeeded in making 'more accessible' and quotes him as stating that 'audiobooks are a long-arc experience that can be very meaningful'. Tammy La Gorce, "At Audible, Work Speaks Volumes", *New York Times*, June 13, 2015, accessed July 20, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/14/nyregion/the-work-speaks-volumes.html>. Rubery similarly points out, that 'companies like Audible [...] have begun promoting audiobooks as an independent art form in its own right, one that can do things other books cannot'. Rubery, *The Untold Story of the Talking Book*, 245.

²⁹⁴ In other words, to simply transform the printed words into spoken words and create an aural recording of the text is not enough—and would merely constitute the 'brute' fact of the matter. Rather, a performer is required to *perform* the text—which, as the institutional fact of the matter, necessitates an audience.

²⁹⁵ Knox, "Hearing Hardy, Talking Tolstoy", 128.

²⁹⁶ As Carlson points out, a performance 'is always performance *for* someone, some audience that recognizes and validates it as performance.' [emphasis in original] Carlson, *Performance*, 5.

²⁹⁷ Hibbitts, in these respects, claims that 'a variety of commentators and critics [...] argue that writing (and reading) are [...] metaphorically dialogic (if not yet actually aural) processes, and that the written 'text' is not so much a thing as an ongoing negotiation of meaning between writer and reader, much as a conversation is between speaker and listener.' Hibbitts, "Making Sense of Metaphors", [3.7].

²⁹⁸ Roach, *Spoken Records*, 51.

Ultimately, a performer should therefore make special effort in directing his/her performance to a *designated* audience due to the fact that their audience is not physically present, but rather exists somewhere ‘out there’, for lack of a better term.²⁹⁹ The audience, in turn, will only hear and experience the eventual completed recording at a later point in time. Appropriately, when perceiving audiobooks as artworks, these constitute some of the main reasons why audiobooks should fundamentally be recorded by professional readers, actors and performers.³⁰⁰ Indeed, even Edison had identified the potential of his invention to enhance the enjoyment that one attains from listening to a book narrated by an ‘elocutionist’ as opposed to the ‘average reader’.³⁰¹ The former, for Edison, possesses the ability to endow the words ‘with the finest grade of feeling and accent’.³⁰² In the same vein, as Stan Godlovitch explains it, the skills a performer possesses can be identified as ‘technical’ on the one hand—which ‘involve causing objectively determinable and (often) quantitatively measurable acoustic

²⁹⁹ Radio, for instance, according to Rudolf Arnheim, can connect between the ‘speaker’ and the ‘hearer’ without either of them necessarily sharing a ‘physical presence or personal acquaintance’. See John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) 211, accessed 31 October 2016, <http://web.mit.edu/uricchio/Public/television/Peters.pdf>.

³⁰⁰ Audible, for instance, employed in 2015 around one hundred narrators (or, rather, ‘voiceover artists’, as La Gorce puts it), about a fifth of whom work as professional actors, and many of whom have Broadway credits. La Gorce, “At Audible, Work Speaks Volumes”. At the same time, one is sure to come across audio recordings featuring non-professional narrators. These include: (a) volunteer readers—who, flawed narration skills notwithstanding, could literally be anyone willing to invest his/her time, or (b) authors, poets and writers—while whose unique talent as wordsmiths may be unparalleled, their skills as narrators might (in fact, more often than not do) leave much to be desired. Indeed, in contrast to the common and, arguably, nearly automatic conviction, an author’s recording of his/her own work does *not* necessarily secure a better performance. These will be addressed at a later point—either in further elaborating upon what counts as AP (that is to say, what phenomena accord with this aesthetic category), or, indeed, by way of more explicitly illustrating what does *not*. In respect of the latter, in particular, I will also attend to an additional kind of so-called ‘audiobook’ that exists in the form of digitized recordings, created by text-to-sound computer programs. As a precursor, and as will become evident at the end of this chapter, it must be underlined that these most definitely *cannot* be identified as AP artworks.

³⁰¹ Rubery, *The Untold Story of the Talking Book*, 35.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 37.

effects,' and 'interpretive' on the other—which 'involve aesthetic effects for which no obvious quantitative measure exists, and typically emphasize 'expression'.³⁰³

While conventionally performed by a single narrator, there nonetheless exists a variety of audiobooks that are recorded by more than one individual, thereby taking the form of a fully-dramatized aural production.³⁰⁴ As Roach, for instance, quite rightly points out, the direction of a recording is just as important as the actual performance.³⁰⁵ Appropriately, just as one can form the distinction between the role of the composer and that of the conductor, the musician or the singer (i.e. the performing artist who will eventually bring life to the composer's given piece of music), one should similarly differentiate between the role of the playwright and that of the director or actor.³⁰⁶

Conceivably, this applies to *all* art forms requiring a performer to convey or mediate an original work to a designated audience. The only exception, according to Hein, resides in the relationship between an audience and the person whom she identifies as the 'expert': a person who possesses the ability to interpret some kind of 'score or schema', and subsequently 'perform the work [...] without mediation.'³⁰⁷ Her 'expert' can surely be perceived as a kind of 'performing artist', whose ability is fundamentally to (a) identify what the internal logic of a particular work is (or, at least,

³⁰³ Stan Godlovitch, *Musical Performance: A Philosophical Study* (London: Routledge, 1998), 54.

³⁰⁴ Audiobooks predominantly constitute a collaborative effort. Their creative process—much like that which exists in the realms of theatre and cinema—requires a number of skilled professional craftsmen: a director or casting director, a sound designer, a text-to-audio editor, a producer, and so forth. Nonetheless, as my definition of the institution of AP endeavours to demonstrate, *vis-à-vis* NITA, the role of the reader/narrator should, to a large extent, be perceived as *the* (performing-)artist.

³⁰⁵ For Roach, 'poor direction or the complete lack of it explains some failures in spoken recordings [...] That so many good recordings do exist is due in large part to the good directors experienced in the medium. [...] [They] have contributed knowledge, experience and a pioneering spirit without which so much that is valuable in spoken recordings might not have been achieved.' Roach, *Spoken Records*, 13.

³⁰⁶ Hein, "Performance as an Aesthetic Category", 383–85.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 383.

what it should be), and (b) utilise his/her talents and skills to properly convey that internal logic to the designated audience. Ultimately, Hein appears to be focused on establishing precisely why performances are a primary art form in its own right.³⁰⁸ I thus find her frame of thinking inherently 'institutional'.³⁰⁹ Indeed, her insights demonstrate an understanding that performances deserve an aesthetic category of their own, effectively highlighting *their* 'aesthetic identity'.³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ As aforementioned, one of the fundamental ideas that NITA is based on the notion that institutions not only institute facts, but that one's cultural institutions are subject to change (e.g., in accordance with the manner in which one's particular society evolves, or, alternatively, complying with the change that one's conception of one's own values undergoes). New and re-examined cultural institutions can give birth to new aesthetic categories. Hein seems to focus on 'instituting' a category that accounts for the role of the performer: 'The new trends within the arts pose a challenge to standard aesthetic categorization, suggesting that new categories might well be adopted, categories which place the role of performer in primary perspective. [...] innovations in art invite us to reconsider the old art forms as well as the new in the light of aesthetic categories [...]'. Hein, "Performance as an Aesthetic Category", 386.

³⁰⁹ Hein explicitly points out that 'every social institution and every intellectual system of the modern era has accommodated itself to change as a fundamental value', and argues that one could benefit from re-examining 'the classic categories of aesthetics by bringing to bear upon them the dynamic elements of the category of performance'. Ibid., 384. Furthermore, her notion of the 'appreciator-critic' (see Ibid., 382) appears to resonate quite strongly with the 'candidate for appreciation' in NITA: 'people do what they do because they think that there is something worthy of appreciation about the things they present to the Artworld. This is what Dickie called "conferring the status of candidate for appreciation". The sculpture, the book, the movie, or the painting being offered to the public, is but a candidate for the public's appreciation'. Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 20

³¹⁰ While Hein does not set out to define art, she does appear to have a rather clear idea of what art is and what aesthetics should be. In the same vein, Osipovich, drawing on David Saltz explicitly points out that performances possess an 'aesthetic identity' of their own. He argues that the 'interpretation' of a particular play both constitutes and is dependent upon the 'framework for a performance' established by the written text. Osipovich, "What Is a Theatrical Performance?", 46. Also noteworthy is David Davies's book review of Peter Kivy's *The Performance of Reading: An Essay in the Philosophy of Literature* (2008). Kivy, in brief, looks upon the reading of literary works as a certain kind of performance. For Davies, Kivy's 'bold thesis in this very engaging and stimulating monograph is that literature in general—not just drama or even poetry but also the novel—should be viewed as a performance art, analogous to music, where the instances of works through which they are appreciated are performances enacted by readers. Reading itself, then, is a performing art. [...] Tokens of the musical work are performances, and tokens of the novel are readings, construed as datable events. [...] [A] novel can be viewed as a performance [...] literature in general [...] is properly viewed as a performance art. [...] [T]he case for a performative element in literature may serve to awaken us to the significance of such aspects of literary experience, even if, as I have suggested, the case for viewing literature as a performance art requires further argument and elucidation.' David Davies, review of *The Performance of Reading: An Essay in the Philosophy of Literature*, by Peter Kivy, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 66, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 89–91. Arguably, these insights could well be applied to audiobooks as well—and particularly to the manner in which one experiences them, aesthetically, through *listening*.

4. Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*: An Aural Case Study (1)

4.1 Comprehending the Written Text: Identifying the Internal Logic

As established earlier, reading a novel and listening to an audiobook constitute two different kinds of aesthetic experiences. Respectively, to achieve a proper aesthetic evaluation of a particular audiobook (or of any AP artwork for that matter), one must possess an understanding of the unique internal logic of the text which is being performed—in addition, of course, to having grasped the discrete workings of an inherently aural medium.³¹¹

I find that Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) serves as an interesting case study. As such, before commencing an analysis of this novel's iteration as an AP artwork, one must begin by understanding the internal logic of the written text that would consequently inform its aural performance. Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that purporting to present a rigorous and comprehensive reading of the entire novel could well prove counterproductive. In fact, no explicit property, facet or attribute can provide one with a luculent indication of what *the* internal logic of the novel actually is. Indeed, to achieve an all-inclusive and thorough interpretation of any

³¹¹ Arguably, any kind of mediation effectively dictates its own rules—which, in turn, inform the aesthetic experience that one undergoes. When reading a novel, for instance, as one essentially engages with the written text first-hand, the rules entail that a mental visualisation in one's head is evoked directly by the printed words on the page. A play, by contrast, essentially evokes a mental visualisation of what the world of any particular play is supposed to look like on a stage. As a performance text, its rules require one to possess a certain amount of experience with theatrical productions in order to properly visualise. Indeed, when one employs the rules of reading a novel while engaging with a play, one risks distorting or misinterpreting it, as one is sure to bypass or neglect certain embedded performative aspects. While listening to an audiobook may not necessarily require the same type of training as that desired for properly reading plays, I would argue that the ability to aesthetically experience an audiobook as something more than the written text merely spoken aloud, surely invites its own type of practice and proficiency. Consequently, when listening to an audiobook, one's first-hand experience is grounded in the written text's iteration as a performed text—that is to say, in the manner in which the printed words are aurally conveyed through a recording of spoken words.

internal logic is arguably altogether impossible.³¹² Yet, there are, however, a number of dimensions to the novel—all of which, as I will show, are essential in their contribution to both formulating and grasping what the internal logic is supposed to be. Ultimately, in considering the generally accepted perception of the novel's status as a literary masterpiece, and in drawing on all that I have absorbed from the different critics I have observed, it appears as though a number of particular and definitive attributes can be established as being inherently constitutive in understanding the novel.

Any internal logic embodies varied shades of meaning, any one of which remains relevant as long as it does not exceed the limitations established by a given range of acceptable possibilities. Although one may have the artistic license to go beyond these when interpreting a particular work, if one adopts an 'alternative' reading, one makes one's reasons for doing so abundantly clear.³¹³ While I do not intend to propose my own personal analysis or interpretation of Twain's novel, my intention *is* to convey a concise understanding of the novel—focusing on its most essential aspects.

Summarily, in order for anybody to begin to grasp the complexities of *Huck Finn*³¹⁴ and identify its internal logic—or at least what it should be—one must consider

³¹² As alluded to earlier, *vis-à-vis* Derrida, one can fundamentally never arrive at a single complete reading of any text. There will surely always be additional provisional readings, effectively going on *ad infinitum*. Notwithstanding, these are only ostensibly infinite insofar as the particular restricted range of appropriate possibilities enables them to be. Consequently, virtually any text embodies two distinct limits beyond which one cannot go. As they establish the parameters of a particular text's internal logic, they in effect determine which readings are and are not appropriate. As aforementioned, grasping any kind of internal logic is attained by way of first-hand experience, rather than theoretical analysis.

³¹³ So-called unorthodox readings or interpretations effectively establish a *new* kind of internal logic, or at least offer a re-imagined one for consideration. As Algernon Tassin asserts, 'the interpreter, like the creator, gives shape and expression to something which was there before but had hitherto existed unperceived by him'. Roach, *Spoken Records*, 13. The artistic manifestation of such a work would predominantly prevail more as a comment or critique, which can either violate or throw interesting light on the original work. Consequently, one is required to evaluate such a work in accordance with its own (newly instituted) internal logic. Nonetheless, much like performances of already existing works, these interpretations are forever informed by the *original* internal logic—which, in effect, can never be completely cast aside. Indeed, it should remain a constant point of reference.

³¹⁴ From this point onwards, I will use this accepted abbreviated title.

and be mindful of the following key facets: (a) the novel's status as an ostensible memoir or autobiography; (b) the varying number of American dialects embedded in Twain's text; (c) the dissonance that prevails between the author and narrator;³¹⁵ and (d) the controversy surrounding the novel with respect to its characterisation of race—and the accusations of racial insensitivities to which it has been subject since its publication.³¹⁶

Now, although these strands may not necessarily constitute the novel's overall 'meaning', they are indeed constitutive of any attempt to read or interpret it. They are definitely not arbitrary. Identifying what they are informs the process one undergoes in journeying through *Huck Finn*, attempting to unravel and capture what the novel is all about. Effectively, every reader who engages with *Huck Finn* should be able to recognise that the novel works within these particular parameters. As crucial constituents for comprehending the novel, they establish the infrastructure for the internal logic around which any reading would revolve. In exploring *Huck Finn* as a performance text, every reader—and, indeed, every performer of a putative audiobook—would thus be required to both observe and work within these constituents when reconstituting Twain's text as an AP artwork. Consequently, any audiobook version of the novel would necessarily entail a comprehensive understanding of these particular strands of meaning. Overall,

³¹⁵ In brief, Twain's mature and ironic literary voice, his inherent socio-cultural criticism, and his identity as the novel's author—all extending well beyond his own time and sustaining their relevance even in present times—as opposed to the fictional identity of Huck's character, his perception of the world he inhabits, and his own distinct voice as the novel's first-person adolescent narrator.

³¹⁶ As Michael Patrick Hearn points out, the novel prevails as a praised literary classic, which has also been both condemned and banned: 'It has been called both a literary masterpiece and racist trash. It has been marketed as a gift book for boys and girls; it has been removed from the children's rooms of public libraries across the country. It is required reading in universities both in American and abroad; it is banned from the curricula of elementary and high school systems'. Michael Patrick Hearn, introduction to the Annotated *Huckleberry Finn*, in Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, in *The Annotated Huckleberry Finn*, ed. Michael Patrick Hearn (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), xiii. According to Hearn, the first institution to ban the book was the Concord Free Library—a committee member of which claimed to have found the novel 'the veriest trash', asserting that had it not been for Twain's reputation, 'the book would undoubtedly meet with severe criticism'. Ibid., lxxvii.

once one accepts the idea that something (i.e., a particular object) is considered beautiful when it embodies and manifests the internal logic of its own world, one should appropriately recognise the key aspects of the novel as inherent to its iteration as an aural performance.³¹⁷

4.2 Huck as an Autobiographical Narrator

Huck Finn is generally regarded as a sequel to Twain's own *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876). Both novels take place in the fictional town of St. Petersburg, Missouri.³¹⁸ The events in *Huck Finn* occur about one year after those depicted in *Tom Sawyer*³¹⁹—which, in brief, concludes with the characters of Tom and Huck, two adolescent boys, coming into a considerable sum of money having found a stash of gold hidden by a group of robbers. The fictional time span of the novel is supposedly around half a century before its publication (1884).

Unlike *Tom Sawyer*, which is told to its readers by an omniscient narrator, *Huck Finn* is purposely written as a first-person narrative account—told through the eyes and distinct point of view of an American boy in his early teens, namely the character of Huckleberry (aka 'Huck') Finn.³²⁰ With an abusive drunk for a father, Huck basically lives the life of an orphan. As the novel begins, Huck informs the readers that he was placed under the guardianship of a character he refers to as the Widow Douglas. Together with

³¹⁷ As will be made clear in Chapter 5, when aesthetically evaluating an audiobook version of *Huck Finn* as an AP artwork, one should examine whether or not (and to what extent) the novel's most essential strands effectively inform the manner in which the novel's internal logic is embodied and manifested in practice.

³¹⁸ Arguably, this town is based on the actual town of Hannibal, Missouri, where Twain was raised.

³¹⁹ From this point onwards, I will use this abbreviation when referencing this book.

³²⁰ Huck's character is described in Chapter 17 as being 'thirteen or fourteen or along there'. Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, in *The Annotated Huckleberry Finn*, ed. Michael Patrick Hearn (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 167.

her sister, Miss Watson, she attempts to teach Huck the Holy Scriptures and religion in an effort of 'sivilizing' him.³²¹ When his father learns about Huck's fortune, he returns to town in order to kidnap his son with the aim of obtaining the money. Huck chooses to escape by faking his own death. He proceeds to hide in a place called Jackson's Island, located in the middle of the Mississippi River.³²² It is there that Huck encounters Jim, whom he recognises as one of Miss Watson's slaves. Huck learns that Jim has apparently run away from Miss Watson, after hearing her talk about selling him to a plantation, where he would no doubt be treated horribly and be separated from his family. Huck makes the decision to help Jim escape, which leads to their voyage together—their 'adventures'—travelling on a raft along the Mississippi.

Ernest Hemingway once remarked that *Huck Finn* can be perceived as the quintessential modern American novel.³²³ Corresponding with this remark, Stephen Railton maintains that Twain's novel could also be perceived as the first *post-modern* American literary work.³²⁴ The first chapter of *Huck Finn* begins as follows:

You don't know about me, without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; but that ain't no matter. That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mainly. There was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth. That is nothing. I never seen anybody but lied one time or another [...] all told

³²¹ This word is misspelt intentionally. As Huck is the narrator of the novel, and, at the same times, happens to be illiterate—so much so, in fact, that he is unable to write even his own name—Twain's misspelling of certain words depicts the manner in which Huck's *speaks* them. In considering the novel's iteration as an audiobook, one might ask whether or not one is indeed able know that a word is misspelt merely through *listening*—especially if one happens to be unacquainted with the novel. This matter will presently be clarified. Summarily, it is one's *responsibility* to know that this aspect of Twain's novel constitutes part of its internal logic. One should simply know what one is listening to—especially if one wishes to properly evaluate it. Yet, it would also be the performer's responsibility to appropriately embody this aspect of the novel's internal logic in his performance. Indeed, while he may not necessarily be able to make a word *sound* misspelt, he *should* be able to underline it somehow—effectively making a listener identify that Huck's pronunciation is a bit 'off'.

³²² The Mississippi is distinctly identified with Twain and his writing, prevailing in *Huck Finn*, as an ostensible character in its own right.

³²³ Ernest Hemingway, *The Green Hills of Africa* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), 22.

³²⁴ Stephen Railton, *Mark Twain: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 50.

about in that book, which is mostly a true book, with some stretchers, as I said before.³²⁵

Thus, the novel opens with Huck's character acknowledging not only the existence of the novel which precedes the novel one is holding in one's hands as one is reading those very lines, but also the fact that he himself was written about in *that* book.³²⁶ What is more, they both *actually* exist in the world of the readers. Put simply, while they may be works of fiction, their concrete existence is most definitely not. As Victor A. Doyno points out, 'there may be other books which similarly insist upon their special status and origin as books, but they must be rare'.³²⁷ The monumental novel *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes is a good comparison, which surely served as a source of inspiration for Twain in more ways than one.³²⁸ For Doyno, it is the second paragraph—beginning with the words 'Now the way that book winds up is this:'³²⁹—that explicitly presents readers with Huck's 'summary' of what his character had undergone in the previous novel, and in effect his 'conclusion'.³³⁰ In his introduction to the novel's 1950 edition, T. S. Eliot maintains that

³²⁵ Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 9.

³²⁶ This, for Railton, is part of what makes Twain's construction of *Huck Finn* an almost radical re-envisioning of *Tom Sawyer*, precisely demonstrating his 'postmodern sensibility'. He references, for instance, Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), as a first-person narrative which is delivered by a character from a completely different novel: namely, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). Rhys's novel offers a radically different reading of Brontë's novel, effectively reframing it to serve her own purposes. Railton, *Mark Twain*, 50. In the same vein, one might also refer to Tom Stoppard's famous play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966). Indeed, although not a work of fiction, it is constructed around two characters originally appearing in the work of a different playwright: namely, William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*—which itself includes allusions to Shakespeare's own *Julius Caesar*.

³²⁷ Victor A. Doyno, *Writing Huck Finn: Mark Twain's Creative Process* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 42.

³²⁸ In the second volume of *Don Quixote*, published in 1615, Cervantes made his protagonists aware that a book exists that had not only been written about them, but that had also achieved some high acclaim: indeed, the first volume of *Don Quixote*, originally published ten years earlier. Both volumes have a concrete existence in the empirical world of the readers. Now, although *Tom Sawyer* was not yet recognised as a classic when Twain began writing *Huck Finn*, and notwithstanding the fact that it had not yet even been published, that Huck not only acknowledges but also directly references both the previous novel and its author could be perceived as Twain's homage to Cervantes's literary device.

³²⁹ Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 9.

³³⁰ Doyno, *Writing Huck Finn*, 43.

Tom Sawyer did not prepare me for what I was to find its sequel to be. Tom Sawyer seems to me to be a boys' book, and a very good one. [...] But the point of view of the narrator is that of an adult observing a boy. [...] Tom is, I suppose, very much the boy that Mark Twain had been [...] Huck Finn, on the other hand, is the boy that Mark Twain still was, at the time of writing his adventures. [...] The two boys are not merely different types; they were brought into existence by different processes.³³¹

To some extent, *Huck Finn* is not only a mere sequel to *Tom Sawyer*, but also its re-envisioning. For instance, the relationship between Tom and Huck could be understood as Twain's attempt to re-enact or re-imagine—and, at the same time, to both satirise and parody—the particular camaraderie that existed between protagonists in classic European literature. Again, the famous literary partnership of the characters Don Quixote and Sancho Panza is probably the most appropriate analogy.³³²

As it is Huck who narrates the novel, he in effect asserts his personal point of view not only in light of what he depicts (i.e., the events or the plot of the previous book), but also with respect to his own identity. On the one hand, his explicit objective seems to be to re-tell (or, perhaps, 'un-tell') what had previously been told by Twain.³³³

³³¹ T. S. Eliot, "An Introduction to Huckleberry Finn", in *Huck Finn, Bloom's Major Literary Characters*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2004), 18.

³³² If in *Tom Sawyer* Huck's character might be an analogous Sancho Panza to Tom's Don Quixote, in *Huck Finn*, Huck assumes the typical Don Quixote role. Indeed, Huck's character becomes not only the eponymous protagonist, but also asserts responsibility for narrating 'his own story'. According to Doyno, it is precisely through his narration that Huck distinguishes himself as Tom's 'polar opposite'. Doyno, *Writing Huck Finn*, 39–40. Moreover, while Tom remains Huck's close friend and confidant, his main counterpart in the novel appears in the form of Jim, the African-American slave. Thus, Jim takes on Huck's role from *Tom Sawyer* and becomes a Panza-esque character to Huck's Quixote. In this respect, Eliot quite rightly points out that 'Huck in fact would be incomplete without Jim, who is almost as notable a creation as Huck himself. Huck is the passive observer of men and events, Jim the submissive sufferer from them; and they are equal in dignity'. Eliot, "An Introduction to Huckleberry Finn," 20. At the same time, Eliot maintains that despite Huck's role as storyteller, he remains an inherently solitary figure. *Ibid.*, 18. (Arguably, this may also be another point of reference to Cervantes's characterisation of Don Quixote, who both requires his companionship with Sancho Panza in order to continue his journey and at the same time is inherently confined to his own self and his own outlook on the world he inhabits).

³³³ Railton suggests that while one should not ponder on whether or not Huck could possibly have read a book that would only be published many years later, 'it is with this gesture that Huck defines himself, and not only against Twain as a maker of books but also against nearly everyone else in the story as readers of books'. Railton, *Mark Twain*, 51.

On the other hand, Huck also appears to imply that while the chapters that follow should consist of 'his' truth, they might also constitute a somewhat 'stretched' version thereof.³³⁴ Alternatively, that Huck does seem to know the difference between true and false could indicate that while he possesses the ability to lie, and although he may very well lie to other characters he encounters throughout his adventures, he has no intention of lying to his readers.³³⁵ What nevertheless seems to be quite clear is that Huck asserts his individuality from the novel's inception. Indeed, he establishes his own authority over the novel, affirming his status as the storyteller. In delivering the story of the novel himself to the readers, Huck becomes his own personal story. Effectively, his character constitutes something of an agent in its own right—that is to say, one who is separate from the persona he refers to as 'Mr. Mark Twain'. Had Twain been responsible for 'making' or telling *Huck Finn* himself, while the story or general plot might have essentially remained the same, the novel would not have turned out quite the same. Thus, one can argue that the fact that it is Huck's character who is delivering his own story to the readers makes for a different type of novel not only in tone and structure, but also with respect to the various details (i.e., things that Huck is able to report from first-hand observation, using his words, but which Twain, for his part, is not). As will later be illustrated, all these issues need to be taken into account when referring to the institution of AP, and the audiobook versions of the novel as aural performances.

³³⁴ This is arguably because (a) Huck may have gathered that in order to 'make' books one is required to 'stretch' truth—as Twain does, and since (b) Huck too, just like everybody else he has encountered in his life, is most likely to have 'lied one time or another', he might very well have also lied, at least to some extent, when telling his story.

³³⁵ Although Huck endeavours throughout the novel to set Jim free, it is ultimately revealed that he was in fact already legally set free, following the death of Miss Watson and in accordance with her will. Unbeknownst to Huck, Tom knew this full well, yet preferred to play along merely for the sake of adventure. Arguably, this is a dual deception at play: one the one hand, Tom's deceiving of Huck; on the other hand, as the story is told after the fact, Huck's deceiving of the readers.

It is interesting to note in this respect that one of the novel's manuscripts, according to Doyno, reveals the words 'Reported by Mark Twain' written in Twain's handwriting on the top of the first page.³³⁶ Effectively, as the novel's narrator, Huck can be understood as a character who both (a) does not fully understand what it is that he sees and experiences, and (b) reveals through narrating the reality of the world he inhabits. Huck's perception of his literary world in many respects embodies Twain's socio-cultural criticism of his (and the readers') shared literal reality.³³⁷ This no doubt strengthens the sense that one of Twain's possible objectives was to have the readers identify the novel not so much as his own work, but rather as Huck's, notwithstanding Huck's inability to read or write. For example, after Huck's raft crashes near their home, the Grangerfords take Huck in, feed him and clothe him. Under their care, Huck is also introduced to their life of advantage coupled with what he realises to be senseless violence. The Shepherdsons are the family whose feud with Huck's hosts leads him to question the virtue and sanity of prolonging a fight for generations, especially since it registers with him that none of them seem to even remember what their feud is actually about. Eliot considers the passages depicting the feud between the two families as a 'masterpiece' on Twain's part. He maintains that had Twain written them in his own voice or as an omniscient storyteller, rather than in Huck's voice and as Huck's own story, Twain could not have employed the 'economy and restraint, with just the right details' that essentially enable the readers to exercise their 'own moral reflections'.³³⁸

³³⁶ Doyno, *Writing Huck Finn*, 40.

³³⁷ Referring, for instance, to the humour and language employed in the novel, Hearn explains that the voice of the narrator effectively evokes the overall tone of the novel: 'Suggestion is an important element of humour, and Twain knew just how far he could go with implied vulgarity. [...] Twain through Huck was a master of euphemism. [...] Maybe Sam Clemens swore, but it is not in Huck Finn's nature [...] to use profanity.' Hearn, introduction to the Annotated *Huckleberry Finn*, xxxiii-xxxiv.

³³⁸ Eliot, "An Introduction to *Huckleberry Finn*," 19.

According to Doyno, Twain's choice to create a novel with 'an almost illiterate narrator' raises a number of major issues, and he argues, for instance, that 'Twain's exploration of the value of fiction is affected by his choice of a narrative consciousness'.³³⁹ In limiting the narration of the novel to Huck's voice, Twain essentially imposes a reading that requires one to consistently account for the singular perspective of Huck's character.³⁴⁰ Doyno argues that while Twain successfully sustains a 'child's tone', one must nevertheless 'be continuously sensitive to the possibility of overlap of authorial and narrator's voices, since both are planners, relaters, and commentators'.³⁴¹ In contrast to the refined prose that a so-called standard literary work might otherwise require, Twain appears to employ Huck's illiteracy as a kind of rhetorical device aimed at making his character seem more honest than any other typical narrator or author might be presumed to be. In essence, Huck's character, both in what he says and in how he says it, appears to give one a sense of confidence that he will spare his readers from any editing or stylisation and honestly present them with the raw unvarnished facts of the matter.³⁴² Nevertheless, and notwithstanding his being the narrator, one should obviously not confuse Huck's linguistic proficiency with that of Twain.³⁴³ Appropriately, when considering an audiobook version of the novel, a proficient performer would thus

³³⁹ Doyno, *Writing Huck Finn*, 40.

³⁴⁰ Railton similarly maintains that Twain apparently found Huck's illiteracy the most useful way to emphasise his place at the margins of society. He argues that the fact that Huck is illiterate not only fulfils one of the postmodern criteria, but is also what allows Twain to realise his 'project as a 19th-century realist writer'. Railton, *Mark Twain*, 51

³⁴¹ Doyno, *Writing Huck Finn*, 45.

³⁴² In Doyno's own words, 'Huck does not appreciate restrictions or need boundaries. He keeps letting the reader share his situation [...] and the process creates a sympathetic identification of reader with narrator. Because Huck sounds confident and trustworthy, the reader enters Huck's world confident that a mixed condition is better.' Doyno, *Writing Huck Finn*, 44.

³⁴³ Just as Twain endowed *Tom Sawyer* with a narrator who speaks in the standard correct American English of an educated adult, he endowed *Huck Finn* with a narrator who conveys his own story in an ungrammatical vernacular. Huck's illiteracy, in effect, manifests Twain's literary proficiency.

be required to manifest their own skills as a performer who is very much proficient in language and words by portraying Huck's lack thereof.

4.3 Embedded Dialects

In considering the relationship between reading and listening, I find that *Huck Finn* constitutes a unique exception that in effect proves the rule. Indeed, its construction appears to demonstrate that there are, in fact, certain audiobooks that *can*, under certain circumstances, replace the actual reading of the original book. This is particularly evident in cases where the recorded performance is able to provide one with something that the original printed work cannot. Although both the original printed work and its audiobook version would essentially consist of the same written text, the exploration of the audiobook versions of *Huck Finn* has the potential of contributing a new outlook to one's aesthetic experience of aural performances as artworks.³⁴⁴

In some respects, one might argue that an audiobook has the potential to evoke Huck's illiteracy by giving him the opportunity of literally *telling* his story, instead of struggling with his inability to express it in writing. Railton, in this respect, not only maintains that Huck's voice is 'vividly conversational', but also points out that it had been suggested that, in effect, his story 'should be read essentially as an oral narrative'.³⁴⁵ Effectively, listening to a *good* aural version of the novel could greatly enhance one's aesthetic experience of the novel. There exists a particularly delicate balance in the novel between Huck's point of view and Twain's own social criticism, wit

³⁴⁴ Arguably, while the average listener may only hear one audiobook version of the novel, an avid listener could enjoy comparing different performances. Indeed, as an aesthetic experience, even the average film-goer could potentially enjoy seeing two different adaptations of the same work.

³⁴⁵ Railton, *Mark Twain*, 53.

and satire. Twain's distinctive literary voice should be apprehended through Huck's fictional voice and his telling of the story. Huck's character is obviously not at all aware that the story he wishes to tell (i.e., to those whom he perceives as his readers) encompasses all that Twain wishes to deliver to *his* readers. On the printed page, this becomes evident through Twain's construction of the manner in which Huck conveys his story. Appropriately, this would also dictate the manner in which a performer might choose to portray Huck's character in an audiobook. Indeed, a performer would be required to maintain an appropriate balance between Huck's telling of his own story and the fact that the novel itself was written by Twain. Furthermore, since Huck is, after all, a young boy, what can be regarded as his innocence, for instance, serves as a vehicle for articulating Twain's criticism. His youth, predominantly, seems to underline his inability to comprehend moral decisions that adults are required to make. As Doyno points out,

Huck's unique blend of innocence, practicality, spiritedness, and literalness create a disarmingly appealing, lifelike character. And these attributes carry thematic importance and may coincide with or reflect parts of a putative national character. Twain's achievement involves the use of Huck's voice, full of freshness and eagerness, as a wistfully striking contrast to the world's bleak reality.³⁴⁶

Similarly, Eliot maintains that the *style* of the novel is in fact the 'style of Huck' and thus there is essentially nothing in Twain's use of dialect, intentional misspelling of words or grammatical and idiomatic idiosyncrasies that can 'destroy the illusion that these are Huck's own words. It is not only in the way in which he tells his story, but in the details he remembers, that Huck is true to himself'.³⁴⁷ As will be further explained in the section concerning issues of racial sensitivity which the novel famously challenges, it should be

³⁴⁶ Doyno, *Writing Huck Finn*, 40–41.

³⁴⁷ Eliot, "An Introduction to Huckleberry Finn," 19.

pointed out that Huck's character has literally no sense that his words, or even his distinct outlook, might in any way be offending anyone—be they a character in the novel or the readers. Consider, for example, Huck's innocent assumption that Jim is the rightful property of Miss Watson.³⁴⁸ Huck's naivety, in this respect, seems to represent another aspect which distinguishes his character from Tom's. This is also rooted in the fact that Huck narrates his own novel.³⁴⁹ While both boys perceive the world they inhabit through the eyes of children, their perspectives, and the manner in which they comprehend their surroundings, are depicted quite differently: namely, whereas Tom's understanding of his world is representative of the kinds of books he reads, Huck's seems to derive from first-hand experience.³⁵⁰ When listening to any audiobook version of Twain's novel, this too would be something worth bearing in mind. That is to say, one should evaluate whether or not (and to what extent) this characterisation of Huck appears to be taken into consideration by any particular performer. Consequently, a performer would be required to make decisions concerning the nature of Huck's character and the manner in which he tells his story.

³⁴⁸ That Huck proclaims this notion, and indeed quite unapologetically, will be discussed in the forthcoming section, examining the role that racial issues play with respect to this novel's internal logic.

³⁴⁹ Tom's innocence takes the form of childhood nostalgia and explicit refusal to grow up, told from the point of view of a narrator reflecting on past events. Tom's character seems to live his life and define the value of his actions according to the books he has read (such as the Bible, the stories in *The Arabian Nights* and his references to books about pirates and robbers). His perception of reality is in effect achieved through the prism of literary stories. Huck's narration and perception of reality seems to demonstrate the problems that might arise from seeing the world through Tom's eyes.

³⁵⁰ Railton points out that while robbers, for instance, are perceived by Tom as chivalrous and brave and that one should therefore aspire to join them, Huck's actual life experience has taught him that they are usually mean, they stink of whisky and that one should thus aim to avoid them. Railton argues that this notion encompasses 'the rhythm of realist novels as a genre', which underlines the 'stark actualities' of one's world, rather than some romantic ideal which cannot be realised. Railton, *Mark Twain*, 52–53. In the same vein, Eliot maintains that Huck's character appears both passive and impassive, and seems to remain a victim of events in the world he inhabits, regardless of whether or not Huck takes part in these events. Nevertheless, Eliot argues that 'in his acceptance of his world and of what it does to him and others, he is more powerful than his world, because he is more aware than any other person in it.' Eliot, "An Introduction to Huckleberry Finn," 18.

Twain also endows *Huck Finn* with a unique literary device that underlines the variety of distinctively American dialects and vernaculars spoken by the characters. This device, when exploited correctly in an aural performance, demonstrates the manner in which an aesthetically good audiobook version of this particular novel, could serve as a possible substitute for reading the actual book. The novel includes a famous opening ‘Explanatory’ which reads as follows:

IN this book a number of dialects are used, to wit: the Missouri Negro dialect; the extremest form of the backwoods South-Western dialect; the ordinary “Pike-County” dialect; and four modified varieties of this last. The shadings have not been done in a haphazard fashion, or by guess-work; but pains-takingly, and with the trustworthy guidance and support of personal familiarity with these several forms of speech.

I make this explanation for the reason that without it many readers would suppose that all these characters were trying to talk alike and not succeeding.

THE AUTHOR.³⁵¹

Twain’s novel constitutes the first American vernacular work of literary fiction. The different speech patterns reflect the different levels of intellect and/or education of the various characters, as well as their sophistication and socio-economic status, race, and gender. This serves as a remarkable device in the novel’s development of characterisation. Ultimately, as the different dialects, accents, speech patterns, etc., exist merely in print, Twain essentially makes one *hear* them by means of spelling, grammar, syntax, vocabulary and so forth. Thus, the different manner in which individual characters speak and sound like is quite literally ‘sounded out’ by the readers in their own heads, as they follow Twain’s construction of the words on the page.

³⁵¹ Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 5.

Herein, however, resides the precise reason why *Huck Finn* is an exception and one of the reasons why it constitutes an interesting case study: it raises the question for readers who may never in their lives have actually heard the various dialects that Twain has deployed throughout his book. As these readers would simply be unable to identify the dialects from the printed page, not only would their understanding and experience of the book not be fully realised, but also their putative aesthetic evaluation of the book would be impaired.³⁵² Thus, when one sets out to aesthetically evaluate an audiobook version of Twain's *Huck Finn* one would need to consider whether or not a particular performer had indeed succeeded in adequately portraying these dialects in the aural performance.³⁵³ In other words, one would need to examine the extent to which the performer manifests and exhibits the internal logic of Twain's novel.³⁵⁴ If one happens to be ill-acquainted with the dialects that Twain had utilised in the text, one will not be able to identify whether or not the performer has successfully done his/her job. Subsequently one would not be able to properly evaluate the degree to which the performed text, as an AP work, helps one better distinguish one dialect from another. Hence, if one is indeed not acquainted with Twain's dialects, one might in fact benefit more from listening to a good audiobook version of Twain's novel than from actually reading the original work. If one reads the book, without fully understanding what one

³⁵² Arguably, the novel itself should allow one to imagine or hear in one's head the different dialects that are rendered by the words on the printed page. Nevertheless, one would surely need to be acquainted with what they *actually* sound like.

³⁵³ Knox, for instance, when referring to Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1869), maintains that the novel's cast of characters 'is so large that it has traditionally presented problems to translators needing to bring to the English language the idiosyncratic argot, vernacular, and diverse characteristics of speech of a wide variety of stations and classes of persons', and by the same token, 'presents [...] an almost overwhelming challenge to a performer doing a voice performance of the work. Thus [...] the defrayed labor of listening is gained at the expense of the phenomenal amount of work involved in voicing the performance. But the labor of performance gives body to voice and is instrumental in shaping the presence of the narrator.' Knox, "Hearing Hardy, Talking Tolstoy," 128.

³⁵⁴ This would constitute an example of how Graves's notion of beauty works in practice.

is *supposed* to hear in one's own head, one might very well miss out on just about the same things one might miss out on when listening to an inadequate performance.³⁵⁵

If one is unable to identify the various dialects in the printed form of *Huck Finn*, one will have no idea how a particular character is supposed to sound. Effectively, if the aesthetic quality of a particular performance happened to escape one, one could subsequently form a misguided aesthetic evaluation of that performance (i.e., evaluating it as bad, when it might in fact be good).³⁵⁶ Those who *are* acquainted with the dialects in Twain's book and their various degrees of subtlety, will not only be able to identify them when reading the book (due, to a large extent, to Twain's ingenious engineering of words on the page), but they should also be able to identify them in a particular audiobook recording. Just as the performer of an audiobook is expected to know how to perform a particular text, the audience is expected to know how to listen to it. Furthermore, the very act of listening to an audiobook—absorbing a particular work through this distinctive aesthetic experience—has the potential of helping one understand how to listen to this kind of aural performance as the recording progresses.³⁵⁷ When confronted with a number of audiobook versions, a person who is

³⁵⁵ According to Wittkower, since readers of poetry might find themselves, on occasion, sensing some bewilderment in terms of the proper manner in which a particular phrase should be read or uttered, one might find the special nature of the audiobook quite helpful. Wittkower, "A Preliminary Phenomenology," 224–25. If audiobooks indeed have the power to assist one in reading a poem, essentially by hearing the manner in which it is supposed to be read, audiobooks should likewise assist one in comprehending the appropriate reading of any given text.

³⁵⁶ Following NITA's R4 (i.e., the 'Artworld Public'), the audience of AP would similarly be required to be 'prepared in some degree to understand an artwork'. One of the most popular and commonly held theories about art concludes that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder'. Notwithstanding its massive popularity, as NITA quite clearly demonstrates, the deficiency of this notion lies in the fact that it simply has nothing to do with art. In essence, while this statement may tell one a thing or two about the 'beholder', it nevertheless tells one absolutely nothing about art or about what the beholder beholds. If the beholder, however, is indeed 'prepared in some degree to understand' what s/he is beholding—rather than what s/he finds to their liking—that is a different matter altogether. As stated, it is their minimum responsibility.

³⁵⁷ Now, consider again the manner in which one should engage a typical Van Gogh 'Cypress' painting.

not acquainted with or unable to identify an aesthetically *good* performance of Twain's novel would be required to take that evaluation on trust from an expert.³⁵⁸ By the same token, a well-performed aural recording of *Huck Finn* would provide a person who *is* acquainted with the various specific American dialects an enhanced aesthetic experience of both Twain's novel as an AP artwork, and of the AP artwork in its own right.

Since it is Huck who narrates the novel and conveys the story to the readers, Twain's language can be said to mimic Huck's own regional speech patterns. In effect, the novel *sounds* as if it is told in one distinct voice. Huck is to some extent obliged to mimic the distinct speech patterns of others. All the other characters are filtered through Huck's narration. When they speak, they are in fact heard via *Huck's voice* and point of view. Twain's use of regional dialect includes the local colour of Huck's surroundings. Huck could therefore be perceived as 'mimicking' the speech patterns of the other characters, and in effect delivering *his* rendition of their speech patterns.³⁵⁹ In creating an audiobook version of the novel, a performer would be required to choose whether or not to bestow different voices on the other characters in the book, maintaining their distinct regional dialects as they appear on the page. Alternatively, a

³⁵⁸ One would for the most part trust an expert's assertion that the *Mona Lisa* is one of the greatest paintings in history. One would not necessarily have to attain a comprehensive understanding of sixteenth-century Neoplatonic artworks (even though, as NITA demonstrates, one *should*). In the same vein, one would also usually take 'on trust' that a particular vineyard of a particular region is sensational in producing a particular kind of wine. Nevertheless, just as one possesses the ability to *see* for oneself—in both senses of the word—*why* the *Mona Lisa* is a remarkable painting or *why* a particular vineyard is exceptional, one can also learn what constitutes a good AP artwork. When one both identifies *and* experiences a particular internal logic, one is able to intensify one's aesthetic experience. This is arguably evident with any kind of cultural institution, from the Artworld and religion to wine and world cuisine. In other words, a fuller and more comprehensive grasp of an internal logic makes for a more rewarding aesthetic experience. As will be made clear later on, casting directors, too, in this respect, are essentially required to possess the ability to sense which actor *should* be best suited for recording a certain text for an audiobook release.

³⁵⁹ I will dedicate the forthcoming section of this chapter to precisely the importance of Huck's narration and point of view.

performer could narrate the novel as if Huck were ‘impersonating’ them, in effect emphasising *his* point of view, how *he* hears them, and the impression they left on *him*. Thus, whether an aural performance should embody a variety of idiosyncratic voices, or convey a consistent vocal identity (i.e., of *Huck’s* voice, or rather the performer’s interpretation thereof) surely constitutes an essential question that the creators of an audiobook version would be required to consider. Consequently, a performer is required to bear in mind that the audiobook should manifest the fact that although the novel is narrated by Huck, it is, after all, written by Twain. Huck’s distinctive voice as the storyteller notwithstanding, the novel also manifests Twain’s unique voice as an author.³⁶⁰ As this is an inherent aspect of the novel’s internal logic, a good audiobook version of the novel should accordingly embody and manifest this quality.

4.4 Two Voices: Huck, the Narrator vs. Twain, the Humourist

Although it addresses such issues as slavery in nineteenth-century America or the Civil War, and despite assuming the guise of an epic adventure chronicle, *Huck Finn* remains an exceptionally humorous novel. As Sacvan Bercovitch points out, ‘It is universally acknowledged that Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is funny. That’s one of the few points of consensus, amidst all the controversies over its meaning’.³⁶¹ Twain’s remarkable wit, for instance, and finely-tuned ability to satirise the follies of his society and surroundings, are to this day held in very high esteem. Quite often with Twain,

³⁶⁰ Arguably, what might appear as Huck’s filtering of the regional dialects of the other characters, could be regarded as Twain’s satirised version of what they sound like. Similarly, one could argue that in distinguishing the various characters on the listener’s behalf, a performer is required to express Huck’s perception of how the other characters are supposed to be heard.

³⁶¹ Sacvan Bercovitch, "Deadpan Huck: Or, What’s Funny about Interpretation," *Kenyon Review* 24, no. 3/4 (Summer–Autumn 2002): 90.

attention must be paid to the manner in which he treats solemn matters from a comic perspective. Therefore, despite Eliot's suggestion that the style of the novel is rooted in the style of Huck's character, the distinct style of its author is no less important. Appropriately, when considering the aural performances of Twain's novel, one must take into account the manner in which Twain's humour should be manifested. Indeed, the performer cannot be a stranger to comedy. To perform *Huck Finn* well, it is essential that at the very least one possesses the ability to tell a joke. Similarly, a performer should also be aware, for instance, that a large number of passages in the novel are implicitly ironic as opposed to other passages that are more obviously humorous.

It is with the above in mind that I now turn to Twain's inclusion of the short opening 'Notice' addressing the readers of the novel. I have purposely delayed referring to this Notice, even though it appears *before* the aforementioned opening 'Explanatory' alluding to the novel's use of regional dialects. In fact, the Notice constitutes the first piece of text that the readers encounter as they begin reading the novel:

PERSONS attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot.

BY ORDER OF THE AUTHOR,
PER G. G., CHIEF OF ORDNANCE.³⁶²

Explicitly identifying what is known as 'deadpan',³⁶³ Bercovitch explains why the Notice is crucial to interpreting the primary type of humour with which Twain endows the

³⁶² Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 3.

³⁶³ Deadpan, according to Wikipedia, is 'an adjective, describing a deliberately emotionless and otherwise impassive, matter-of-fact manner'. *Wikipedia*, s.v. "deadpan," accessed December 30, 2015, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/deadpan>. Merriam-Webster regards the term as both an adjective and adverb, explicitly referencing 'deadpan comedy'. It is defined as being 'marked by an impassive matter-of-fact manner, style, or expression'. *Merriam-Webster Online*, s.v. "deadpan," accessed December 30, 2015, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/deadpan>.

novel. He asserts that it is ‘the comic form familiar to Americans through a wide range of folklore [...] and particularly the Western Tall Tale. [...] In Twain’s case, the joke often reflects the peculiar historical conditions of the Southwestern frontier’.³⁶⁴ For Bercovitch,

The deadpan connective, “G. G.,” links all the above (narrative, reader, author, and protagonist), and the Notice itself is a directive [...] *against* interpretation [...] but a deadpan directive, which therefore requires interpretation. For obviously the Notice is a form of kidding around, a prank of sorts; and then, too, there’s a satirical side to it, a subversive laughter in the “order” that ridicules authority.³⁶⁵

The Notice certainly seems to set a particular tone for the novel, particularly of what is yet to come. It is integral to the novel in that it ostensibly offers guidelines for how to read it.³⁶⁶ In effect, it even dictates the appropriate manner in which a performer should narrate these particular lines. Moreover, in addition to its serving as an introduction to the *kind* of humour one might expect to encounter throughout the novel, the particular wording proves essential in another aspect as well, and corresponds with the fact that the novel is delivered in the first-person.³⁶⁷ As an autobiography, it could be perceived as an extended monologue. This is crucial, especially as the novel declares itself as such before the ‘actual’ narrative commences.

As I will demonstrate with the audiobook versions of *Huck Finn*, as well as with my forthcoming case studies, it would appear that the audiobook, as an AP artwork, constitutes the obvious medium for manifesting those texts which can be perceived as

³⁶⁴ Sacvan Bercovitch, "What's Funny About *Huck Finn*," *New England Review* 20, no. 1 (Winter 1999): 8.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁶⁶ Its inherent importance notwithstanding, as I will show in the section dedicated to my concrete analyses, some audiobook versions have apparently made the decision not to include it. The reasons for such a course of action completely elude me.

³⁶⁷ According to Hearn, Twain had originally chosen to write the Notice with the word ‘book’ instead of ‘narrative’. He most likely chose the latter in order to reinforce the illusion of the novel as Huck’s autobiography. Hearn, introduction to the Annotated *Huckleberry Finn*, 3.

extended monologues, memoirs or autobiographies. When played by a performer, the speaker in the text 'becomes' a narrator who exists, virtually, within the confines of the aural medium. Moreover, one's engagement with a particular audiobook takes on a distinctively personal quality. In effect, the fact that Huck is telling his own personal story becomes a virtual testimony in an audiobook, rather than the work of fiction that it actually is. Thus, there are a number of important aesthetic questions one should ask when setting out to produce an audiobook version of Twain's novel. For example, whether or not the novel should be performed by a young actor, and perhaps even by a child who should be roughly the same age as Huck is in the book.³⁶⁸ Ultimately, a good performer would be required to convey the nature of Twain's novel both as a pseudo-autobiography while at the same time evincing Twain's intentions as the actual author—part of which involves the unique humour with which he endows the novel.

According to Bercovitch, Twain scholars have calculated a body-count of 33 corpses mentioned in the novel. Thus, he argues, 'getting killed is a key to the novel's plot-line' and that the 'ordnance' quite appropriately warns the readers that seeking a plot is punishable by death.³⁶⁹ It is precisely in such aspects that he identifies Twain's deadpan comedy.³⁷⁰ The Notice, in this respect, indicates to the reader at the very

³⁶⁸ As I will demonstrate in the final section of this chapter—which is dedicated to my concrete analysis and comparison of different audiobook versions of *Huck Finn*—it appears as though the novel has predominantly been recorded by older performers.

³⁶⁹ Bercovitch, "What's Funny About *Huck Finn*", 18.

³⁷⁰ In his own words: 'usually deadpan artists specialize in one or another of these ways of being funny—[...] innocent, satirical, and sinister—but the humor reaches its highest pitch [...] when the joke reverberates with all three layers of fun [...]. What makes [*Huck Finn*] distinctive [...] is Twain's deliberate and sustained use of the third, sinister [...] virtually a reversal of conventional techniques. The novel is [...] a great work of social satire whose comic mode overturns the very tradition of deadpan it builds upon. Ostensibly that tradition belongs to the narrator-hero. Huck speaks "gravely" and often plays the Trickster; but the funny thing is, he's not a humorist [...] Huck has a stylized deadpan; his voice may sound comic to the comically disposed listener, but actually it's troubled, earnest. [...] For of course the "teller" is really Mark Twain, the Comic Writer, and this deadpan artist is not straight-faced (as Huck is), but smiling. [...] [T]he deadpan artist is Mark Twain, wearing the Comic Mask, doing his best to conceal the fact that he even dimly suspects that there's anything grave, let alone sinister, about his story [...] [...] [...]

beginning precisely what should and what should not be taken seriously. Conceivably, its three short lines contain the implied instructions for the inherently comic way they are supposed to *sound*. Bercovitch's analysis in this respect appears to be both simple and insightful:

[T]hink of the penalties for trespassing (prosecution, banishment, death), and the deadly pun that reinforces them: "ordnance" is not (just) a colloquial misspelling; technically it means "cannon or artillery"; a "Chief of Ordnance" is an officer ready to blow you to pieces. All this makes for an especially funny situation with regard to the act of interpretation. For the narrative itself—the book that's the subject of the directive against interpretation—*demand*s interpretation all the time. We can't get any of its jokes without figuring out motive and plot, and we can't possibly do that without assuming a moral position. [...] There's a joke here that involves us in a contradiction: the official order prohibits interpretation but the narrative demands interpretation. The nub or snapper is that the Notice is *calling attention* to interpretation. It's reminding us of our tendency to look for plot, moral, and motive, and then the narrative itself does the rest of the work: it virtually forces us to interpret. [...] There's something funny about this invitation to interpret—it's a Trickster's invitation.³⁷¹ [emphases in original]

Twain's own essay, 'How To Tell a Story', illustrates this matter quite well in describing his approach to the humorous story as literary form.³⁷² Predominantly, this essay appears to underline the seemingly simple fact that there should be distinctly different of ways of *telling* particular types of stories. Twain confesses, 'I do not claim that I can tell a story as it ought to be told. I only claim to know how a story ought to be told, for I have been almost daily in the company of the most expert storytellers for many years'.³⁷³ He makes it clear that the manner of telling a particular story, while

This Trickster has conned us, somehow diverted our attention away from the real point, and we have to go back over the story in order to recognize its nub.' Ibid., 9–10

³⁷¹ Ibid., 12–13.

³⁷² Although extrinsic to the novel itself, one might associate its insights with Twain's overarching literary voice, thereby potentially utilising this essay to inform one's understating of the distinct role of humour in the internal logic of *Huck Finn*.

³⁷³ Mark Twain, "How To Tell a Story," in *How To Tell a Story and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1898), 3.

appropriate and unique for the telling of that one, would not necessarily accord with telling another. In essence, different stories can be said to require different ways of telling them. Twain appears to be implying that each particular story requires a distinctly different kind of internal logic. He maintains, for example, that of the several kinds of stories in existence, there is only one which can be regarded as difficult: namely, that which he refers to as the humorous kind.³⁷⁴ Subsequently, he both describes its distinctive artistry and highlights the importance of the manner in which this particular kind of story should be told:

[T]he humorous story depends for its effect on the *manner* of the telling; the comic story and the witty story upon the *matter*. [...] The humorous story is strictly a work of art,—high and delicate art,—[sic] and only an artist can tell it; but no art is necessary in telling the comic and the witty story; anybody can do it.³⁷⁵ [emphases in original]

Twain also clearly differentiates between the manner in which the telling of a story would appear on the page and the manner it should be delivered 'by word of mouth'.³⁷⁶

Furthermore, in a manner which could arguably be compared with the immortal advice that Hamlet affords the company of Players who arrive at Elsinore, Twain argues that

The art of telling a humorous story—understand, I mean by word of mouth, not print—was created in America, and has remained at home. The humorous story is told gravely; the teller does his best to conceal the fact that he even dimly suspects that there is anything funny about it; but the teller of the comic story tells you beforehand that it is one of the funniest things he has ever heard, then tells it with eager delight, and is the first person to laugh when he gets through. Very often [...] the rambling and disjointed humorous story finishes with a nub, point, snapper, or whatever you like to call it. Then the listener must be alert, for in many cases the teller will divert attention from that nub by dropping it in a carefully casual and indifferent way, with the pretense that he does not know it is a nub. [...] But the teller of the

³⁷⁴ In deciphering what this particular kind of story is, Twain in effect identifies and distinguishes three kinds of literary genres: 'the humorous story is American, the comic story is English, the witty story is French'. Twain, "How To Tell a Story," 3.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

comic story does not slur the nub; he shouts at you—every time. And when he prints it, in England, France, Germany and Italy, he italicises it, puts some whooping exclamation-points after it, and sometimes explains it in a parenthesis. All of which is very depressing, and makes one want to renounce joking and lead a better life.³⁷⁷

To be sure, this distinction between the possible ways of *telling* is essential. Ultimately, it contributes to understanding precisely how a particular story should be told. I find this is to some extent Twain's way of emphasising the internal logic of his own work. That 'the listener must be alert', for instance, and focus his/her attention on the teller so that the 'nub' does not go unnoticed, hints at the manner in which one might approach the aesthetic evaluation of a performance.

In one of his major examples, Bercovitch refers to a famous passage in Chapter 32 of the novel, where once Huck's adventures on the river come to an end, he meets the character of Sally Phelps, Tom's aunt, who mistakes him for her nephew. As happens elsewhere in the novel—in a passage I shall refer to later on—Huck plays along and takes on the identity of another (in this case Tom's). Once he discovers that Sally was expecting Tom, who was supposed to have arrived via steamboat, Huck proceeds (in the guise of Tom) to improvise an excuse accounting for his tardiness. Huck's explanation shows what makes this particular passage 'a key joint of the narrative'.³⁷⁸ The following is a short excerpt from their exchange:

"We been expecting you a couple of days and more. What kep' you?—boat get aground?"

"Yes'm—she—"

"Don't say yes'm—say Aunt Sally. Where'd she get aground?"

I didn't rightly know what to say, because I didn't know whether the boat would be coming up the river or down. But I go a good deal on instinct; and my instinct said she would be coming up—from down towards Orleans. That didn't help me much, though; for I didn't know the names of bars down that way. I see I'd got to invent a bar, or forget

³⁷⁷ Twain, "How To Tell a Story," 4–5.

³⁷⁸ Bercovitch, "What's Funny About *Huck Finn*," 17.

the name of the one we got aground on—or—Now I struck an idea, and fetched it out:

“It warn’t the grounding—that didn’t keep us back but a little. We blowed out a cylinder-head.”

“Good gracious! anybody hurt?”

“No’m. Killed a nigger.”

“Well, it’s lucky; because sometimes people do get hurt. Two years ago last Christmas your uncle Silas was coming up from New Orleans on the old Lally Rook, and she blowed out a cylinder-head and crippled a man. And I think he died afterwards. He was a Baptist. Your uncle Silas knowed a family in Baton Rouge that knowed his people very well. Yes, I remember now, he did die. Mortification set in, and they had to amputate him. But it didn’t save him. Yes, it was mortification—that was it. He turned blue all over, and died in the hope of a glorious resurrection. They say he was a sight to look at.”³⁷⁹

According to Bercovitch, this passage ‘unites all three sections of the novel (Hannibal, where Tom figures prominently; the journey down the river; and Huck’s adventures at the Phelps); and it connects all three layers of Trickster fun (innocent, satirical, and sinister)’.³⁸⁰ He argues that it also ‘demonstrates Twain’s hermeneutical imperative’ in that one has no choice but to ‘interpret this scene’, which is a direct consequence of its humour.³⁸¹ The joke implicit in Huck’s lie—namely, that nobody was hurt, with the exception of the ‘nigger’ being killed—is diverted by Twain through Aunt Sally’s response and the casual manner in which she plunges into the story of uncle Silas. Bercovitch concludes that one should bear in mind Twain’s ‘instruction’ calling for a listener to be ‘alert’ to the teller’s diversions from the nub. Thus, Aunt Sally’s Baptist story is rendered an elaborate ‘decoy’ on Twain’s part.³⁸² Beyond the seven points he outlines with respect to Huck’s ‘throwaway line’,³⁸³ what seems most important about Bercovitch’s analysis is that the analysis *itself* presupposes not only what a reader (or

³⁷⁹ Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 350.

³⁸⁰ Bercovitch, “What’s Funny About *Huck Finn*,” 10.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

³⁸² *Ibid.*

³⁸³ *Ibid.*

listener, when audiobooks are concerned) is supposedly meant to receive from the text, but also in what manner the teller (or performer) is supposed to deliver it.³⁸⁴

Conceivably, the implication of Twain's aforementioned insights alluding to how certain stories should be told, coupled with the fact that he famously held public readings of his own work, appears to be that his work virtually extends an invitation to be read aloud.³⁸⁵ Effectively, one might argue that when creating an audiobook of his work, a performer would benefit from considering Twain's insights as ostensible instructions for a proper delivery performance. Now, on the one hand, Twain initially asserted that

written things are not for speech, [...] their form is literary; they are stiff, inflexible; and will not lend themselves to happy and effective delivery with the tongue—where their purpose is merely to entertain, not to instruct; they have to be [...] broken up [...] and turned into the common forms of unpremeditated talk—otherwise they will bore the house, not entertain it.³⁸⁶

On the other hand, following a week of performing his work, in the form of memorised passages, Twain concluded that the words 'transformed themselves into flexible talk, with all their obstructing precisenesses and formalities gone out of them for good.'³⁸⁷ Arguably, the success of Twain's public readings potentially constitutes an additional strand for consideration in respect of the novel's internal logic.

³⁸⁴ Drawing on Twain himself, Bercovitch regards this matter in terms of 'listener' and 'teller'. This appears to comply with (a) one's aesthetic experience of Twain's novel (following a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of its internal logic), and (b) the notion of evaluating the audiobook versions of *Huck Finn* as AP artworks (particularly with respect to the manner in which a performer is inclined to deliver, or succeeds in appropriately delivering, Twain's humour).

³⁸⁵ Twain, after being 'hit by the Panic of 1884 [...], decided to "stump the Union" on a four-month public reading tour; his first since 1874'. Hearn, introduction to the Annotated *Huckleberry Finn*, ii. Although urged to go on a solo tour—due to public demand—Twain felt unable to cope with the strain of sustaining an entire evening's performance. Consequently, Twain toured alongside his fiend, Southern novelist George Washington Cable. The latter, Hearn explains, was 'a perfect partner for Twain, an experienced public speaker with a different aesthetic sensibility from Twain's. Cable could provide the pathos and Twain the Comedy'. Ibid., li–lii.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., lvii.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

In the same vein, recognising the identity of the novel as a ‘performance text’—or, rather as a written text that includes a number of passages identified by the manner in which Twain performed them for an audience—could serve as guideline for creating a putative audiobook version. Notwithstanding, despite being praised by most reviews and generally adored by audiences (so much so, in fact, that Twain and Cable often performed twice a day), the live readings appeared to prevail as an innovative and unconventional marketing ploy, and thereby were not well-received by all. As Hearn points out, they were even relegated to an act that degrades literature.³⁸⁸ At the same time, this also demonstrates that questions concerning a so-called aesthetic hierarchy (corresponding with the aforementioned reading vs. listening conundrum) are surely not a novelty. Consequently, I find that this in fact strengthens my own approach to audiobooks, highlighting the need to assign them a unique aesthetic category of their own. Once one similarly identifies Twain’s live readings as a kind of performance that evokes an aesthetic experience in its own right, one need not be concerned with questions pertaining to the ostensible degradation of literature as an art form.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁸ Ibid., liii–lv.

³⁸⁹ Consider, for instance, Western writer Hamlin Garland’s account of Twain’s live reading. Hamlin describes Twain’s voice as ‘flexible and with a fine compass. Running to very fine deep notes easily. He hits off his most delicious things with a raspy, dry, “rosen” voice. He has a habit of coughing drily that adds to his quizzical wit. [...] Never the ghost of a smile. Is an excellent elocutionist. Sighs deeply at times, with an irresistibly comic effect’. Ibid., liv. While some of Hamlin’s notes might be insightful in light of aurally performing Twain’s work, his account predominantly prevails as a reaction evoked by the aesthetics of a live event. Now, as a precursor to Chapter 6 of this study, it should be made clear that neither a public or ‘live’ reading, nor audio recordings thereof, can be classified as an AP artwork. Indeed, they do not comply with the aesthetic category. Cantril and Allport, for instance, identify a distinct difference between seeing a speaker talk at a public lecture and hearing that speaker on the radio. With the medium of radio, they explain, one is essentially ‘forced to grasp both obvious and subtle meanings’ relying on nothing but one’s ears—which consequently greatly reduces one’s ‘cues for judging the personality of a speaker and for comprehending his meaning’. Hadley Cantril and Gordon W. Allport, *History of Broadcasting: Radio to Television* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 10. What they regard as ‘cues for judging’ appears to constitute an inherent aspect of what informs one’s aesthetic appreciation. Conceivably, one can utilise those ‘cues’ for identifying a particular work’s internal logic.

4.5 Taking Offence: An 'Institutionally' Unrewarding Reading

Huck Finn can surely be regarded as Twain's masterpiece.³⁹⁰ At the same time, an inherent aspect of the novel's internal logic relates to its status as a fundamentally controversial work.³⁹¹ To this day, the novel seems to provoke a great deal of criticism both in light of its assumed lack of moral propriety in language and perceived racial insensitivity—what has been construed as its unapologetically racist content. Its place in the Western literary canon is often questioned and offered for re-consideration. Nonetheless, I would argue that its status as a legitimate work of literature *cannot* be questioned.³⁹² My intention throughout has been, and still remains, to analyse, compare and aesthetically appreciate a number of its audiobook manifestations. I do, however, sympathise with the concerns about the novel's apparently inherent racist nature. The handful of other objections pertaining to the novel's lack of sensitivity—in light of, for instance, gender, politics, and its own socio-cultural background—are likewise quite valid.³⁹³ To a great extent, these issues—particularly those associated with race and identity—have become an inherent aspect of the novel's internal logic. They prevail as

³⁹⁰ Arnold Weinstein, "Huckleberry Finn—The Banned Classic," Lecture #38, *Classics of American Literature (The Great Courses, The Teaching Company)*. See URL: www.thegreatcourses.com/courses/classics-of-american-literature.html, accessed March 19, 2016.

³⁹¹ As Hearn points out, Huck shows up for the first time in Chapter 6 of *Tom Sawyer*, where he is described as 'the juvenile pariah of the village'. Hearn, introduction to the Annotated *Huckleberry Finn*, 10. Arguably, *Huck Finn* itself similarly became something of a 'pariah' on its own merits.

³⁹² Having acquainted oneself with the workings of NITA, and attained an understanding of what can or cannot be regarded as an artwork under particular institutional circumstances, the novel's literary legitimacy cannot be challenged. In other words, it *is* a legitimate literary work. The question of whether or not it can be regarded as racist is a different matter altogether, and indeed a legitimate question. In viewing it as racist, one could find oneself facing the *moral* quandary of whether or not the novel should be accepted as part of the literary canon at all. As a moral question, one should seek an appropriate answer through exploring, for example, the role of ethics in the field of aesthetics.

³⁹³ The objections to *Huck Finn*, which one can trace back to its publication, have not always been raised for the same reasons. The portrayal of the Southerners, for instance, as ignorant and dim-witted sparked many reservations. The violence represented in the text, which can be said to be overt, uncompromising and cruel, is another aspect of the novel that some objected to. Nevertheless, it would appear that most objections pertain to the discomfort that readers and critics alike have experienced by being taken on a journey that is based on an unsettling companionship between an adult black male slave and a white male adolescent.

part of its world. Indeed, as these issues have been associated with the novel's *milieu* since its publication, they have effectively contributed to the place it holds in literary history. Consequently, one cannot simply discard or ignore them altogether. Thus, I wish to address the predominant challenges one might be confronted with when listening to an audiobook version of the novel, while taking into account the assumed objections regarding race, identity and cultural insensitivity.

Jim is one of the novel's two major characters. He is also one of the most famous in literary history. To be sure, his character became one of the reasons why Twain's book had in the past been (and, in fact, still is) subject to great controversy and debate. Even if one considers turning the proverbial blind eye to Jim's depiction as an African-American slave, there remains another major issue which has caused much concern: namely, the very fact that what the current trend in political correctness dictates one refer to as the 'N-word' appears throughout the novel no less than 219 times.³⁹⁴ This fact alone has prompted some school authorities to exclude Twain's book from their curriculum—including the Mark Twain Intermediate School of Fairfax, Virginia. Indeed, the extent of the perceived offence caused by the existence of this word in Twain's novel has even resulted in the publication of a number of 'nigger' devoid versions of the novel.³⁹⁵

Notwithstanding, to deliberately remove that word from the novel, making a point of replacing it with another, could, conceivably, not so much strengthen its ill-

³⁹⁴ Julie Bosman, "Publisher Tinkers With Twain," *New York Times*, January 4, 2011, accessed March 19, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/05/books/05huck.html>.

³⁹⁵ One such version was edited in 1982 by a teacher named John Wallace; another was edited by a professor of English named Alan Gribben and published in 2011 by NewSouth Books. In what can arguably be regarded as something of a grotesque misunderstanding of Twain's novel, both versions replaced the N-word with the word 'slave'. I am deliberately avoiding concerning myself with whether or not one can regard these 'nigger' devoid versions as censored. It is obviously much more than an issue of semantics, and interesting as it may be, this study is surely not the place to resolve it.

reputed offensive connotation, but rather effectively emphasise the misinterpretation of its use in the novel.³⁹⁶ American novelist Toni Morrison, for instance, identifies this as ‘a narrow notion of how to handle the offense Mark Twain’s use of the term "nigger" would occasion for black students and the corrosive effect it would have on white ones.’³⁹⁷ She states that it strikes her ‘as a purist yet elementary kind of censorship designed to appease adults rather than educate children. Amputate the problem, band-aid the solution’.³⁹⁸ Nonetheless, prior to establishing claims pertaining to racism, one should acquaint oneself with the novel’s socio-historical context. Morrison recounts, for instance, her initial encounter with Twain’s novel. Having chosen it ‘randomly’, reading it ‘without guidance or recommendation’, she depicts her experience as ‘deeply disturbing’, leaving her with sensations of ‘fear and alarm’.³⁹⁹ It was only when she reread the novel through the prisms of such scholars as Leslie Fiedler and Lionel Trilling that Morrison understood the importance of placing the novel within a particular context. By her own admission, reading the novel with their analysis in mind had enhanced her aesthetic experience considerably, with her initial response paling in comparison. She explains that while their insights helped her see things she had not noticed when engaging with the novel on her own, it was only because Fiedler and Trilling had essentially ‘ignored or rendered trivial’ the very things that made her feel ill

³⁹⁶ The words one uses can also be understood in terms of the distinction between institutional and brute facts—chiefly as this distinction is predominantly rooted in Nietzsche’s approach to language and ostensible ‘word games’. Words, by and large, need not be likened to ‘semitrailers’ that carry and lead their meaning wherever they go. Rather, it is one’s *intention*—instituted amid a particular given context—that bestows a discrete meaning on a certain word. Accordingly, in order, for instance, to cause offence, one would need to purposefully utilise a particular word with that specific intent in mind. By way of illustration, and with its dictionary definition notwithstanding, the word ‘bastard’, for example, can be utilised both as profanity *and* as a somewhat whimsical way of depicting one’s fortunate stroke of luck.

³⁹⁷ Toni Morrison, “*Huckleberry Finn*: An Amazing, Troubling Book,” in *Ethics, Literature, and Theory: An Introductory Reader*, ed. Stephen K. George (Lanham, Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield, 2005), 280.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 279.

at ease.⁴⁰⁰ Ultimately, to see the novel in its proper context, one should be obliged to acquire a degree of historical understanding. For instance, one should be mindful of the fact that the novel is firmly grounded in a particular American geography and consciousness. Explicitly, one should realise that what is now regarded as degrading and offensive was in the 1840s a colloquial term commonly used by whites and blacks alike. Fundamentally, one would need to understand that Twain incorporates the word 'nigger' in his book not as a racial slur, but as an elementary component of Huck's regional dialect. Thus, his use of the word becomes *essential* to Huck's vernacular narrative and to the entire style of the novel.⁴⁰¹ Arguably, had Twain employed any other word in place of the N-word, he would have in fact *falsified* Huck's voice. By endowing Huck with an unadulterated use of the word 'nigger', Twain ensures that the novel remains in tune with its own internal logic. At the same time, it enables him to amplify the ironic tone of the novel, thereby provoking one to criticise Huck's environment and what appears to be its automatically-prompted racist discourse.

An aural performance of the novel should therefore appropriately make full use of this word, as part of Huck's narration of his own story. It would obviously be a mistake to confuse the author's point of view with that of his characters.⁴⁰² One must not forget

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 280.

⁴⁰¹ Even if one might insist on perceiving the novel as inherently racist, it could be argued that the internal logic of the novel is dependent upon and stems from the fact Twain himself was raised in a racist South, which shaped his personal identity, and in effect the nature of his writing. Arguably, in this respect, even if he finds the white society which he depicts in the novel to be no less than deplorable, one could also maintain that Twain could not fully free himself from the stereotypes with which he grew up—dictating that he will in his perception forever remain superior to black slaves of his time.

⁴⁰² Particularly with *Huck Finn*, making that error results in a misinterpretation of the novel, wrongful accusations and condemnations, as well as the regretful (and arguably avoidable) taking of offence. When one reads the depiction of Jim, for instance, as 'Miss Watson's nigger', one should understand that these are Huck's words rather than Twain's. One should understand that this depiction manifests the socio-cultural perception that operated at that particular time in history. By the same token, a performer of an audiobook would be required to identify particular passages spoken by Huck as explicitly conveying the literary voice of Twain himself. Indeed, by allowing Huck to narrate his own story, Twain is able to say certain things he otherwise would not have been able to say.

Huck is telling the story. His narration—his distinctive voice—depicts *his* vision of *his* world. In a sense, this becomes the moral heart of the novel, and should therefore manifest in the audiobook version thereof. The performer should serve as a ‘vehicle’ for Huck’s voice and perception. Especially once acquainted with the scope of Twain’s writing, his distinct style, his humour and ironic outlook, one should make a distinction between the kind of language that Huck employs, on the one hand, and the literary manner in which Twain utilises it on the other. It is in this respect that Twain’s irony reveals itself loud and strong.

The PBS documentary *Born to Trouble: Adventures of Huck Finn* (2001), exploring the controversy surrounding the novel, features a scene in which a high school English teacher explains why she simply does not say the word aloud in class when she teaches the novel to her students. It demonstrates that the teacher is conscious that the utterance of the word—even in the specific context of a lesson that is dedicated to the novel—could indeed cause offence. Morrison, in this respect, asserts that ‘to hear the dread word spoken, and therefore sanctioned’ when she read Twain’s novel in the eighth grade, was embarrassing enough, and to read it hundreds of times in print embarrassed, bored and annoyed her, yet did not disturb her composure.⁴⁰³ Hence, an argument could be made that while seeing the word ‘nigger’ on the printed page may cause one to feel ill at ease, to hear the word, actually uttered aloud could be construed as even more offensive and disconcerting.⁴⁰⁴ Morrison, in my own terms, essentially managed to distinguish between the ‘brute’ facts (i.e., Twain’s employment of racist

⁴⁰³ Morrison, "*Huckleberry Finn*," 280.

⁴⁰⁴ Yet, just as one would be required to identify the particular context that justifies Twain’s use of the N-word—thereby setting aside the possible immediate offence it might provoke—one would likewise be required to accept the justifiable context of hearing the word spoken aloud on an audiobook version of the novel. Morrison, evidentially, required a number of close readings to do so. *Ibid.*, 280–81.

and offensive words and themes) and the ‘institutional’ ones (i.e., the internal logic of the novel).⁴⁰⁵ Thus, to record an audiobook version of the novel and replace the N-word just because one might be more offended when hearing it spoken aloud than one might be when reading it in print, is quite simply not a good enough reason. In her own words, Morrison recounts,

The source of my unease reading this amazing, troubling book now seems clear: an imperfect coming to terms with three matters Twain addresses—Huck Finn’s estrangement, soleness and morbidity as an outcast child; the disproportionate sadness at the center of Jim’s and his relationship; and the secrecy in which Huck’s engagement with (rather than escape from) a racist society is necessarily conducted. It is also clear that the rewards of my effort to come to terms have been abundant. [...] For a hundred years, the argument that this novel *is* has been identified, reidentified, examined, waged and advanced. What it cannot be is dismissed. It is classic literature, which is to say it heaves, manifests and lasts.⁴⁰⁶

Ultimately, Huck’s perception is constructed by his culture. His attitudes are a direct result of his nurture and education.⁴⁰⁷ His depiction of the world he inhabits is dependent upon the way he was taught to see it.⁴⁰⁸ When Huck realises that Jim is not merely a runaway slave, but is also a person, it emphasises the contrast between Huck’s

⁴⁰⁵ A major reason for the disdain of the book in late nineteenth-century America would have been rooted in a moralistic social sensitivity. Twain’s biting satire would surely have required some getting used to. Twain’s criticism of Christian morality seems to have surfaced more in twentieth-century readings. Given Twain’s overtly ironic construction of Huck’s character and conclusive criticism of the White American South, it is surprising that the novel has often been accused of delivering Twain’s own racist and biased point of view. Rather than criticising Twain for being ostensibly over-critical of American culture or the South, it would seem that critics have been more inclined to accuse Twain of adopting the value system he was in fact satirising. Twain’s irony constitutes an essential aspect of the novel’s internal logic. Nonetheless, even when it is indeed identified, it would seem that Twain’s depiction of Jim in particular—representing the ‘Black’ character as inferior, uneducated and somewhat dim-witted, coupled with an ostensibly unadulterated employment of the N-Word—are largely perceived as a vehicle of conveying Twain’s own views—manifesting and sustaining racist stereotypes.

⁴⁰⁶ Morrison, "*Huckleberry Finn*," 287–88.

⁴⁰⁷ Huck has absorbed the mindset of his culture to such an extent that it has, in effect, become almost second nature. These are precisely the themes and ideas that readers would, and to a certain extent quite rightly, find offensive, disturbing and unconscionable.

⁴⁰⁸ Indeed, the world of the novel takes place before the Civil War, and prior to the Emancipation Proclamation—during which time African-American slaves were identified as the rightful property of their owner, rather than considered as actual human beings.

understanding of the world and the racist concepts that shaped his culture and upbringing. In what Railton considers the novel's 'best known scene',⁴⁰⁹ Huck resolves that he would rather 'go to hell' than turn Jim over to Miss Watson:

But somehow I couldn't seem to strike no places to harden me against him, but only the other kind. I'd see him standing my watch [...] so I could go on sleeping [...] and do everything he could think of for me, and how good he always was; and at last I struck the time I saved him by telling the men we had small-pox aboard, and he was so grateful, and said I was the best friend old Jim ever had in the world [...] and then I happened to look around and see that paper. [...] I took it up, and held it in my hand. I was atrembling, because I'd got to decide, forever, betwixt two things, and I knowed it. I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself: "All right, then, I'll go to hell"—and tore it up.⁴¹⁰

This passage eloquently demonstrates Huck's internal struggle and instinct for compassion. It highlights his understanding and arguable acceptance of how the world works (i.e., complying with his internalisation of the politics and ideology of the culture that raised him) as opposed to how he feels that things ought to be (i.e., corresponding with what his conscience tells him).⁴¹¹ Conceivably, just as he knows under what circumstances it would be acceptable to play the role of the trickster, he is also very much aware of what it is to be a decent human being. Thus, Huck wholeheartedly accepts that he may 'go to hell' (complying with the moral code he was raised with), yet he makes a point of going there on his own terms, having done what he *knows* to be right.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁹ Railton, *Mark Twain*, 59.

⁴¹⁰ Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 345.

⁴¹¹ As Weinstein points out, Twain endows Huck with an instinctive sense of right and wrong—thereby allowing him to re-evaluate the moral code of his culture. Arnold Weinstein, "*Huckleberry Finn—A Child's Voice*," Lecture #39, *Classics of American Literature (The Great Courses, The Teaching Company)*. See URL: accessed March 19, 2016, www.thegreatcourses.com/courses/classics-of-american-literature.html.

⁴¹² It would be interesting to evaluate the manner in which a performer would convey Huck's resolution in an aural performance. If this particular passage can be identified, for instance, as an ostensible point of departure in which Huck's character undergoes a discernible change (i.e., with respect to his point of view and his observation and perception of the people he subsequently encounters), one would be

5. The Institution of Audiobooks: *Huck Finn* as a Performance Text

5.1 Aesthetically Evaluating Audiobooks: A Precursor to a Concrete Analysis

According to Roach, the recordings discussed in her book have been chosen ‘on the basis of excellence in execution, literary or historic merit, interest and entertainment value’.⁴¹³ Her aim, by her own admission, had been ‘to include those items which may prove to be of lasting value’.⁴¹⁴ She asserts that ‘looking hopefully towards the future, one can say that among the best spoken records today is an elite group which communicates more than entertainment’.⁴¹⁵ This accords with my own point of view, which is rooted in NITA and the notion of internal logic. It quite clearly indicates that Roach both identifies and calls for a hierarchy in this genre—indeed, not only that one can evaluate certain AP artworks as *better* than others, but that one should.⁴¹⁶

Audiobook reviewer Mary Thompson describes her professional process as follows.⁴¹⁷ When reviewing an audiobook, if she has either not read the original printed work, or is completely unfamiliar with the book and its author, she begins by conducting

required to examine whether or not a performer succeeds in demonstrating Huck’s change. If the change that Huck undergoes in the novel could account for a possible distinctive change in the tone of his narration—that is to say, if he *sounds* (in print) more mature than before—it should also be recognised and exhibited by the performer in the audiobook version.

⁴¹³ Roach, *Spoken Records*, 10.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 13

⁴¹⁶ As Knox points out, as a result of the ‘doubling of authorship’ that inhabits audiobooks, coupled with ‘the investiture of the presence of the narrator in the voice-body of the text’, there appears to be an ‘implicit invitation to readers to listen to different audio productions of the same work’. Additionally, she argues, ‘that there is such a variety of unabridged recordings of a single work (particularly of those no longer under copyright) facilitates the consumption of multiple productions of a work, even if it does not assume it. [...] The “hear-over” is something the audiobook listening experience implicitly invites. [...] If [...] the narrator assumes a significant presence—is the body as well as the soul of the reading—then a listener discovers not only a new text but forms the (one-sided, admittedly) acquaintanceship with the new speaker’. Knox, “Hearing Hardy, Talking Tolstoy,” 138–39.

⁴¹⁷ I contacted Ms. Thompson via the LinkedIn Corporation, an online community and business-oriented social networking service. See Thompson’s user profile: accessed February 10, 2016, www.linkedin.com/in/mary-thompson-02641a27?authType=name&authToken=msBu&trk=wonton-desktop. All quotes are directly extracted from our correspondence.

a certain amount of research on that particular title.⁴¹⁸ As she listens, Thompson makes notes in which she identifies and references the ‘special qualities’, as she calls it, of the narration. This, as far as she is concerned, entails paying particular attention to a number of distinctive aspects—for instance, whether or not the voices appear to ‘match’ the ‘emotion’ that resides within the story.⁴¹⁹ If, indeed, as Thompson suggests, the voices inhabiting audiobooks are supposed to ‘match’ what she regards as the ‘emotion of the story’, it would imply that there is surely a *particular* emotion she has in mind. Thus, one should be able to identify a distinctive emotion as an inherent element of the story, and subsequently determine whether or not, and to what extent, *that* emotion is either present or appropriately manifested in the aural recording of the story.⁴²⁰ According to Thompson, she examines aspects such as whether or not a particular character’s accent is ‘done correctly’, the proficiency of the performer’s pronunciation, as well as the degree of ‘consistency’ in light of the voice with which the narrator endows the character. Indeed, an audiobook might suffer from a variety of apparent inconsistencies, creating in effect a flawed aesthetic experience.⁴²¹ By her own

⁴¹⁸ What Thompson describes appears to accord with my own effort in researching *Huck Finn*. Indeed, the aim of this kind of research—both my own, as well as, arguably, Thompson’s—is to try and identify the internal logic of a particular novel. As I have demonstrated, the explicit internal logic of *Huck Finn* can be identified, explored and explained through focusing on (a) the novel’s being written in dialect, (b) Huck’s identity, his distinctive voice and point of view, and (c) questions of race and racism.

⁴¹⁹ While this may appear as a given, this is in fact quite essential for *appreciating* the aesthetic nature of the performance. As I have underlined earlier, the performer needs to be able to identify the manner in which a particular text *should* be performed. As Tassin maintains, ‘the theory of reading aloud can be entirely summed up in one statement. The reader is taking the place of the writer and simply talking what he has to say. Literature is talk made permanent. [...] True, it may sometimes happen that he will fail to deliver the meaning when he has got it. But that is merely because the customary attitude of people in speaking printed words is absurdly different from their attitude in speaking their own. [...] It is in reading aloud that the difference in the general attitude toward the printed and the spoken word is most glaring’. Roach, *Spoken Records*, 11-12.

⁴²⁰ If one cannot distinguish a single emotion, at the very least there exists a discrete limited *range* of emotions, arguably linked together or expressing the same general sentiment.

⁴²¹ If, for instance, when reading a book, one happens to lose track of the plot, one can easily find one’s place by turning back the pages. Arguably, with audiobooks, all one has to do is to simply rewind the recording. Yet, if a performer (or, indeed, a director or producer) fails in his/her job, the inconsistencies would effectively remain embedded in the AP artwork. Simply rewinding, therefore, will be to no avail.

admission, Thompson also listens for any ‘awkward pauses in speech’, ‘noticeable swallowing’ or any other ‘mouth noises’, as she terms it, in addition to any possible ‘background noise’ or what she regards as ‘production issues’.

In my own terms, all of these can be identified as ostensible ‘aesthetic lapses’ since they all appear to predominantly relate to the listener’s experience. Surely these can be regarded as the audiobook equivalents of the occasional typo, the odd page unintentionally left blank, or any other ‘factory defect’ that one might encounter in the world of printed books. I would also argue that what Thompson regards as ‘awkward pauses’ and what she identifies as a ‘noticeable’ interference in the recording pose a somewhat more serious aesthetic issue. For the most part, the fact that such aspects of a recording are noticeable at all is precisely where the deficiency of that recording, as an AP artwork, would reside. Likewise, what Thompson describes as ‘awkward’ implies an aesthetic flaw with respect to the aural performance itself. In terms of this study, I find that her sense of awkwardness suggests a lack of appropriateness—that is to say, an unsuccessful attempt to appropriately convey the internal logic of the text in an aural performance.⁴²²

In her process of evaluation, Thompson considers the extent to which the aural medium affects the original work—i.e., what does the audio do to augment the written material or detract from it. She endeavours to identify, for instance, whether or not the ‘pacing’ succeeds in sustaining her ‘attention’ as a listener.⁴²³ Indeed, once one

⁴²² A performer is no doubt free to choose at which point in his/her performance he or she might see fit to pause. Nevertheless, not all pauses necessarily have their place, and not every choice would comply appropriately with what a particular text dictates in accordance with its distinctive rhythm.

⁴²³ These aspects can be compared with the particular pacing and rhythm of a stage performance. It would likewise help explain one’s ostensible fortitude in resisting a variety of soporific effects thrust upon one by the stage spectacle and overcoming them until the curtain call.

identifies an audiobook as an AP artwork—thereby rendering the act of listening to an audiobook an aesthetic experience—the listener’s attention becomes intrinsic.⁴²⁴ To be sure, just as a performer is expected to know how to *perform* within the confines of the aural medium, a listener, in turn, is expected to know how to *listen* within the same aural boundaries.⁴²⁵ At the same time, as alluded to earlier, both the listener and the performer hold a shared responsibility to identify the internal logic of the aural medium—through which the performance is delivered. Similarly, they are mutually required to grasp the internal logic of the work itself, which is being performed.⁴²⁶

Consequently, when aesthetically evaluating audiobooks, one would need to consider both sets of internal logic.⁴²⁷ Thompson, I would argue, should be identified as

⁴²⁴ Wittkower, in this respect, maintains that ‘like the conductor holding her hand aloft, the narrator can signal to the audience not to move on, not to be distracted, and not to stop paying attention’. Wittkower, "A Preliminary Phenomenology," 224–25. Effectively, the listener’s role prevails as a necessary constituent of the institution of AP.

⁴²⁵ Unlike with visual art forms, listening to an audiobook or radio play can be done while driving, knitting or doing household chores. One of the unique things about this art form is that one can listen to an audiobook *and* at the same time do all those things without missing any red lights, pricking one’s finger, or, perhaps most importantly, without losing the plot. As Luhrmann puts it, ‘What happens when you hear a text rather than read it? The obvious thing is that you can do something else with your eyes. That is why I can listen to books when I garden. My hands and eyes can work. And so listening to a book is a different sensory experience than reading it. The inner imagining of the story becomes commingled with the outer senses—my hands on the trowel, the scent of tansy in the breeze.’ Luhrmann, "Audiobooks and the Return of Storytelling". Also noteworthy is an advertising campaign by Random House—one which even promoted its own website (TryAudiobooks.com)—that, according to Andrew Adam Newman, appears to be ‘directed at consumers who may never have bought an audiobook but whose hobbies may predispose them to listening to one’. Evidently, the themes that this campaign attempts to associate with listening to audiobooks include such images as needles stuck into a ball of yarn, running shoes, an airplane—all with earbuds wrapped around them. Andrew Adam Newman, "Expanding the Market for Audiobooks Beyond Commuters," *New York Times*, June 1, 2013, accessed July 20, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/12/business/media/expanding-the-market-for-audiobooks-beyond-commuters.html>.

⁴²⁶ I find that Wittkower’s attempt to identify what he regards as a phenomenology of audiobooks appears to parallel my own endeavour to demonstrate the significance of their internal logic. Wittkower argues, for example, that audiobooks follow a ‘rhythm and pace’ of their own, which resides ‘in between the starting and stopping of playback’, and when one listens to an audiobook, it ‘proceeds at the same inexorable rate while the audience drifts in and out of attention’. Wittkower, "A Preliminary Phenomenology," 222.

⁴²⁷ Inevitably, in evaluating any performance as an artwork, one is able to either (a) establish that the performance is aesthetically good and that the audience is merely ill-equipped to properly experience it, or (b) determine that the performance happens to be aesthetically deficient and thus the audience may be justified in falling asleep. As Fischer-Lichte points out, ‘Being present in a performance implies a level of consent with the performance. Those who object to the performance have to make their criticism

a responsible, learned and avid listener. As such, she quite obviously knows how to experience an audiobook. She is surely able to identify, at least to some degree, whether or not a performer has appropriately done his/her job, and, indeed, she is also aware of her responsibility and knows how to do her job as a listener.⁴²⁸ As Roach maintains,

An experienced listener is quick to recognize a performer's intrusion with personal feelings of shyness, indifference, resentment, tiredness or laziness. He knows, too when the performer, instead of being concentrated with meaning, is thinking of the way he is doing it, the way it sounds, or some other aspect of his craft. [...] It takes supervised experience, much like that acquired in a chemistry lab, to develop the skill needed to bring life to material embalmed in print.⁴²⁹

According to American casting director and production manager Claudia Howard, a particular casting choice begins to make *sense* as soon as she can 'see' a picture in her head of the narrator—suggesting that the words on the page give rise to a visual image of a narrator's identity.⁴³⁰ She argues that the human voice is able to do so in a way that the written word alone simply cannot.⁴³¹ McQuaid, to whom I have alluded earlier, similarly maintains that part of his job, as a casting director, is to identify which performer will be able to 'convincingly' portray a particular narrator. He explains that the first thing he considers is the designated form in which the narrative is presented in the text, and the challenge of achieving some level of 'authenticity'. According to

known or leave the space. By remaining part of the performance, participants also take responsibility for it'. Fischer-Lichte, *The Routledge Introduction to Theatre*, 22.

⁴²⁸ The 'Artworld Public', as NITA articulates it, is required to be 'prepared in some degree to understand an artwork'. Therein resides the core responsibilities of an AP audience—they are required to *understand* audiobooks. By its nature, Thompson's profession appears to elicit a 'heightened state' of said responsibilities. In some respects, she might be indefinable as the preferred (perhaps even ideal) AP audience. She both understands audiobooks *and* knows how to listen to them. As playwright and poet William Alfred maintains, 'a great text makes its demand of truth on audience as well as performers: we must prepare to listen as they must prepare to read, by bringing ourselves to a reverent sense of that text's full nature'. William Alfred, preface to *Spoken Records*, v.

⁴²⁹ Roach, *Spoken Records*, 10-11.

⁴³⁰ All references to Howard's insights, as well as any direct quotes, pertain to an interview I conducted with her via Skype in May 2013. (Recording provided on the enclosed USB flash drive).

⁴³¹ To some extent, this echoes Rubery's reference to R. Balmer, who regarded the 'full realization of what the printed book was intended to do'. Rubery, *The Untold Story of the Talking Book*, 254.

Howard, performers seem to be more attracted to books written in the first-person. Predominantly, she argues, ‘they tend to embrace a text where they get to say “I did this, I feel this, this happened to me” and so on’—rather than narrating a description in the third-person. Her insight strengthens the notion that audiobooks prevail as the most appropriate medium for written texts that constitute ostensible extended monologues.⁴³² According to McQuaid, when confronted with a first-person narrative, a performer’s objective is to ‘become’ *that* voice, which, he asserts, is inherently a ‘property’ of the written text itself.⁴³³ My concrete analyses of the audiobook versions of *Huck Finn* will demonstrate the manner in which this insight informs one’s aesthetic evaluation.

Audiobooks should essentially deploy the range of possibilities evoked by the internal logic of the aural medium itself. At the same time, as with any medium, one must also be mindful of its particular limitations. Alan Beck, for example, in his consideration of radio acting, explains that the existence of the characters is almost entirely ‘word-based’ and that ‘it is radio’s strength that it speaks and that it is logic-

⁴³² Arguably, the more personal the narrative—or, rather, the more personally connected or involved a performer can become with a certain narrative—the more an aural performance could benefit from having the narrative spoken directly to the listeners.

⁴³³ McQuaid considers Solomon Northup’s memoir, *Twelve Years a Slave* (1853) a good example. He distinguishes between a ‘voice’ and an ‘accent’, and argues that while this book is written in a Black American voice, there are not many actors in London who actually possess the ability to portray it. He argues that an audiobook version of this particular memoir requires a voice that is based more on the narrator’s ethnic identity, rather than whether or not they are a good actor. According to McQuaid, had the audiobook been recorded by a Black British actor—such as Chiwetel Ejiofor, who portrayed the lead role in the Academy Award winning 2013 film version of the memoir—it simply would not have worked. In brief, he argues that a narration featuring any voice other than that which exists in the text itself would simply sound wrong. McQuaid asserts that ‘you’d need him to be American’. He argues that although there are some people who might be able to do it, for the most part, one cannot simply ‘fake it’ when it comes to such things as dialect, lilt or a particular internal rhythm. Sustaining them throughout the reading of an entire book is likewise virtually impossible. McQuaid explains that when he looks at these kinds of texts, he usually refers to—and, in fact, literally hears in his head—the Morgan Freeman voiceover in *Shawshank Redemption* (1994; dir. Frank Darabont). He recounts that this is precisely what he told one of the actors who came in to audition for reading Northup’s memoir. He argues that it is just how an audience is *supposed* to experience it.

based—that is logic as it is originally derived from the Greek for word and reason’.⁴³⁴ In identifying one aspect of that logic—which I would regard as its internal logic as a sub-(institutional)-category of AP—Beck asserts that when actors on radio sound like nothing more than ‘talking heads’ (i.e., as if they are merely reading the words into the microphone rather than properly performing them), the listeners tend to perceive the acting as unconvincing.⁴³⁵ Now, on the one hand, this sentiment appears to comply with my distinction between *performing* a text (i.e., an institutional fact; creating an AP artwork), and merely reading a text into a microphone (a brute fact; not art). On the other hand, I would argue that what Beck identifies as ‘talking heads’ should not be altogether discarded. Indeed, some texts, under certain circumstances, might even *require* precisely this kind of performance, and would be dictated by the internal logic of the text. As a brute fact, the notion of what precisely a ‘talking head’ constitutes can be interpreted as either unconvincing acting or not acting at all. At the same time, as an institutional fact, a ‘talking head’ can be established as a particular style of acting that *is* appropriate for certain kinds of texts. The aptly titled *Talking Heads* television series and its subsequent radio version is a good example.⁴³⁶ As I will show with my second case study—focusing on a comparison between the aural adaptations of Samuel

⁴³⁴ Alan Beck, *Radio Acting* (London: A & C Black, 1997), 83.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴³⁶ Originally screened in the late 1980s, the series consisted of dramatic monologues written by the prolific English playwright and author Alan Bennett. In the late 1990s, the series was adapted for radio, and the monologues were re-recorded. Now, it is not my intention to compare the two versions by way of analysis, but rather to utilise the fact that these different versions exist, thereby demonstrating that the actors were required to adjust their delivery so as to comply with the internal logic of the particular medium at hand. To be sure, all the performers in this case are not only highly accomplished in their own right, but also skilled interpreters of Bennett’s distinctive style. In brief, although the two versions of each monologue constitute the same text, and while performed by the same principle actor, the aesthetic difference remains apparent. On television, the characters speak directly to the camera, becoming almost literally a ‘talking head’ on the screen. As an aural performance, the said ‘talking head’ narrates the spoken words out of the darkness. In both cases, the performances sustain the text’s own unique internal logic despite the different kinds of mediation. See USB flash drive for samples of both versions.

Beckett's novel *Molloy* (1955)—the so-called 'talking head' style delivery, as an aural performance, arguably complies quite well with the kind of audiobooks that one can identify as extended first-person monologues.

The best audiobook narrators, as far as Howard is concerned, consist of performers who *know* that they are performing for an audience. They always have a designated listener in mind. Those who do not, she quite rightly asserts, sound as if they are merely 'reading to themselves'.⁴³⁷ Good narrators, for Howard, *become* the book—a notion which seems to comply with being able to manifest its internal logic. Knox, in this respect, argues that a novel, its characters, and the narrator who brings them to life 'merge into one another and take form', which is subsequently 'underpinned by the rationale for the choice of narrator'.⁴³⁸ She maintains that although the Naxos record label, for instance, predominantly follows the general rule proclaiming that 'if a man wrote it' then 'the book should be read by a man', for their release of Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) they concluded that having the entire novel narrated by a female voice 'seemed the only way to proceed'.⁴³⁹ This, she asserts, 'suggests an act of transmutation, but also a kind of political or ethical representation: the enfranchisement of literary character. [...] To "capture the essence" of the book is to give it a body, and to give that body voice'.⁴⁴⁰ Indeed, the primary objective in my forthcoming concrete analysis of the different audiobooks of *Huck Finn* is to identify precisely in which of those recordings this occurs.

⁴³⁷ Indeed, even though their audience is not actually in their presence at the time, good performers should always direct their reading at an *implied* audience. The listeners, for their part, should be aware (and should be *made* well aware) that the text featured on the recording is made explicitly for them. Put simply, the listeners should know that they are listening to a performance. As explained earlier, it is a requirement of their institutional role.

⁴³⁸ Knox, "Hearing Hardy, Talking Tolstoy," 138.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

5.2 Evaluating the *Huck Finn* Audiobook Versions as AP Artworks

The number of commercially available audiobook versions of *Huck Finn* is extensive.⁴⁴¹ There exist both abridged and unabridged versions, professional and non-professional readings (e.g., recordings created by amateur performers and volunteers reading for blind people and visually impaired). As will be explicitly addressed in Chapter 6 (which presents a further elaborate consideration of the aesthetic category), it must be understood that non-professional recordings, for the most part, do not comply with the institution of AP, and thus cannot constitute AP artworks. My intention is therefore to neither analyse nor evaluate them, but rather to focus on the professional recordings, produced and released as official audiobooks. Now, for the purpose of this study, I have surveyed over thirty recordings.⁴⁴² Listed alphabetically, in order of the performer's surname, the featured narrators are as follows: Matt Armstrong, Thomas Becker, Tim Behrens, Dick Cavett, Jason Damron, Denny Delk, Norman Dietz, Jim Donaldson, Eric G. Dove, William Dufres, Robin Field, Patrick Fraley, William Fortier, Grover Gardner,⁴⁴³ Don Hagen, Garrick Hagon, B.J. Harrison, Johnny Heller, Johnny Heller, Dick Hill, Garrison Keillor, Jack Lemmon, Mike McShane, Alan Munro, Michael Prichard, Kerry Shale, Stephen L. Vernon, Will Wheaton, Trevor White, and Elijah Wood.

⁴⁴¹ As Rubery points out, 'by the 1990s, fans could hear [*Huck Finn*] read by Ed Begley, Dick Cavett, Jackie Cooper, David Crawford, Alfred Gingold, Hal Holbrook, Robert Lewis, Hiram Sherman, Peter Thomas, and Jack Whitaker'. Rubery, *The Untold Story of the Talking Book*, 254.

⁴⁴² Some of these releases have apparently added the word 'the' to the book's title. I therefore consistently cite in my references the manner in which the novel is named in the recordings themselves.

⁴⁴³ Gardner, who has been recording audiobooks since the early 1980s, released several titles under the pseudonyms 'Alexander Adams' and 'Tom Parker'. Evidentially, he recorded *Huck Finn* twice—once under his own name and once as the said Tom Parker. See Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, unabridged, narrated by Grover Gardner (Audio Book Contractors, Inc., 1994); and Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, unabridged, read by Tom Parker (Blackstone Audio, 2014). To identify the differences between his narrations, one can compare, for instance, the opening of the novel. See USB flash drive for the 'Tom Parker' recording; and See URL for online sample of that which credits Gardner: accessed February 20, 2017, www.audible.co.uk/pd/Classics/Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn-Audiobook/1606460544/ref=a_search_c4_1_22_srTtl?qid=1487594161&sr=1-22.

Of all the versions listed above, the Dietz recording represents the best aural manifestation of Twain's novel.⁴⁴⁴ Dietz, first and foremost, stands out as a masterful and engaging narrator. His vocal properties—e.g., the tone of his voice, its timbre and texture—all underline the immediacy of the audiobook as an AP artwork. His narration effectively creates a distinct sense of intimacy that allows one to engage with Huck's telling of his own personal story. His narration clearly endows Huck with a clear speech pattern and a consistent kind of rhythm, highlighting his perspective as the storyteller. He often allows tension to build (either to create a dramatic effect, or to allow Twain's points to get across beyond Huck's first-person narration). The particular pace of his narration is quite satisfactorily listenable. He neither runs through the text, reading the various passages rapidly (like Garrison Keillor, for instance, whom I will shortly address), nor does he leisurely stray through the chapters, achieving a rather dreary kind of reading (like those of Michael Prichard or Thomas Becker—both of whom I will also presently regard).⁴⁴⁵ Fundamentally, Dietz delivers a captivating aural rendition in that he succeeds in transforming Twain's depictions into a riveting aural world, which appears quite vivid as one listens to the narrative. This happens with Dietz more than with any other performer.

In comparing, for instance, Dietz's reading of the novel's opening chapter to that of Jason Damron,⁴⁴⁶ it becomes evident that whereas Dietz engages the listener from the very beginning—making every word resonate loud and clear, thereby

⁴⁴⁴ See Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, unabridged, narrated by Norman Dietz (Recorded Books, 1980).

⁴⁴⁵ A good sense of pace and rhythm has little to do with a particular recording's actual running-time. For instance, while both Dietz and Prichard's recordings are complete and unabridged, whereas the Dietz's runs over 11.5-hours, Prichard's last about 10.5-hours. Nonetheless, as should become clear through my forthcoming examples, Prichard's narration simply *sounds* much slower. See Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, unabridged, read by Michael Prichard (Books on Tape, 1977).

⁴⁴⁶ See Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, read by Jason Damron (ABN, 2012).

demonstrating that he is a storyteller who wants his audience to listen to him—Damron’s narration can be described as the polar opposite.⁴⁴⁷ Explicitly, Damron appears to be rushing through the text without allowing himself to breath or pause, thereby quite literally reading at double-speed. Furthermore, his narration seems to employ the same kinds of inflections and emphases in almost every sentence. As a storyteller, he is anything but engaging. While his narration does appear to manifest a surge of enthusiasm, which arguably contributes to depicting Huck’s adolescence, I would nevertheless maintain that it sounds both over-enthusiastic and devoid of any context. It consequently cannot be aesthetically justified.

In considering Chapter 31—in which, as alluded to earlier, Huck fundamentally resolves to do what he believes in his heart to be right, while accepting the possibility that he might ‘go to hell’ for doing so—Damron’s narration appears to be particularly deprived of any kind of emotion. Ultimately, his narration manifests virtually none of the aspects of the novel’s internal logic. Moreover, it clearly does not appear to comply with what a proper aural performance should be, in that one does not sense that he is in fact performing for an audience. Consider his performance of the following passage in particular:⁴⁴⁸

Once I said to myself it would be a thousand times better for Jim to be a slave at home where his family was, as long as he’d *got* to be a slave, and so I’d better write a letter to Tom Sawyer and tell him to tell Miss Watson where he was. But I soon give up that notion for two things: she’d be mad and disgusted at his rascality and ungratefulness for leaving her, and so she’d sell him straight down the river again; and if she didn’t, everybody naturally despises an ungrateful nigger, and

⁴⁴⁷ See USB flash drive for Dietz’s recording; and See URL for online sample of Damron’s: accessed February 20, 2017, www.audible.co.uk/pd/Classics/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn-Dramatized-Audiobook/B008XA39HU/ref=a_search_c4_2_37_srTtl?qid=1487604289&sr=2-37).

⁴⁴⁸ See URL for online sample: accessed February 20, 2017, www.audible.co.uk/pd/Film-Radio-TV/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn-Chapter-31-Audiobook/B00YIPK22E/ref=a_search_c4_1_33_srTtl?qid=1487614929&sr=1-33

they'd make Jim feel it all the time, and so he'd feel ornery and disgraced. And then think of *me*! It would get all around that Huck Finn helped a nigger to get his freedom; and if I was ever to see anybody from that town again I'd be ready to get down and lick his boots for shame. That's just the way: a person does a lowdown thing, and then he don't want to take no consequences of it. Thinks as long as he can hide, it ain't no disgrace. That was my fix exactly. The more I studied about this the more my conscience went to grinding me, and the more wicked and low-down and ornery I got to feeling. And at last, when it hit me all of a sudden that here was the plain hand of Providence slapping me in the face and letting me know my wickedness was being watched all the time from up there in heaven, whilst I was stealing a poor old woman's nigger that hadn't ever done me no harm, and now was showing me there's One that's always on the lookout, and ain't a-going to allow no such miserable doings to go only just so fur and no further, I most dropped in my tracks I was so scared. Well, I tried the best I could to kinder soften it up somehow for myself by saying I was brung up wicked, and so I warn't so much to blame; but something inside of me kept saying, "There was the Sunday-school, you could a gone to it; and if you'd a done it they'd a learnt you there that people that acts as I'd been acting about that nigger goes to everlasting fire." It made me shiver. And I about made up my mind to pray, and see if I couldn't try to quit being the kind of a boy I was and be better. So I kneeled down. But the words wouldn't come. Why wouldn't they? It warn't no use to try and hide it from Him. Nor from *me*, neither. I knowed very well why they wouldn't come. It was because my heart warn't right; it was because I warn't square; it was because I was playing double. I was letting *on* to give up sin, but away inside of me I was holding on to the biggest one of all. I was trying to make my mouth say I would do the right thing and the clean thing, and go and write to that nigger's owner and tell where he was; but deep down in me I knowed it was a lie, and He knowed it. You can't pray a lie—I found that out.⁴⁴⁹

Dietz, on the other hand, conveys Huck's thought process and soul-searching contemplations very poignantly, gradually building up towards his final resolution.⁴⁵⁰

Grover Gardner's 'Tom Parker' rendition of the same passage is similarly well-performed.⁴⁵¹ I would argue that his performance, overall, is among the better aural iterations of the novel. His storytelling not only appropriately complies with what an

⁴⁴⁹ Twain, *Adventure of Huckleberry Finn*, 341–343.

⁴⁵⁰ See USB flash drive for Dietz's recording of Chapter 31, 07m45sec–11m20sec.

⁴⁵¹ See USB flash drive for the 'Tom Parker' recording of Chapter 31, 05m51sec–08m30sec.

aural performance requires with respect to the medium, but it also successfully manifests the internal logic of the novel.

Both Dietz and Gardner successfully develop the novel's individual characters—endowing them with individual voices, identities, and appropriate regional dialects—thereby distinguishing them from Huck. By contrast, Michael Prichard's narration of the various characters seems, overall, somewhat emotionally detached—that is to say, as if he merely conveys the facts of the matter for the voice-over of a documentary film.⁴⁵² In the same vein, the sense that one is listening to a drab voice-over also applies to the Don Hagen narration. While Hagen possesses a pleasant and quite easy-to-listen-to kind of voice, one gets the sense that he is not performing the text for an audience.⁴⁵³ Prichard, in this respect, *does* in fact endow the different characters with a voice of their own, they nevertheless are not all well-performed.⁴⁵⁴ I will presently address a particular scene in the novel where the reader is required to imagine a particular transition between two ostensibly different voices, and would thereby influence the manner in which this scene would be heard as an aural performance.

Although I find it to be the best audiobook version of the novel currently available, Dietz's recording does appear to exhibit one particular flaw, explicitly pertaining to the novel's aforementioned Notice. As expressed, the importance of the Notice to the internal logic of the novel cannot be questioned. So much so, in fact, that

⁴⁵² See USB flash drive for Prichard's recording, e.g., Chapter 3.

⁴⁵³ Although his vocal properties do seem to comply with what an aural performance requires, Hagen's particular voice, at least in respect of *Huck Finn*, appears to be quite miscast. See Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, unabridged, read by Don Hagen (Gildan Media, 2010); and See URL for online sample: accessed February 20, 2017, http://www.audible.co.uk/pd/Classics/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn-Audiobook/B004FTU24G/ref=a_search_c4_2_25_srTtl?qid=1495817041&sr=2-25.

⁴⁵⁴ In considering, for instance, the appearance of the drunken Pap in Chapter 5, it seems that whereas Prichard's narration makes his character sound more like a caricature, Dietz's delivery is quite powerful and succeeds in overcoming the potential so-called obstacle of over-playing the aspect of his drunkenness. See USB flash drive for both the Norman Dietz and Michael Prichard recordings.

I was both surprised and bewildered to discover that some recordings do not feature the Notice at all (e.g., William Duffris's and Patrick Fraley's recordings—despite both presenting themselves as 'Complete and Unabridged'). To be sure, there is no apparent aesthetic justification for the exclusion. As a kind of precursor to the no less important Explanatory—which, for reasons beyond understanding, has also found its way out of some of the aural versions—the Notice effectively contributes to setting the tone of voice for the entire novel. (e.g., Dick Hill's, Jack Lemmon's and Garrison Keillor's recordings, which fail to include either).⁴⁵⁵ In addition to setting the tone, they both indicate the type of humour one should expect, effectively forming a manual for working with the embedded dialects. Fundamentally, they constitute an inherent referential criterion for evaluating the audiobook versions of the novel. I therefore cannot fathom why one would wilfully choose to exclude them, even from an abridged version. Now, while the two *are* indeed featured on the recording, it is nevertheless *not* performed by Dietz. Rather, it is included amid the spoken introduction to the novel, provided for the listener by the audiobook's production company. Inadvertently, this decision detaches the voice of the introduction from the voice of the novel as a whole. There is essentially no reason why Dietz should not read the Notice himself, while sustaining the delicate balance between performing the text as Huck while also conveying Twain's literary voice.

Ultimately, Dietz's achievement is also noteworthy in that he succeeds in capturing and conveying to the listener what could be perceived as the most

⁴⁵⁵ Interestingly enough, Dick Hill, much like Gardner, appears to have recorded two audiobook versions. As opposed to the version included on the enclosed USB flash drive, an audio sample of the other version reveals that Hill *does* in fact narrate these two essential passages. See Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, unabridged, read by Dick Hill (Brilliance, 1992); and See URL: accessed February 20, 2017, www.scribd.com/audiobook/315847399/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn.

appropriate voice for Huck. Indeed, one could argue that this represents the most difficult task in aurally performing the novel. As has already been established, Huck's first-person narration is quite literally the voice of the novel—while at the same time, as one engages with the novel, one should be aware of Twain's own literary voice as the author. Dietz not only succeeds in conveying a believable portrayal of Huck's character, but his delivery appears to be sympathetic and without judgement or criticism. As I will presently illustrate, utilising two recordings as ostensible binary opposition—Elijah Wood and Jack Lemmon—Huck cannot sound too young and cannot sound too old.

In considering the potential aesthetic implications involved with having a mature or older actor narrate a novel that arguably requires the voice of a young adolescent, one could argue that to perform the novel in the voice of an actual child seems to comply with the novel's internal logic (i.e., having Huck tell his story in *his* own voice).⁴⁵⁶ At the same time, however, it is uncertain how many so-called 'child-actors' would be up to the task. Indeed, a reader would not only be required to sustain a professional aural performance throughout the entire recording (and, in effect, be able to enthrall his listeners), but he would also need to possess both the skill and experience of modulating between the portrayal of Huck's character while suggesting Twain's literary voice. This would constitute a difficult enough task for professional and experienced actors. As audiobooks can be perceived as a singular form of adaptation, it is interesting to note that while all the novel's cinematic and televised adaptations consistently employ child actors, I have yet to discover one single audiobook version narrated by someone the same age as Huck.

⁴⁵⁶ Prichard's narration, for instance, is predominantly inconsistent in his conveying to the listeners the sense that Huck is a young boy. See USB flash drive for Prichard's recording, e.g., Chapter 9.

Evidentially, some narrators make an explicit attempt to sound like a young child, albeit, so it seems, predominantly unsuccessfully. Yet, the only professional recording that appears to stand out in this respect is the version performed by Elijah Wood.⁴⁵⁷ Largely due to the particularly youthful, slightly high-pitched and almost feminine quality of his voice, Wood's performance differs from most of the other narrations precisely in that it makes his rendition of Huck's character sound the most youthful. At the same time, however, I find that his recording relies more on Wood's vocal qualities and less on a successful aural interpretation of Huck's character. Consequently, despite an apparent resonating youthfulness, I would argue that Wood's performance does not properly sustain an aural performance of the entire novel. His portrayal of Huck does not *sound* young enough to convey the thought processes of a child, and, at the same time, does not appear old enough to be delivering his recollected adolescent memories.⁴⁵⁸ Arguably, one can consider in the same vein the performances of Eric G. Dove,⁴⁵⁹ Johnny Heller,⁴⁶⁰ and Will Wheaton⁴⁶¹ as all three appear to succeed in making Huck's character sound distinctly young, while at the same time convey a certain sense of maturity.⁴⁶²

⁴⁵⁷ Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, unabridged, read by Elijah Wood Audible, Inc., 2014). Although born in 1981, and hence hardly a child, Wood nevertheless is the youngest of all the performers discussed herein. (Wood, incidentally, as a child-actor, portrayed Huck in a 1993 film adaptation).

⁴⁵⁸ See USB flash drive for the Elijah Wood recording.

⁴⁵⁹ Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, unabridged read by Eric G. Dove (Dreamscape Media, 2013). See URL for online sample: accessed February 20, 2017, www.scribd.com/audiobook/237980627/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn.

⁴⁶⁰ Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, unabridged read by Johnny Heller (Listen2aBook.com, 2015). See URL for online sample: accessed 20 Feb 2017, www.audible.co.uk/pd/Classics/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn-Audiobook/B0195A5P5K/ref=a_search_c4_1_25_srTtl?qid=1487758377&sr=1-25;

⁴⁶¹ Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, abridged, read by Will Wheaton (Phoenix Books, 2014). See URL for online sample: accessed February 17, 2017, <https://www.overdrive.com/media/2122090/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn>.

⁴⁶² Wheaton's narration in particular appears to manifest Huck's age very well. His characterisation of Huck appears expressive and convincing. (Nonetheless, his performance is not without faults—explicitly with respect to certain noticeable mispronunciations of the Midwestern accents). By contrast, both

Alternatively, given the unique nature of the narrator's voice in Twain's novel—conveying Twain's literary voice through Huck's distinct first-person storytelling—one could argue that an audiobook of the novel might actually work better when performed by an older actor. Since the novel assumes the guise of an authentic autobiography, its performance by a mature actor—or perhaps one who may *sound* older than he actually is—could assist in creating a sense for the listener that he is recording his memories and recollections.⁴⁶³ Moreover, since the novel depicts a particular period in history (both with respect to the time of its publication, and even more so in present times), it might even seem quite appropriate to hear the story told by an older voice who is making an attempt to re-enact his own past experiences.

In this respect, Jack Lemmon's recording can be placed on the other end of the spectrum. Having passed away in 2001 at the age of 76, Lemmon's voice in this recording, which is dated 2000, sounds like that of a relatively old man, or of an individual who has lived a long life. His narration of the novel gives one the sense that one is listening to a man looking back upon his youth from a distance.⁴⁶⁴ In effect, he succeeds in making Huck sound as if he is conveying his own experiences from his own perspective. At the same time, I would argue that this kind of possible interpretation—well-performed as it may be—does not fully accord with the novel's internal logic.

Patrick Fraley and William Dufris appear to over-emphasise the childish aspects of Huck in their portrayal of his character, rather than his child-like point of view. See individual recordings on USB flash drive, e.g., Chapter 14. Although Dufris does so to a lesser extent, one might argue that they both fail in making the listener aware that although Huck is a child, he is nevertheless not immature.

⁴⁶³ Conceivably, while told through a child's voice, Huck's narrative could not have been written by a child. Rather, as with most autobiographies, it would have been written by a person who has lived a considerable number of years.

⁴⁶⁴ Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, abridged, performed by Jack Lemmon (Simon & Schuster Audio, 2000). See URL for online sample: accessed December 20, 2016, http://www.audible.co.uk/pd/Classics/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn-Audiobook/B004F1W59E/ref=a_search_c4_1_3_srTtl?qid=1495805074&sr=1-3.

Ultimately, although Lemmon is surely a remarkable performer—whose persona as the American Everyman conceivably contributes to one’s listening experience in identifying Huck’s character as a typical American boy—the main deficiency of his performance is that he sounds too old for the part. Indeed, one’s aesthetic experience of Twain’s novel depends upon Huck’s first-person narration.⁴⁶⁵ Consequently, finding an actual voice for properly conveying Huck’s point of view is imperative. Whereas Wood’s narration is ostensibly neither here nor there with respect to Huck’s voice, Lemmon’s performance makes Huck sound as old as Lemmon himself—which simply does not comply with the world of the novel. Even when one applies a willing suspension of disbelief, something nevertheless gets lost in one’s aesthetic experience when hearing the novel through the voice of an old man.

To be sure, Lemmon’s audiobook version is also noteworthy merely in that it presents one with the opportunity to listen to an aural performance by Jack Lemmon. As he ranks among the most remarkable and well-respected actors in his profession, a listener is in many respects invited to tune-in to his/her informed intuition—much like the casting director—and thus ostensibly superimpose what one knows about a

⁴⁶⁵ In referencing Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (1891), Knox alludes to her own ‘deep in despair at (or during?) the Flo Gibson narration’ of the novel: ‘Not that I wanted to hurry the suffering Tess on to her death on the gallows—quite the opposite. I’d once or twice pleaded with the MP3 player as if it was the ear of an innocent Tess. [...] Whether Tess’s end came fast or slow, it was coming, and neither Flo Gibson nor I could do anything about it. My desire to tinker was prompted by the quaver in Flo Gibson’s voice, those eloquent cracks and dips and warbles that—like the voice of the actress Thora Hird in the audio version of Alan Bennett’s ‘A Cream Cracker under the Settee’ [sic]—are the remonstrance of the text outside of the text, letting you know that you are listening to the main character and the voice talent teeter on the brink of death; reminding you that what you are hearing is time passing. The implicit body—the body behind the voice, the body laboring in the reading—was what prompted me to reach for a technical fix. If the narrator’s voice was too old for the winsome Tess, might I not make it the voice of a breathless young girl? For Gibson’s age is one of the things a listener quickly identifies in her voice, and during those first few hours of listening to Tess it seemed the thing most amenable to change. So I put Gibson on double-time [...] The result was Flo Gibson on helium. All the menace had gone out of Alec d’Urberville [...] That the critical scene had raced past me was galling: Tess at a merry clip, and none the younger for it’. Knox, “Hearing Hardy, Talking Tolstoy,” 135–36.

particular performer and his/her work, together with what one knows about the text being performed. (Arguably, with performers such as Lemmon, one might even regard having the opportunity to experience their performance as something of a privilege—especially when their aural performances are scarce).⁴⁶⁶ Even from a marketing point of view, if one knows that a particular audiobook happens to be narrated by a certain celebrated performer, one could deduce that it should thereby potentially evoke both an enriching and entertaining aesthetic experience, and thus one should purchase it.⁴⁶⁷ Nevertheless, in further evaluating Lemmon's narration, one could argue that his audiobook version is also somewhat deficient in two additional aspects: (a) Lemmon's delivery of the embedded dialects, and (b) the racially sensitive censorship that this particular version has been subject to. With respect to the former, while he does employ different voices when narrating different characters (such as, for instance, Miss Watson and Jim), and although he appropriately performs them in accordance with Twain's variations in spelling, he does not in fact appear to endow them with a distinctive dialect. With respect to the latter, Lemmon uses the word 'slave' rather than the dreaded N-word.

Albeit (arguably) self-evident, it should nevertheless be stressed that in addition to one's aforementioned proficiency as (audio)-performer, s/he is essentially *required*

⁴⁶⁶ Lemmon's narration of *Huck Finn* constitutes but one of a handful of audiobooks he recorded. It was released by Simon & Schuster both individually and as part of a 'Family Audio Classics' box set, including abridged versions of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland* (1865) and Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), narrated by Sally Field and Paul Newman, respectively.

⁴⁶⁷ Audible's 'a-list' collection is surely another good example. See URL: accessed January 14, 2016, www.audible.co.uk/mt/hollywood/narrow. Although one would be required to aesthetically evaluate each audiobook on a case by case basis, these cases demonstrate the manner in which one utilises one's informed intuition to identify that these particular performances should be exceptionally good. As Luhrmann points out—referring to the Simon & Schuster audiobook production of Colm Toibin's short novel, *Testament of Mary* (2012), narrated by Meryl Streep—publishers in recent years appear to be paying more attention to production value, which manifests here in the choice of narrator. Luhrmann, "Audiobooks and the Return of Storytelling".

to possess a unique (i.e., an above-average) vocal quality.⁴⁶⁸ As Knox points out, the human voice, 'as a species of sound, [...] has particularly strong capacities for affect'.⁴⁶⁹ Similarly, in referring to what he counts as 'good technique' in radio acting, Beck maintains that in addition to being articulate and owning skills in 'language, dialect, pace, pitch and rhythm', one has to possess a 'must-be-listened-to' voice.⁴⁷⁰ I would argue that more than half of the narrators discussed herein most definitely possess these kinds of vocal qualities.⁴⁷¹ Ultimately, drawing to some extent on Thompson's insights, an audiobook should most definitely *captivate* its audience.⁴⁷²

Now, to further illustrate the problem involved in identifying and conveying the internal logic of the novel in the form of an audiobook, it is interesting to consider the manner in which several performers have approached the shift in dialect that appears, for instance, in the opening scene of Chapter 11. Here, Huck's character—who at this point has disguised himself as a girl—meets the character of Judith Loftus, whose vernacular is that of a Missouri housewife. Although a minor character in the novel, she does seem to leave a profound impression on Huck. The previous chapter sets up Huck's meeting with Loftus. Having already been assisted by Jim to dress up like a girl, Huck ends the chapter with the following words:

⁴⁶⁸ To be sure, in addition to his/her acting abilities, skill, talent and craftsmanship, an (audio)-performer should be able (a) to identify how a particular text is supposed to be read (i.e., with respect to the written text's own aesthetic context and unique internal logic), and (b) to possess the ability of performing the text in question within the confines and limitations of an inherently aural medium.

⁴⁶⁹ Knox, "Hearing Hardy, Talking Tolstoy," 128.

⁴⁷⁰ Beck, *Radio Acting*, 2.

⁴⁷¹ At the same time, just as not all artworks are necessarily aesthetically good, my analysis should make it clear that not every recording that effectively complies with the definition of an aural performance necessarily succeeds in properly manifesting the required aspects of a particular work's internal logic.

⁴⁷² As has been established, listening to an audiobook constitutes an aesthetic experience in its own right (i.e., rather than an alternative to reading). Now, since a novel is surely to captivate one through the act of reading itself, I would argue that what Thompson implies is that audiobooks—especially when one can identify them as AP artworks—should essentially find a way to engage with their listeners in a manner that would accord with the confines of the distinct aural medium.

I practiced around all day to get the hang of the things, and by and by I could do pretty well in them, only Jim said I didn't walk like a girl [...] I took notice, and done better. [...] the drift of the current fetched me in at the bottom of the town. [...] There was a woman about forty year old in there knitting by a candle that was on a pine table. I didn't know her face; she was a stranger, for you couldn't start a face in that town that I didn't know. Now this was lucky [...] if this woman had been in such a little town two days she could tell me all I wanted to know; so I knocked at the door, and made up my mind I wouldn't forget I was a girl.⁴⁷³

The next chapter begins as follows:

"Come in," says the woman, and I did. She says: "Take a cheer."

I done it. She looked me all over with her little shiny eyes, and says: "What might your name be?"

"Sarah Williams."⁴⁷⁴

The misspelling of the word chair immediately indicates the peculiar regional dialect of Loftus. More importantly, following the set-up from the previous chapter, a reader would effectively need to imagine what Huck sounds like as he is speaking with Loftus. A performer, in turn, would be required to know how to perform Huck's attempt at sounding like a girl. Loftus, for her part, does not take very long to realise 'Sarah' is in fact a young boy: 'You do a girl tolerable poor, but you might fool men, maybe'.⁴⁷⁵ Nevertheless, she treats Huck with kindness and teaches him how a real girl is supposed to act. Consequently, although a reader receives the information of Huck's poor impersonation of a girl only near the end of their conversation (making for a comic relief, of sorts), the task of a performer would be to appropriately convey Huck's poor attempt right from the start.

⁴⁷³ Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 109.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 118.

A possible choice a performer would need to make in this respect is whether or not, and the degree to which, Huck's voice might change. Should one, for instance, perform Huck's attempt in an exaggerated fashion with much emphasis on how Huck knows nothing about what girls really sound like, or should one not make any change in Huck's voice at all—effectively emphasising the irony in having Huck's sound exactly the same, arguably making his disguise even more see-through?⁴⁷⁶ Much like the aforementioned scene with Aunt Polly, in which Huck assumes the role of Tom, the performer's delivery of Twain's lines is crucial. Choosing an appropriate narrator should therefore not only depend on the manner in which a performer decides to perform Huck's character (in light of the novel as a whole), but also take into consideration Twain's satire.

When listening to some of the available audiobook versions of Twain's novel, this problem becomes clearly seen (or rather *heard*) when evaluating the work of the performer. To be sure, different performers employ different choices. One should not only examine and evaluate the choices of a particular performer (who may or may not possess the necessary qualities for performing this particular novel) but also analyse their choices and the extent to which they comply, if at all, both with the novel's internal logic and with that of the aural medium itself.

In Dietz's version, the character of Loftus sounds like a relatively young woman, and seems to match her depiction—which, according to Huck's calculation, is around

⁴⁷⁶ English teacher Sarah Burgess suggested to me an additional complication that resides herein, pertaining to the *narrator's* gender. As an avid listener of audiobooks, Burgess finds that male narrators seldom 'get' the female voice 'just right'. This is indeed an important insight. In the case at hand, a listener is essentially confronted with a grown male narrator trying to sound like a young boy who is himself trying to sound like a young girl, *and*, at the same time, the grown male narrator is *himself* making an attempt to successfully sound like a grown woman who in the novel calls Huck out on his miserable attempt at actually sounding like a young girl.

forty. Dietz succeeds in delivering this aspect of Loftus's character from her very first utterance. His rendition of the word 'cheer' makes it sound like *her* natural way of speaking—both in terms of her assumed age and her regional dialect. He does not over emphasise the fact that this word is misspelt. Indeed, that it appears misspelt on the page is merely the 'brute fact' of the matter. However, the 'institutional fact'—that is to say, the fact that actually counts—is that its spelling is supposed to indicate this particular character's regional dialect. It should therefore sound effortless. A listener, in effect, should hear Loftus rather than Dietz. In addition, although Loftus is given a distinct voice of her own, Dietz excels in filtering it through Huck's first-person account as the storyteller. A clear distinction is similarly evident in the shorthand transition between his portrayal of Huck (as the narrator) and Huck's portrayal of Sarah Williams. One can hear, for example, at least to some extent, Huck's youthful joy and a kind of playfulness in trying to get away with his scheme. Ultimately, Dietz succeeds in consistently conveying the voices with which Twain endows the characters throughout the entire novel. His achievement is quite remarkable.⁴⁷⁷

In Thomas Becker's recording, on the other hand, the word 'cheer' does not sound as natural as it does in Dietz's. While Becker arguably demonstrates that Loftus speaks in her own distinct way, it nevertheless does not sound like a particular regional dialect. In fact, in Becker's reading, it sounds more like the ostensible brute fact of its being misspelt—or rather, in this case, mispronounced. Additionally, Becker's reading appears to be insufficient in two key respects: namely, (a) the age of Loftus's character—which sounds like a woman who is well over forty, and (b) the inconclusive transition

⁴⁷⁷ See USB flash drive for Dietz's recording of Chapter 11.

between Huck's voice as the narrator and what should be Huck's somewhat altered voice when disguised as a girl. With Becker, this transition appears to build up gradually. He makes Huck sound as if he is improvising Sarah Williams 'on the spot'—as indeed Huck does. On the one hand, this surely constitutes a viable and interesting choice on the performer's part. On the other hand, if this had indeed been his choice, its execution is nonetheless inconsistent in that the performance does not appropriately convey it. Rather, the recording gives one the sense that Becker is unsure whether or not he should utilise a girl's voice to begin with.⁴⁷⁸

The two different renditions recorded by Grover Gardner (i.e., credited to himself and 'Tom Parker'), the Loftus scene both properly express her age and successfully convey her correct regional dialect. Particularly well done is the seemingly simple utterance "'No", I says', as the transition between his portrayal of Huck and his performance of Huck's portrayal of the girl.⁴⁷⁹ Much like Dietz, Gardner's performance (in both his recordings) seems almost effortless, naturally delivering the world of the novel to the listeners.

In an abridged version performed by renowned American storyteller and radio personality, Garrison Keillor, there prevails an evident difference between his narration of Huck's voice as the 'voice' of the novel (i.e., speaking directly to the listener) and Huck's reporting of his conversations with other characters.⁴⁸⁰ He establishes a unique tone for Huck's character, making him sound *child-like* without sounding *child-ish*.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁸ See Mark Twain. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, unabridged, read by Thomas Becker (In Audio, 2003); and See USB flash drive for his recording of Chapter 11.

⁴⁷⁹ See USB flash drive for the 'Tom Parker' recording of Chapter 11.

⁴⁸⁰ See USB flash drive for Keillor's recording, 45m10sec.

⁴⁸¹ As alluded to earlier, making Huck sound child-like highlights his innocence. The danger in making him sound too childish is that it would not comply with his evident journey into adulthood and his growing understanding that the ways of his society are not necessarily conscionable.

Indeed, while Huck is indeed a child, and although the story is told from a child's point of view, portraying his character as childish seems a less appropriate way to actualise the novel's internal logic. To be sure, this is precisely what one can sense in Wood's performance in that he makes Huck sound too young.⁴⁸² Ultimately, Keillor's narration complements Huck's storytelling in that it highlights the fact Huck is telling the story, in *his* voice, as *he* experienced it, even when he refers to and uses the words spoken by other characters. Keillor's use of the dialect in this respect seems natural and effortless—as it should have been for Huck, with regard to his experience of the world and society that surrounded him. He performs the passage with charm and enthusiasm, allowing Twain's wit to be heard loud and clear. In the Loftus scene, succeeding where Becker fails, Keillor appropriately conveys Huck's assumed improvisation when faced with the challenge of changing his voice to sound like a girl.

Dufri's narration, although endowing Huck with a kind of child-like innocence, sounds over-enthusiastic to the extent that it makes Huck sound fundamentally immature.⁴⁸³ As can be heard in the Loftus scene, yet evident throughout, Dufri endows each character with a distinctive voice. His reading of Loftus appropriately succeeds in suggesting her imagined age. At the same time, however, whereas Dietz and Keillor succeed in consistently making their portrayal of Huck's voice present in the words and

⁴⁸² In the same vein, even a cursory listening to Robin Field's recording one gets the sense that his portrayal of Huck sounds too childish. Furthermore, his narration also manifests a rather problematic sense of pace and timing. Consider, for example, the arguably unnecessary pause in his utterance of the words 'free and satisfied'. (Although there is surely nothing wrong with pronouncing a certain word or phrase differently from anyone else, I find that this small example clearly demonstrates that not every choice works for every text). Consequently, I would argue that prolonged listening to Field's narration would evoke a completely unrewarding aesthetic experience. See Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, unabridged, read by Robin Field (Mission Audio, 2011); and See URL for online sample: accessed December 20, 2016, www.audible.co.uk/pd/Classics/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn-Audiobook/B0057AOL6M/ref=a_search_c4_1_9_srTtl?qid=1487352187&sr=1-9.

⁴⁸³ See USB flash drive for Dufri's recording of Chapter 11.

voices of the other characters, Dufriis does not. Effectively, as one listens to Dufriis, as Huck, telling his own story, one seems to constantly be made aware of his effort to act the part. So much so, in fact, that one might even reject his narration as overacting, and thereby render his aural performance aesthetically flawed.⁴⁸⁴

In Dick Hill's performance, Huck's voice remains exactly the same throughout the entire recording.⁴⁸⁵ In the Loftus scene, Hill takes no pains to make Huck sound like a girl or to convey to the listener whether or not Huck is at all worried about Loftus exposing his scheme. His performance lacks consistency in its aural characterisation of Huck. Hill's overall performance—much like that of Dufriis—is marred by overacting.⁴⁸⁶ (At the same time, his overacting might arguably be perceived as somewhat helpful in this particular scene, as it amplifies Huck's situation: namely, it potentially conveys Huck's attempt in trying to sustain the guise of a girl). Furthermore, although Hill also fails to give Loftus any specific regional dialect, he does utilise a distinctively different voice for her character—one which appropriately matches her assumed age. Nevertheless, as with his characterisation of Huck, his performance fails in consistently sustaining a complete and concrete sense of her character.

⁴⁸⁴ While considerably more so than Dufriis, I would argue that Stephen L. Vernon's narration constitutes a similarly so-called 'good bad-example' of what an audiobook version of *Huck Finn* should sound like. See Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, unabridged, read by Stephen L. Vernon (A.R.N. Publications, 2015); and See URL for online sample: accessed February 22, 2017, www.audible.co.uk/pd/Classics/Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn-Audiobook/B0108KAWZ4/ref=a_search_c4_1_16_srTtl?qid=1487758377&sr=1-16

⁴⁸⁵ See USB flash drive for Hill's recording of Chapter 11.

⁴⁸⁶ According to Knox, listeners, narrators and producers alike are very much aware of the risks involved with an 'over-the-top performance' in audiobooks. Knox, "Hearing Hardy, Talking Tolstoy," 131. Referring to *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872)—where she finds Hardy's 'concerted attempt to put down on paper' and 'make audible' the dialect and voices 'of his home country'—Knox maintains that 'the labor of voicing a literary work for an audiobook is precisely to put "it into words and speak it," and with such a force of presence that the "voice" previously to the fore in the reader's encounter with the printed text is dropped to the rear'. Ibid., 130–31.

A cursory listening to the performance by Patrick Fraley might lead one to conclude that it is just as good as that of Dietz. In brief, it both appropriately complies with the requirements of the aural medium and succeeds in manifesting the major aspects of the novel's internal logic. Yet, a close listening to Loftus makes it clear that Fraley's rendition of her character's regional dialect, for example, sounds quite forced and ostensibly mechanical.⁴⁸⁷ Consider, explicitly, his rendition of the word 'cheer', which is fundamentally closer to Becker's flawed delivery.⁴⁸⁸

Garrick Hagon's narration maintains a predominantly consistent rhythm and pace throughout his performance. So much so, in fact, that it seems to neglect some of the novel's more dramatic passages.⁴⁸⁹ In the Loftus scene, however, Hagon's portrayal of the character makes her sound well beyond the age of forty, and her regional dialect is heard quite distinctly—and the same can be said about his portrayal of additional characters in the novel. This scene also demonstrates Hagon's clear transition between Huck's voice as the narrator and Huck's portrayal of the girl.⁴⁹⁰ In his portrayal of Huck in disguise, he seems to have taken a somewhat different approach to that of the other readers discussed: namely, rather than conveying Huck's sense of playfulness or adventure, Hagon's rendition conveys more of Huck's fear of being exposed.

⁴⁸⁷ Fraley—much like Dufriis, although to a lesser extent—appears to portray Huck more as childish, rather than highlight his child-like point of view. In this respect, both Dufriis and Fraley seem to fail in making a listener aware that although Huck is a child, he nevertheless does not lack maturity. At the same time, both their performances demonstrate the understanding that Huck should not sound completely like an adult male narrator. See Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, unabridged, read by Patrick Fraley (Audio Partners, 1999); and See USB flash drive for his recording of Chapter 11.

⁴⁸⁸ Prichard's recording similarly suffers from a lack of consistency in conveying to the listeners the sense that Huck is a young boy. Neither he nor Becker succeed in endowing Huck with a clear speech pattern or a particular rhythm that manifests his perspective as the storyteller. Prichard does, however, meet the requirement of altering his voice to indicate Huck's impersonating the girl in the Loftus scene. He also provides Loftus with a distinctive voice, rather than portraying her through Huck. See USB flash drive for Prichard's recording of Chapter 11.

⁴⁸⁹ Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, unabridged, read by Garrick Hagon. (Naxos, 2007). See USB flash drive for Hagon's recording, for instance, of Chapter 31, 00m00sec–06m00sec.

⁴⁹⁰ See USB flash drive for Hagon's recording of Chapter 11.

Consequently, this aesthetic choice is not only interesting but also appears to work quite well in enhancing the listener's aesthetic experience. In brief, it draws the listener into the dramatic situation, making one simply compelled to listen.

Wood's delivery of the Loftus scene is a playful, child-like performance of Huck's attempt to sound like a girl.⁴⁹¹ His narration of Huck appears to subtly demonstrate Huck's illiteracy. At the same time, in contrast to other narrators who may have over-emphasised the various characters in the novel by endowing them with distinctive voices, Wood's performance seems to do the opposite. The variations of characters are consequently not distinctive enough and they also are not necessarily 'filtered' through his rendition of Huck's voice. Effectively, a listener might even become confused and lose track of which character is in fact speaking.⁴⁹²

As will later be made clear with my additional extended case studies, my intention is to further examine the audiobook as the most appropriate medium for the first-person narrative—with particular emphasis on the manner in which casting an aural performance reflects on one's informed intuition in aesthetic appreciation of artworks. As aural performances—manifesting in the form of extended monologues, delivered by narrators who appear to *require* an audience to whom they must speak their narrative—they enrich one's aesthetic experience to a considerable and compelling degree, showing how an internal logic works in action.

⁴⁹¹ See USB flash drive for Wood's recording, 01hr58m51sec.

⁴⁹² While he does succeed in making the characters of Huck and Jim sound different from one another, this problem is particularly evident in Wood's reading of the characters of Pap, the Duke and the King—all of whom sound almost identical.

6. Sub-(Institutional)-Categories: An Extended Analysis of AP Artworks

6.1 Stephen Hawking, LibriVox and other 'Earsores': What Does *Not* Count as AP

Before I turn to my second major case study, having already surveyed a classic and comparatively standard nineteenth-century novel—utilising it for identifying the unique manner in which audiobooks, as the primary aural artefacts of AP, effectively facilitate the performative aspects of the first-person narrative—I wish to present an extended analysis of the aesthetic category itself. Indeed, I find it necessary to better articulate what sub-(institutional)-categories the institution of AP evokes—thereby developing a more comprehensive understanding of the institution itself. By way of illustrating what essentially does *not* comply with the mother institution, my intention is to make abundantly clear what in fact *does*.⁴⁹³ Thus, examined herein are two distinct phenomena associated with the realm of audiobooks: (i) books for the blind and visually impaired—explored through the volunteer-based website libriVox.org,⁴⁹⁴ and (ii) computer-generated audiobooks—commonly identified by their ostensible Stephen Hawking 'soundalike' quality.

LibriVox is a 'Web 2.0'⁴⁹⁵ community. As such, according to Michael Hancher, they are able to conduct themselves in ways that typical commercial audiobook publications simply cannot: not only are they immune to issues of copyright (as they

⁴⁹³ In brief, my objectives with this intermediary chapter are to (a) identify so-called 'false friends': namely, cases in which one merely appears to identify an AP artwork—when in fact the work in question does not comply with what an AP artwork should be, and (b) extend my evaluative analysis of AP artworks by underlining the comprehensive importance of appreciating artworks.

⁴⁹⁴ LibriVox, in essence, is a volunteer-based Internet community, devoted to the creation and online distribution of audiobooks.

⁴⁹⁵ The term 'Web 2.0' describes World Wide Web sites emphasising user-generated content, usability, and interoperability. Similarly, these websites enable interaction and collaboration between users, who function as both creators and consumers, taking part in a dialogue, within social media as part of a virtual community. *Wikipedia*, s.v. "web 2.0," accessed March 1, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0.

concern themselves exclusively with works in the public domain),⁴⁹⁶ but they also appear impervious to ‘constraints of the literary tastes’ evoked either by the readers (i.e., the volunteers who record the books) or the listeners (i.e., the community’s members who consume the recorded material).⁴⁹⁷ As is evidently underscored by the slogan embedded in the LibriVox logo, the community’s self-confessed and overt objective appears to unapologetically advocate their devotion to the ‘acoustical liberation of books in the public domain’.⁴⁹⁸ Their ostensible manifesto asserts that ‘LibriVox volunteers record chapters of books in the public domain and publish the audio files on the Internet. Our goal is to record all the books in the public domain’.⁴⁹⁹ Effectively, their so-called ‘call to action’ appears to be simple. As LibriVox founder, Hugh McGuire, puts it, ‘It’s easy to volunteer. All you need is a computer, some free recording software, and your own voice’.⁵⁰⁰

Now, McGuire’s perception of the LibriVox volunteer—as well as his implied assertion about him/her lacking any obstacles in the process of recording a printed book—both stand in direct contrast to the conception of the (audio)-performer and his/her crucial role in defining what constitutes an AP artwork.⁵⁰¹ Predominantly, McGuire’s perception appears to outwardly oppose the notion that an audiobook requires a *professional* performer. Additionally, he seems to completely ignore the no

⁴⁹⁶ Works that are regarded as being in and/or belonging to the public domain are essentially ‘those whose exclusive intellectual property rights have expired, have been forfeited, or are inapplicable’ *Wikipedia*, s.v. “public domain”, accessed March 1, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_domain.

⁴⁹⁷ Michael Hancher, “Learning from LibriVox,” in *Audiobooks, Literature, and Sound Studies*, ed. Matthew Rubery (New York: Routledge, 2011), 201.

⁴⁹⁸ See URL: accessed November 14, 2014, www.librivox.org.

⁴⁹⁹ Hancher, “Learning from LibriVox,” 204-205.

⁵⁰⁰ *Wikipedia*, s.v. “Hugh McGuire,” accessed March 1, 2016, https://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Interview_with_LibriVox_founder_Hugh_McGuire.

⁵⁰¹ As has been established throughout, in constituting one of the four rule-schemes constructing the intuition of AP as whole, the (audio)-performer is essential for articulating all the other three.

less crucial factor of performing for a designated audience. To be sure, their spatiotemporal absence notwithstanding, there *is* an audience who will consequently listen to the recording and experience it as an AP artwork. Effectively, to properly perform an AP artwork, one is required be proficient precisely in performing for an audience who essentially is not there. Thus, as LibriVox abandons any and all notions pertaining to criteria, neither its recorded products nor their recording creators can be aesthetically evaluated.⁵⁰² Fundamentally, although it might be quite ‘easy’ to become a volunteer and record a book (i.e., in light of the technology required for the process), I would argue that it is nonetheless most definitely *not* ‘all you need’. Quite the contrary. To *perform* an audiobook—and, in effect, to *create* an AP artwork—is unequivocally not an easy task. Surely it is a challenge that requires investing far more effort than merely knowing how to read and work a tape recorder.

While most files on LibriVox can be found under the ‘human-read’ category, their website also dedicates a designated category for archiving computer-generated audiobooks. Hancher asserts that since computers have already succeeded in defeating chess masters—a point I will presently address myself—one might surmise that they could soon pose ‘serious competition’ to LibriVox volunteers, especially since ‘increasingly sophisticated text-to-speech (TTS) synthesizer programmes are now common features on computers and a variety of portable devices’.⁵⁰³ For Hancher, the current frontier is focused on the manner in which ‘expression’ can be represented in computer-generated speech. He therefore maintains that when expression is

⁵⁰² Hancher appropriately describes the LibriVox phenomenon as one that can be identified precisely for what it is not: namely, ‘it is not the result of special training, although all of its participants have been schooled in one way or another; and, with few exceptions, it is not the product of professional skills’. Hancher, “Learning from LibriVox,” 199.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, 210.

represented successfully, one might be tempted to identify it as a manifestation of ‘emotion’—or some kind of blending between the two, subtle as they both may be.⁵⁰⁴ Since Hancher considers most poems to constitute a challenge to almost any (human) reader, he argues that they surely present a challenge for computer programmers as well.⁵⁰⁵ Yet, expression and emotion could, conceivably, be more accurately characterised by employing the notion of common sense. Indeed, technological advances notwithstanding, none of the currently available TTS programmes encompass the innate ability to employ common sense in the process of decision making. Computers may be able to ostensibly ‘translate’ printed words into sound—perhaps even to a high degree of precision—nevertheless, they do not, indeed cannot, possess the knowledge of *how* a particular phrase or sentence should be spoken.⁵⁰⁶ A sentient human being, however, most definitely possesses the ability of understanding, indeed *knowing*, just how a particular text is supposed to sound when spoken aloud in a putative performance.⁵⁰⁷ Consequently, I would argue that these so-called synthetic

⁵⁰⁴ Hancher, "Learning from LibriVox," 210-211.

⁵⁰⁵ On the one hand, it seems as though Hancher implies that there is indeed a correct or proper way of reading a particular text—at least with respect to poetry. In this respect, the fact that reading a poem might pose a challenge clearly entails that not every reading is acceptable. Moreover, the fact that programmers are attempting to teach computers *how* to read poems demonstrates that there *is* indeed a particular way of reading certain poems—which is thus inherently different from reading other kinds of texts. On the other hand, despite the fact that Hancher appears to recognise the importance of classification and evaluation, LibriVox quite blatantly renounces them both.

⁵⁰⁶ Even the most advanced computer cannot employ a literal comprehension of context, and quite plausibly will never be able to. Borrowing from Graves’s example in NITA, consider, for instance, the famous chess matches between Russian Chess Grandmaster, Garry Kasparov, and IBM’s Deep Blue. Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 65. In essence, unlike Kasparov, Deep Blue did not *play* the game while fully employing either common sense or any degree of intuitive process. Advanced and sophisticated as ‘he’ was, all he could do was *calculate* moves. He may have done *that* incredibly well, yet that was literally all he did. Chess, after all, is a game. It has its own institutional rules and it consists of a unique and distinctive internal logic. Thus, to *really* play a game of chess, one needs to grasp its workings. A computer—even Deep Blue—is simply unable to do so.

⁵⁰⁷ In March 2013, Google’s A.I. system, AlphaGo (developed by their DeepMind programmers) defeated Lee Sedol, champion of the ancient Chinese Go board game—which is considered one of the most creative and complex games ever created, posing an almost infinite number of possible moves. It is well established that prominent Go players depend to a large extent on intuition in order to determine what move to make at any given point in the game. It had been assumed that a computer might be able to

recorded books *cannot* be regarded as proper audiobooks. They are most definitely not performances and they cannot be considered artworks. Rather, these recordings consist of nothing more than the mere computer-generated translation of text to sound. To be sure, no matter what degree of skills, talent or intelligence one might possess, a person who for whatever reason is only able to speak using the assistance of some computer-generated vocal software (e.g., Professor Stephen Hawking) simply *cannot* be considered an appropriate choice for recording an audiobook.⁵⁰⁸

Having already alluded to both Deep Blue and AlphaGo, consider now the variety of ‘joke responses’ (for lack of a better term) that one can elicit from Siri—Apple Inc.’s artificially-intelligent personal assistant and ‘knowledge navigator’, employed in Apple’s mobile operating system (iOs). Asking Siri questions such as ‘What is the meaning of life?’, ‘Will you marry me?’, ‘What is the airspeed velocity of an unladen swallow?’, ‘How much wood could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?’, to name but a few, can result in very amusing answers. In some instances, the same question may even elicit more than one single response. At the same time, although Siri is able to simulate responses in a number of different languages, accents and genders, she/he/it is *not* in fact responsible for eliciting laughter. Ultimately, all Siri does is merely translate

defeat a human player only by 2025. The fact that AlphaGo actually *won* the first match demonstrates the incredible advances in A.I. technology. Nevertheless, its impressive simulation of creative thinking and the fulfilment of complex tasks notwithstanding, to argue that AlphaGo has learned intuition—as was indeed suggested—would be somewhat preposterous. Learning intuition is a contradiction in terms. Google’s AlphaGo may be more advanced than IBM’s Deep Blue, but it too, at the end of the day, cannot really get the internal logic of the game. As stated earlier (see Chapter 2), intuition, common sense, and the inner-workings of any internal logic can only be sensed, felt, developed and employed by a first-hand experience.

⁵⁰⁸ TTS programmes are not able to express tonality, rhythm, emphases, inflections and so forth. Effectively, only a sentient human being possesses the ability of knowing how a particular text should be performed. As a source of knowledge, one attains it via an informed intuition. By way of illustration, see USB flash drive for what I find is a good bad-example of a computer ‘reading’ first chapter of H. G. Wells’s novel *The War of the Worlds* (1898).

into sound the particular schematic responses that were fed into her/his/its system by a team of human designers. Siri her/his/itself cannot deliver comedy, and, indeed, is not even aware that her/his/its responses are supposed to be funny. Thus, although Siri delivers these replies aurally, they do not comply with the institution of AP.⁵⁰⁹

In the same vein, as Philip Auslander points out, ‘there is currently no machine capable of presenting a performance of the *Kreutzer Sonata*, *Hamlet*, or *Swan Lake* that would pass muster with the relevant audiences’.⁵¹⁰ Nonetheless, in attempting to ascertain whether or not machines are able to perform⁵¹¹—a question prompted by his encounter with Sergei Shutov’s installation, *Abacus* (2001)⁵¹²—Auslander, by his own admission, asserts that machines *can* in fact be perceived as performers.⁵¹³ He insists that robots can possess and employ the technical skills required for creating a performance, yet, at the same time, he does not argue that they can possess and

⁵⁰⁹ While the notion that Siri appears to reply it/her/himself may be funny in its own right, the fact that Siri’s developers have managed to anticipate and predict what its users might ask Siri and appropriately simulate its replies can indeed be perceived as quite a feat.

⁵¹⁰ Philip Auslander, "Humanoid Boogie: Reflections on Robotic Performance", in David Krasner & David Z. Saltz (eds.), *Staging Philosophy: Intersections of Theater, Performance, and Philosophy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006) 91.

⁵¹¹ For Auslander, ‘at the most basic level, the question [...] can only be answered in the affirmative. After all, the primary meaning of the verb *to perform* is simply “to do.” Inasmuch as machines (or human beings) do things, they perform. Moving from that basic level to the context of art practices, however, the definition of performance proves to be context-specific, not universal; it changes according to the particular aesthetic form and tradition under consideration. What it means to perform a piece of classical music is not the same as what it means to perform jazz, and neither musical definition of performance is applicable to the theater, dance, or performance art. [...] If the definition of performance is context-dependent, so is the determination of what counts as a performer’. *Ibid.*, 88.

⁵¹² *Abacus*, as Auslander depicts it, ‘consists of over forty crouching figures draped in black, which face an open door and pray in numerous languages representing a multitude of faiths while making the reverential movements appropriate to prayer. Nearby video monitors display the texts of the prayers in their many alphabets. [...] the figures performing [...] are not human beings—they are robots programmed by a computer to engage in *dahvening* (Jewish prayer) movements accompanied by the recorded sounds of ecumenical prayer’. *Ibid.*, 87.

⁵¹³ Auslander is ‘not proposing that machines can perform in all of the ways that human beings can. One element common to most traditional definitions of performance is an emphasis on the agency of the performer as the interpreter of a text of some kind and an artist who expresses something of her own through interpretation’. *Ibid.*, 90.

execute interpretive skills.⁵¹⁴ According to Auslander, since machines might predominantly be perceived either as ‘surrogates’ for sentient human beings or as metaphors for human conditions, one is able to interpret pieces performed by a machine in the same way that one would interpret ‘the same piece [...] if performed by a human being. [...] The question of what it means to have the actions that define the piece performed by a machine provides for a further, enriched level of interpretation’.⁵¹⁵ Consequently, he maintains that ‘there are many possibilities for interpretation that arise from defining such a piece as a performance undertaken by machines and addressing directly both the ways in which the machines can be seen as metaphoric humans and the implications of using a machine in the particular context of the piece’.⁵¹⁶ Even though it may be context dependent, I am doubtful that one is able to define such cases—in which the ostensible performers constitute machines and robots—as proper performances. Furthermore, I am confident that to regard them as artworks would be altogether impossible. In the realm of audiobooks, if one would compare a recording of a novel performed by a human being—indeed, by a professional performer—with a recording of the same novel as ‘read’ by a computer, one would surely realise that the latter cannot be considered a performance.

Books for blind and visually impaired constitute a similar example. James Parker, for instance—a writer for *The New York Times* who also writes the Entertainment column for *The Atlantic*—alludes in one of his articles to a blind friend of his who

⁵¹⁴ In his own words: ‘This, it seems to me, is the crucial distinction between robotic performers and human performers: although robots are capable of executing technical assignments, they lack consciousness, intelligence, and emotions—all the ingredients that presumably contribute to the development of interpretive skills’. *Ibid.*, 91.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 98-99.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 99.

makes frequent use in her reading of text-to-speech technology, whereby the words she summons to her computer screen are recited aloud in an uninflected automated-banking robo-voice. She claims to prefer this voice, for all its flatness and occasional glitchiness, to the conventional huffings and puffings of some great Narrator. 'It mispronounces a ton of stuff,' she tells me, 'but I don't care, because I'm getting the information in a way that's most analogous to reading the printed word. You can learn a lot of things from a narrator's voice, but that interpretation belongs to the narrator. With a synthesized voice there's no interpretation'.⁵¹⁷

At the same time, Parker asserts that there do exist certain recordings which his friend 'is gaga' for, as he puts it, and that some interpretations are quite simply 'irresistible'.⁵¹⁸

Interestingly enough, however, among the number of libraries that recruit volunteers to record books for the blind, some explicitly instruct them *not* to employ a so-called dramatic reading. Rather, they require them to simply record the books, in what can best be depicted as a 'flat' reading.⁵¹⁹ As Rubery describes it, 'talking books made for blind people stick as closely as possible to the printed source, reading verbatim everything from acknowledgements to appendices, sometimes even preserving the original's typos'.⁵²⁰ While I do sympathise, to some extent, with the sentiment prompting this particular decision, I would argue that this approach does more harm than good, both for the original books and *vis-à-vis* the recordings themselves. When considering literary classics, already recognised as remarkable artworks in their own right, there seems to be an ostensibly amplified insult added to injury. As there is no distinct difference between a so-called flat human reading and a 'reading' generated by

⁵¹⁷ James Parker, "The Mind's Ear," *The New York Times*, 25 November 2011, accessed October 10, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/27/books/review/the-minds-ear.html>.

⁵¹⁸ Parker considers his personal favourite audiobook to be Evelyn Waugh's *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, as read by Michael Cochrane—whose performance, for Parker, has become 'inseparable' from the original text: 'I read Waugh, and I hear Cochrane'. *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁹ This approach is advocated, for instance, by Mr. Yoav Hefher, who in 2010 held the position of CEO of the Central Library for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Handicapped (based in the city of Netanya, Israel), who described his views to me in a telephone interview.

⁵²⁰ Rubery, *The Untold Story of the Talking Book*, 3.

a computer or machine, it would be nearly impossible to classify such recordings as aural performances or AP artworks. A 'flat' reading—if such a thing is even possible⁵²¹—does not demonstrate an understanding of context, and therefore cannot be considered an *actual* reading.⁵²² If one happens, for instance, to come across the same word more than once when reading a particular sentence on the page, one *knows* that that word does not (or, at least, is not 'supposed to') sound exactly the same way if spoken aloud.⁵²³

According to Hancher, each LibriVox reading evokes a so-called invitation to another reading.⁵²⁴ Granted, there is more than one single way of reading a particular text. As every performer is aware, there is more than one way of delivering a line. Nevertheless, as every good performer should be aware—and notwithstanding what appears to be a common conception—this does not mean that there are an infinite number of readings.⁵²⁵ Consequently, what can be identified as indiscriminate support for any and all kinds of readings and readers, appears to prevail as an inherently problematic (anti-)aesthetic paradigm. Since the volunteers are from all over the world, one is sure to come across recordings that feature a number of people recording different chapters of the same book.⁵²⁶ To make matters worse, and in conjunction with

⁵²¹ As Rubery quite rightly points out, a narrator is able to profoundly influence the reception of a particular book in spite of his/her 'best efforts to remain neutral.' *Ibid.*, 98.

⁵²² Much like the 'reading' generated by a computer, it implies almost completely ignoring it. In effect, Hancher's decision renders the final recordings somewhat futile.

⁵²³ By the same token, if a particular sentence or phrase happens to repeat—as is quite often the case with dramatic texts—professional actors know that one should not pronounce it exactly in the same manner each time it appears. Computers, however, cannot make this distinction. It thus becomes quite evident why the recordings featured on LibriVox cannot, for the most part, be considered as artworks.

⁵²⁴ Hancher, "Learning from LibriVox," 201.

⁵²⁵ In fact, once grasping a particular text's internal logic, one might discover that quite a limited number of readings, and to a varied degree of compliance, would be deemed appropriate (not to mention aesthetically good).

⁵²⁶ As Hancher explains, 'LibriVox is catholic regarding not only the titles that it publishes but also the merits of its recordings. It does not discriminate in terms of the quality [...] As one volunteer puts it, "Everyone is welcome [...] regardless of language, accent, country, age, or vocal ability"'. Hancher, "Learning from LibriVox," 205.

LibriVox's so-called 'great scheme of things', this is done without making any effort to logically assign either specific chapters or particular characters to designated readers in such a way that would either comply with the readers' individual abilities and or talents, or demonstrate some distinctive rationale in terms of casting.⁵²⁷

By way of illustration, consider the CollegeHumor Originals⁵²⁸ comedy sketch featuring American comedian and actor, Gilbert Gottfried, reading passages from E. L. James's erotic romance novel, *Fifty Shades of Grey* (2011).⁵²⁹ Conceivably, even if one had not actually read the novel, but does happen to possess enough information about its general theme and content, *and* if one is at the same time acquainted (at least to some degree) with Mr. Gottfried's *oeuvre*—explicitly his voice, and the fact that it usually emanates a rather obnoxious chalk-on-a-blackboard quality—one should, almost unmistakably, undergo some kind of an aesthetic experience. Indeed, the aurally *heard* mental 'image' that one would conjure up ignited by the very notion of *him* (Gottfried) reading *that* (James's literary eroticism), is sure to elicit one of two possible reactions: either (a) complete bewilderment, or (b) roaring laughter. Whereas the latter can be identified as a reaction to the brute fact of the matter, the former constitutes a reaction to the institutional fact.⁵³⁰ To be sure, the latter prevails as the very reason for

⁵²⁷ Had one been able to identify that an attempt has indeed been made to work out intelligently and creatively *how*, *why* and whether or not a particular book *should* be distributed between a number of readers, one might have been able to aesthetically appreciate the final recorded product as potential AP artwork. Similarly, if a learned reason is given with respect to *why* a different approach is chosen, creating in effect a 'new' internal logic, one could evaluate the final recording in light of *that*.

⁵²⁸ A video section, featured on collegehumor.com, an original comedy website based in Los Angeles, created by Josh Abramson and Ricky Van Veen. The website features both in-house and user/fan-submitted videos, pictures and articles. See URL: accessed June 10, 2015, www.collegehumor.com.

⁵²⁹ See URL: "Gilbert Gottfried Reads 50 Shades of Grey", accessed June 10, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkLqAlIETkA>. (See also USB flash drive).

⁵³⁰ As previously stated, I believe that a strong case can be made for advocating the analysis of humor and comedy through NITA and the notion of internal logic, thereby establishing what counts as funny with respect to certain specific contexts set upon by the potential aesthetic category. Put simply, that something is 'funny' can be established as an institutional fact. Notwithstanding, the scope of this study merely enables me to identify this potential, yet prevents me from further developing the insight.

this sketch having been made in the first place. Now, I would argue that although this sketch exists as a video clip—an infomercial for a new audiobook, including the visual element of seeing the reactions of women who are hearing Gottfried’s narration—the joke *itself* is inherently aural.

Now, had James’s novel been in the public domain, would LibriVox accept Gottfried as a legitimate volunteer? The answer appears to be a resonating ‘Yes!’—which is precisely what renders their entire philosophy as something of an aesthetic conundrum. As Hancher points out, ‘Listeners may sense that some LibriVox readers are not as good as others; variation in quality may be especially apparent when the chapters of a book are distributed to a mixed group of volunteers’.⁵³¹ In essence, as far as LibriVox is concerned, ‘all voices are different; some are adequate or better; more are welcome’.⁵³² On the one hand, all voices are inevitably, indeed empirically, different from another. On the other hand, to regard certain voices as adequate or better—forming, in effect, an aesthetic judgement—would require one to examine the particular context in which the voices are heard. In this dissertation, the former should be perceived as the ‘brute’ fact of the matter, whereas the latter prevails as the ‘institutional’ fact. This cannot be emphasised enough. Effectively, the idea that ‘more are welcome’ should be applied with caution and due consideration.⁵³³ Consequently, what seems to take the form of valuing quantity over quality, results in almost altogether abandoning any aesthetic consideration.⁵³⁴

⁵³¹ Hancher, "Learning from LibriVox," 205.

⁵³² *Ibid.*, 201.

⁵³³ Following Graves’s aforementioned assertion that while anything goes not everything works, it could be argued that while more voices are indeed welcomed not any voice will suffice. Accordingly, while one should not restrict the number of possible additional voices, one should limit their given range to the degree it complies with a particular text’s internal logic.

⁵³⁴ Although LibriVox had in the past been asked to incorporate or formulate some kind of quality criteria that might grade each audio file, its founder, Hugh McGuire, ‘resists such calls for critical interference.

While the LibriVox community seems to relish the fact that their recordings are (a) easily accessed and (b) demonstrate, to some extent, a social uniqueness (i.e., in their being part of an online community), little or no attention is paid to the very nature of the readings themselves as putative performances, potentially possessing an aesthetic quality as AP artworks. Ultimately, these recordings, on the whole, become no different than the majority of recordings designated for the blind community or the visually impaired community. In both cases, one primarily encounters recordings that are for the most part created by non-professional (albeit well-intentioned) volunteers, who generally do not account for aesthetics or artistic tendencies. As such, the LibriVox recordings are not entirely different than those produced by TTS programmes.

The purposeful, unapologetic, and to some extent, quite brutal abandonment of any need to account for aesthetic quality deprives the very act of recording these works of any real meaning. To extract these recordings from the appropriate cultural institution is to render them 'un-evaluable'. It is a decision that can be perceived as a blatant and irresponsible lack of respect for the works that are being recorded—especially as most of them are recognised amongst the most pivotal works in one's literary and poetic canon.⁵³⁵ According to Hancher, one is able to measure the

Instead he offers the hospitality of the free market: if a reader is unhappy with a recording of a text, that reader can supplement it with a reading of his/her own, which LibriVox will gladly host. [...] Not only will LibriVox provide recordings of "all the books in the public domain": it will provide an indefinite number of recordings of each [of] those books'. Hancher, "Learning from LibriVox," 205. Nevertheless, as Hancher points out, 'a typical LibriVox recording will be an amateur project, in both senses of the word; not professional, but earnest'. Ibid., 200. Following NITA, I have attempted to employ a similar 'pluralistic' nature to my suggested institution of AP. Although an unprofessional narration would, in effect, constitute an aesthetically bad performance, I find LibriVox's preference of the 'earnest' recording to a professional one quite problematic. Indeed, with respect to aesthetically evaluating such recordings, one should examine not only (a) what an 'earnest' recording is to begin with, but also (b) whether or not, and the extent to which, 'earnestness' is even relevant or has any artistic merit.

⁵³⁵ In essence, one is invited to ask questions such as: What is the value, if indeed there is one, that is underscored by the goal of 'having as many public-domain audio versions as possible' just for the sake of having them made 'acoustically liberated' regardless of quality? Hancher emphasises, for instance, the ostensible majesty of their goal: namely, to record 'not some such books, but all of them'. Hancher,

popularity of certain books given the number of downloads they receive—which he maintains is dependent ‘on the human embodiment that they are given by the LibriVox reader’s voice’.⁵³⁶ Arguably, one could compare this notion of ‘human embodiment’ to the notion of ‘embodied meaning’. Thus, to identify that a particular book can in fact become ‘embodied’ by a particular human voice, implies that one would necessarily be required to consider *what* in the book is being embodied, *how* it is being embodied, and finally whether or not the particular embodiment does or does not ‘work’ and why.

At the same time, although he appears to remain focused on the issue of popularity, Hancher *does* appear to find *value* in identifying and appreciating the *good* performances.⁵³⁷ He asserts that some readings can ‘give the illusion of being the ideal reading of the text, perfectly realizing what the author wrote’.⁵³⁸ He clearly has at least a vague idea of what would constitute a good performance and what would not, and he evidently recognises the fact that particular texts *should* be read in a manner that is appropriate to them. Hancher cites Colclough and Vincent stating that readers who possess ‘sophisticated reading skills must often have found listening to a poor reader frustrating’.⁵³⁹ He similarly cites McGuire for indicating that ‘if a reading disappoints, offer a better one’, which LibriVox will publish as well.⁵⁴⁰ As Hancher points out, while there have indeed been multiple readings of a single work made, they have not always been made due to a sense of dissatisfaction with what has already been recorded. He explains that ‘enthusiasm for an author or a book may be enough to motivate the extra

"Learning from LibriVox," 205. This, he concludes, entails that volunteers ultimately will not have to choose what to read, simply because all would have been already read. In his own words: ‘nothing will be selected, because everything will be included’. Ibid.

⁵³⁶ Ibid., 204.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 207-208.

⁵³⁸ Ibid., 205.

⁵³⁹ Hancher, "Learning from LibriVox," 206.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

effort. There are several dozen books that volunteers have read more than once for LibriVox, either as solo readers or in groups'.⁵⁴¹ I would argue that if a reading 'disappoints' there is absolutely no merit in having it eternalised in cyberspace along with the ones which do not.

In the same vein, there is no apparent reason for hanging a bad painting in an exhibition hall—or, alternatively, hanging it and expecting an audience to come and see it. Effectively, audiobooks as AP artworks should be evaluated aesthetically. Even mass-produced professional recordings, which are aesthetically deficient, should not find their way to the Spoken Word shelf at one's local bookstore. Moreover, if, indeed, there could be such a thing as a 'perfect' or an 'ideal' reading (and Hancher seems to imply that there could), one cannot but consider aesthetic terms. In other words, the institution of AP is quite necessary for a comprehensive engagement with audiobooks.⁵⁴² Ultimately, while one would be required to analyse each particular case in its own right, it can be determined that the vast majority of LibriVox recordings (much like the non-professional recordings made for the blind and visually impaired) cannot comply with what counts as creating art.⁵⁴³

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² In referring to the David Barnes recording of Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1859), alluding specifically to Barnes's rendition of the narrative of the character of Mr. Fairlie, Hancher asserts that it is 'exactly, preternaturally, what Wilkie Collins had in mind when he wrote that section'. Hancher, "Learning from LibriVox," 205. For all intents and purposes, this is an aesthetic evaluation—and one that can be said to resemble the evaluations employed by Roach in her aforementioned *Spoken Records*. Moreover, Hancher could only have arrived at this conclusion by first having attained some understanding of that novel's internal logic. By his own admission, Hancher asserts that it is between the 'fantastic extremes of perfect embodiment' that resides 'the commonsensical belief that skill in reading aloud is unevenly distributed and that some people are better at it than others'. Ibid.

⁵⁴³ That one can predominantly learn more about (a) reading or listening habits, (b) popular online communities or download preferences, and, arguably, (c) what one does with one's spare time, all indicate why conducting a sociocultural study of LibriVox will surely be far more fruitful than an aesthetic study of the recordings it produces. While one might be able to attain a better understating of LibriVox as a cultural phenomenon (arguably, in effect, leading one to some insight with respect to their internal logic), one cannot aesthetically evaluate LibriVox's recordings as AP artworks.

Although to regard LibriVox recordings in aesthetic terms constitutes a significant challenge—due to their ostensible *raison d'être* and the simple fact that they are not created with an aesthetic consciousness—one is nonetheless sure to come across instances that will disprove the general trend. To some extent, the overall conceit of LibriVox is something of an illusion. It is not entirely logical (and thereby quite counter-intuitive) to request that listeners discard the aesthetic quality of the aural readings. Fundamentally, one *should* care about the aesthetics of the narrations. To experience a poorly-performed aural iteration of a good literary text—especially once a listener is well acquainted with that text and therefore is aware of, or at least has some basic idea about, the manner in which that text should be performed—would surely constitute a frustrating aesthetic experience. That one *is* in fact able to identify certain LibriVox recordings as ‘candidates’ for aesthetic appreciation (thereby implying that certain recordings are necessarily intended to be judged by listeners), appears to constitute a predominant consequence of the aesthetic category itself. The fact that some recordings seem to possess a certain aesthetic component, arguably prevails as an explicit reason for why this category is required to begin with. (Given the lack of a designated aesthetic category, a so-called good LibriVox recording would merely entail that the recording successfully transfers the written text from the public domain to an equally liberated aural iteration). As any aesthetic feature is inevitably rooted within the institutional artistic framework, one is able to consider certain LibriVox recordings as AP artworks. Subsequently, one can survey a variety of different recordings on LibriVox, and—predominantly on a case by case basis—distinguish their aesthetic quality.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴⁴ In brief, as alluded to earlier, the criteria and parameters established by a particular artistic institution are predominantly what determines the aesthetic quality of its artistic products. In considering AP, to identify whether or not, and the extent to which, a certain narration of performance is ostensibly pleasing

6.2 'Old Men Fighting' vs. A Legitimate Comedy Album: What *Could* Count as AP

Amongst the amalgamation of witty one-liners constituting his act (consisting of jokes and statements that range between the hilarious to bewildering and creating a distinctive borderline hybrid between comedy and haiku), American stand-up comedian Steven Wright has stated that he recently went to a museum where all the art was done by children and all the paintings were hung on refrigerators.⁵⁴⁵

Now, in deconstructing this little joke with NITA in mind—bearing in mind the institutional conditions and given circumstances necessary for someone to be considered an 'artist' or something to be considered a 'work of art' and so forth—Wright's witty one-liner becomes, in fact, a potentially accurate statement.⁵⁴⁶ In essence, since NITA has demonstrated that in art 'anything goes', the putative existence of such an exhibition should not be too farfetched. Wright's joke, in effect, appears to

to the ear of the listener, is fundamentally irrelevant to what *makes* a particular recording an AP artwork. Indeed, drawing on Danto's insight, a pleasing voice—as an aesthetic property—does not take part in the definition. Consequently, one should examine whether or not, and to what extent, a particular recording complies with the aesthetic category itself. Subsequently, one should be able to establish if and when a particular recording, as AP artwork, can be identified as a good example of its kind. If one is unable to distinguish between the aesthetically good and aesthetically flawed, one might unwittingly listen to a bad audiobook, effectively forming a misguided conclusion that audiobooks, on the whole, constitute an untenable genre.

⁵⁴⁵ *A Steven Wright Special* (HBO; 1985), 26m55se-27m05sec.

⁵⁴⁶ As far as NITA is concerned, with respect to the institutional structure of the Artworld, children, predominantly, cannot be considered artists. Accordingly, the drawings they produce do not and cannot fall under the category of 'art'. As Graves puts it, 'Dickie defines the artist as the one who participates in all this "with understanding". [...] Kjørup gives a fair idea of just what it is that the artist needs to understand: the elaborate social-cultural structure of the Artworld as a whole. He must be familiar with the history of art in general, and more so of his particular genre or system. He must know the technical rules of his medium, and the semantic rules of his "artistic language", even if he intends to break some of those rules. He must understand that he is trying "to say something" in his work, and the addressees of that saying constitute his public. He must understand their role in all of this. In short, there is an awful lot for an artist to understand, if he is to properly carry out his institutional role as artist. Does this mean that an elephant cannot be an artist? Yes, it does. The elephant may produce pretty paintings, but that is not enough for art, (it's not even necessary). The same holds true for the child, precocious and pure as she may be. That's why our children's paintings go up on the fridge, and we do not love them any less for it. These ramifications of the institutional theory concerning the true nature of the artist annoy some people very deeply. We say that a child cannot be an artist, that a person who zealously creates only for himself is not an artist, that an artist cannot be ignorant of the rules and conventions of his genre'. Graves, *The New Institutional Theory of Art*, 31–32.

defeat its purpose.⁵⁴⁷ Indeed, one might very well come across recordings that while they comply with the institution of AP, and can thereby be regarded as AP artworks, the artist who created them has not necessarily contributed anything at all to their creative process.⁵⁴⁸ These kinds of recordings consist predominantly of what is commonly regarded either as ‘found-sound’ or *audio-vérité*. In fact, they can be identified as a sub-(institutional)-category in its own right—deriving from the general mother institution of AP.

By way of illustration, I wish to consider the collection of recordings known as ‘Shut Up, Little Man!’ (SULM), the story of which has been depicted in the film *Shut Up, Little Man! — An Audio Misadventure* (2010), directed by Australian filmmaker Matthew Bates. In brief, two friends, Eddie Guerriero (aka ‘Eddie Lee Sausage’) and Mitchell Deprey (aka Mitchell D.)—to whom I shall henceforth refer to as Eddie and Mitch—teamed up in 1987 for the purpose of sharing a low-rent apartment in San Francisco. They soon discovered the walls in their new abode were incredibly thin. So much so that they were subjected to hearing virtually every single argument conducted by their next-door neighbours. The latter, Raymond Huffman and Peter J. Haskett—to whom I shall henceforth refer to as Ray and Pete—habitually bickered and argued on a daily basis

⁵⁴⁷ The child (or children) who would have hypothetically been responsible for producing the drawings themselves do not hold the institutional role of *the* artist(s). Rather, in such a scenario, this role would belong either to the curator or to the person responsible for coming up with and realising the aesthetic concept. Indeed, as far as NITA is concerned, such an exhibition would in itself consist as *the* work of art. While Wright’s joke is funny, precisely because what it depicts seems to be a bit of a stretch, its purpose is defeated for the very reason that the Artworld has no problem whatsoever in accepting such an exhibition. If indeed one were to *actually* open such an exhibition (i.e., that would literally consist of a bunch of refrigerators, upon which hang a wide collection of various children’s drawings) it would not only be accepted as legitimate art, but it might even turn out to be an interesting cultural event. Wright presents one with a purely funny visual image and something of a social criticism confronting the ‘anything goes’ attitude (entailing that one *is* essentially willing to accept the premise of the existence of such an exhibition as a plausible concept).

⁵⁴⁸ In brief, s/he is not the author of the original text, nor is s/he the performer featured on the recording, or, alternatively the director of the aural performance itself.

(presumably induced by an excessive consumption of alcohol). Moreover, Ray and Pete appeared to be particularly loud and bitter old men, and their interactions predominantly included all manner of profanity and explicit language. Now, unbeknownst to the two old men, Eddie and Mitch began recording their daily verbal exchanges. By their own admission, Eddie and Mitch initially began their endeavour as a response to their being legitimately intimidated by what they heard. Soon enough, however, the act of recording Ray and Pete literally abusing one another became not only an obsession but also a form of entertainment. After creating a handful of copies for a number of close personal friends, the recordings, put simply, went 'viral'. As more and more people became aware of Pete and Ray—who on their part, unwittingly became a source of entertainment, if not mockery—Eddie and Mitch began selling the recordings, forming, in effect, their own little industry and establishing an audience for their product.⁵⁴⁹ Now, any legal and moral implications of Eddie and Mitch's actions notwithstanding, before one scrutinises personal taste, comedic quality, and artistic value—that is to say, before evaluating these recordings as AP artworks—one would need to answer whether or not these recordings qualify as AP artworks to begin with. I would argue that they indeed *do*. (Enter Steven Wright).

To be sure, the decision to sell copies of these tapes—under their own copyright—can very well be compared to making the decision to open an art exhibition featuring refrigerators with the drawings of other people's children. Even if one might wish to condemn them for their actions, Eddie and Mitch would nevertheless, remain the holders of the creative copyrights.⁵⁵⁰ Ultimately, it is they who *own* the intellectual

⁵⁴⁹ See USB flash drive for a number of typical examples.

⁵⁵⁰ By the same token, even if one were to discover that the children's drawings in the so-called 'refrigerators' exhibition' happened to be stolen—and for that reason would condemn, perhaps even

property, and it is they who have identified that recorded conversations between Ray and Pete could be construed as funny. Eddie and Mitch are unequivocally the ones who bestowed these recordings with an identity other than that of ‘old men fighting’ (which was, incidentally, while being a brute fact, also one of the first titles with which Eddie and Mitch marketed the tapes). Drawing on NITA, and thereby in accordance with the institution of AP, these recordings can indeed be perceived as unique AP artworks.⁵⁵¹

Thus, having established that these recordings can surely be classified as a certain kind of AP artwork—thereby allocating them a sub-(institutional)-category of their own within the general mother institution—one is able to contemplate their aesthetic quality. Indeed, as aforementioned, the classification and identification of an artwork, as such, is simply not enough. Rather, it is quite essential to also be able to evaluate whether or not it is any good. In the case of SULM, once allocating these recordings within the realm of AP, attention must be paid to (a) whether or not they have any artistic value, (b) whether or not they contribute anything to the field of comedy, and, of course, (c) whether they contribute anything to the study of AP artworks.⁵⁵²

Alternatively, as the artefact of an established sub-(institutional)-category, one can also examine these tapes versus what in certain circles are known as the (in)famous

prosecute, the exhibition’s curator—it would not, in fact, hold water. Indeed, two simple institutional facts would remain unchallenged: the person responsible for the exhibition would forever be the artist; and the exhibition *itself* would retain the status of his/her artwork.

⁵⁵¹ In brief, Eddie and Mitch are the artists, who have created these aural recordings, and it is they who present them to a designated audience. These tapes have, in effect, become part of the Artworld. The question of their value and aesthetic quality, however, remains.

⁵⁵² It is my contention, on all three accounts, that they most definitely do *not*. Indeed, their fairly substantial fan-base, one might merely discard them as another ostensible ‘oddity’ in a line of examples demonstrating that as far as the Artworld is concerned, although surely ‘anything goes’, not everything necessarily works.

Buddy Rich 'bootleg' tapes,⁵⁵³ or the no less (in)famous outtakes of Orson Welles attempting to record radio commercials.⁵⁵⁴ To be sure, while one could refer to the latter as mere *audio-vérité* recordings, the fact that someone made the mindful decision of listening to these recordings *as* something funny, and someone else was willing to listen to them as something which might elicit laughter, is in effect the institutional fact that *makes* these recordings comic AP artworks. As Graves points out,

That is the point of the institutional theory: the person or persons who normally and usually offer up the artifacts to the Artworld as candidates for appreciation (the status conferred), are the artists, not the 'officers'. The very nature of the game changes deeply, once we realize that the general principle is that the artists offer up their artifacts for appreciation, that the artists are the pivotal players, and not the officers. For the institutional theory, the key institutional role is 'artist', and not 'gallery owner'.⁵⁵⁵

In similar respects, I would argue that an audio recording of a parent reading a bed-time story to their child predominantly does not constitute an AP artwork. Fundamentally, one does not take a recording of one's parents reading them a story to an audio-publishing house or a local radio station, in order to present it to a larger audience as an AP artwork.⁵⁵⁶ Nonetheless, one could establish certain (institutional) circumstances

⁵⁵³ These tapes are (in)famous for featuring American jazz drummer and bandleader, Buddy Rich, excoriating members of his band for playing too loudly, which he used to do from time to time, with pure rage. Apparently, at some point, someone at the back of the tour-bus turned on a tape recorder and forever immortalised these rants. Amongst the bonus material featured on the DVD release of the American T.V. series *Seinfeld* (1989-1998), there is a segment in which Jerry Seinfeld explains that the Buddy Rich tapes are a 'legendary thing between comedians and comedy writers'. Seinfeld then presents three examples of how lines from the Buddy Rich tapes were incorporated in the show. See YouTube clips: (1) "Seinfeld & The Buddy Rich Tapes," accessed October 23, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWP77C4StLs>; (2) "Obscure Audio 1: Buddy Rich Cursing His Band," accessed October 23, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=covUesgl6fA>. (See also USB flash drive).

⁵⁵⁴ In what might best be described as an ostensible 'hissy fit', these outtakes encapsulate Welles's argument with the sound engineer in the recording studio over how precisely he should be giving his reading to material in front of him. See YouTube clip: "Orson Welles Frozen Peas," accessed October 23, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhWM4_pIKVg. (See also USB flash drive).

⁵⁵⁵ Graves, *The Institutional Theory of Art*, 26.

⁵⁵⁶ In the same vein, despite various superlatives a parent might use to describe his/her child's drawing (regardless of its actual aesthetic quality or whether or not they actually believe it), the drawing itself would ultimately remain alongside the assortment of magnets on the household refrigerator. Indeed, a

in which a recording of a well-read story, by a talented parent, could be regarded as an aesthetically good AP artwork for young listeners if marketed as such.⁵⁵⁷ Indeed, there surely is a distinct tone of voice, a style of speaking, an inflection and pronunciation that would be appropriate for children's stories—and at the same time would simply not work with a so-called standard novel or narrative. To be sure, aural recordings of children's literature should essentially constitute a sub-(institutional)-category in its own right, the internal logic of which would arguably consist of and/or pertain to precisely such aspects as one's tone of voice, style of delivery and so forth.

6.3 'Text-Sound Art' as a Sub-Institutional Category

In his study, sound-artist Joseph Sprinzak does not aim to define a specific artistic genre—as opposed to my own endeavour to articulate an explicit aesthetic category.⁵⁵⁸ He employs Richard Kostelanetz's term 'text-sound art' as a theoretical paradigm.⁵⁵⁹ In brief, it is Kostelanetz's conviction that words and the sounds they 'make' together create a kind of coherence, namely: one that is separate from the meanings that words intend to signify.⁵⁶⁰ Sprinzak utilises Kostelanetz's term to describe what he regards as

small number of extreme exceptions notwithstanding—e.g., the child-prodigy, deemed poet and artist, Akiane Kramarik (See URL: accessed September 3, 2014, <https://akiane.com>)—one customarily does not hang one's children's drawings in a gallery or a museum, and would not, for the most part, manufacture and distribute their reproductions and sell them as unique works of art.

⁵⁵⁷ Drawing, again, on Wright's one-liner, if one were to release a collection of recorded bed-time stories read by different parents—which, as an ostensible conceptual aural compilation could hypothetically be considered an AP artwork. Its aesthetic quality, however, would surely remain a different question.

⁵⁵⁸ Joseph Sprinzak, "Text-Sound Art: Speech with Source and Temporality Disturbances in Avant-Garde and Intermedial Vocal" (PhD diss., Ben-Gurion University of the Negev: May, 2010), II.

⁵⁵⁹ Kostelanetz coined this term to describe 'an intermedium located between language arts and musical arts', and maintains that it 'characterises language whose principle means of coherence is sound, rather than syntax or semantics – where the sounds made by comprehensible words create their own coherence apart from denotive language'. Richard Kostelanetz, *Text-Sound Texts* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1980), 14.

⁵⁶⁰ Similarly, as Roger Dean and Hazel Smith point out, while Kostelanetz's employment of the term does not include works which utilise 'defined pitches', the term is predominantly 'used more broadly in relation

a unique 'intermedium' (which in the past would have been referred to as either 'Performance Poetry' or 'Sound Poetry') and maintains that this approach is a direct result of 'a century of interdisciplinary vocal art'.⁵⁶¹ Nevertheless, although Sprinzak may not have set out to create an artistic genre in its own right, I would argue that, in fact, he did just that. His study appears to convey an exploration of a cultural phenomenon, which he finds to be based in the world of modern art. He identifies a variety of artistic manifestations, all demonstrating a similar kind of intermedial quality, thereby establishing certain criteria for aesthetic classification.⁵⁶²

Fundamentally, whereas Sprinzak's study is primarily occupied with highlighting unique aesthetic properties, my approach is founded on the notion of institutional procedures. Sprinzak's study can therefore serve as a helpful 'tool' for identifying and interpreting the distinctive internal logic of the *particular* work he considers. Dean and Smith maintain that 'the text-sound movement stemmed from experiments of the Surrealists, Dadaists and Futurists at the beginning of the century [...] but re-emerged as a strong movement during the fifties to seventies'.⁵⁶³ To be sure, many of the artworks created in the confines of these movements manifest an individual internal

to verbal/text/sound interactions'. Roger Dean and Hazel Smith, *Improvisation Hypermedia and the Arts Since 1945* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 133.

⁵⁶¹ Sprinzak, *Text-Sound Art*, I.

⁵⁶² Sprinzak's study focuses primarily on the manner in which voice and speech are employed in so-called 'interdisciplinary art'. As an artistic-practitioner, his study seems to constitute an attempt at articulating just what he 'does'. His aim, it seems, is to underline the conceptual process of the past one-hundred years in arts. The latter involve speech and are based on two central concepts: namely, (a) Kostelanetz's intermedium element (with respect to its modern manifestations as text-sound art); and (b) the manner in which the element of sound is used in modern art (which, according to Sprinzak, includes its 'non-musical', as well as other various forms). Overall, his study attends to the application of sound on visual arts, effectively emphasising the technological developments that enable sound-processing and reproduction, and, consequently, the creation of new kinds of performances. My own conception of AP as an artistic institution *necessitates* an interdisciplinary perspective, which requires one to acquaint oneself with more than a single artistic medium, thus assisting one to determine whether or not a particular recording complies with the definition of what an AP artwork should be.

⁵⁶³ Dean and Smith, *Improvisation Hypermedia and the Arts Since 1945*, 132.

logic of their own. Their general affiliation to these movements notwithstanding, each individual Surrealist, Dadaist or Futurist work of art either pertains to, or possesses an internal logic in its own right. Thus, if one wishes to explore or evaluate these kinds of works, one would be required to study each work both as (a) part of the general aesthetic category or genre it belongs to, and (b) as a stand-alone case study in its own right. By the same token, aesthetically evaluating what Sprinzak regards as ‘text-sound’ works *necessitates* a deeper examination on a case by case basis. Thus, in order to aesthetically appreciate a ‘text-sound’ work one is required to employ the same kind of approach one would utilise when endeavouring to identify and aesthetically evaluate what is usually regarded either as contemporary, post-modern or ‘experimental’ artwork.⁵⁶⁴ Ultimately, these kinds of ‘text-sound’ works would become part of a sub-(institutional)-category in their own right.

Consider, for example, the Vinyl record *The Medium is the Massage with Marshall McLuhan* (1968).⁵⁶⁵ Cited as the ‘first spoken arts record you can dance to’ and described as being ‘designed for young people’—and thus consists of a 40-minute ‘interface’ and intended ‘to be heard again and again and again and again and again,

⁵⁶⁴ As they appear to predominantly constitute a manifold, of sorts, combining live performance, plastic arts, and multi-media, these ostensibly ‘experimental’ recordings, as AP artworks, are arguably akin to what one would customarily regard as either a ‘performance piece’ or an installation artwork. Effectively, one is required (a) to attain a virtually comprehensive understanding of the individual internal logic of each element that comprises a particular ‘experimental’ work, and (b) to identify the putative overarching internal logic of that work as a whole. As with performance pieces or installation artworks, these requirements are achieved on a case by case basis. At the same time, an argument could be made that to simply deem the more ‘experimental’ recording as such, is both dismissive and problematic. Indeed, much like Martin Esslin’s suggested definition of the theatre of the absurd, which he originally coined in 1961. Although Esslin’s term is customarily considered to allude to a distinctive category, explicit genre and unique style, his notion is in fact quite problematic. Summarily, Esslin’s critical mistake, as established by numerous eminent scholars, was in associating a number of different playwrights (e.g., Edward Albee, Samuel Beckett, Friedrich Dürrenmat, Eugène Ionesco, Harold Pinter or Luigi Pirandello), claiming that they all comply with his definition of the absurd—whereas each of them, without distinction, certainly can be identified by a unique aesthetic of their own.

⁵⁶⁵ Marshall McLuhan, Quentin Fiore, and Jerome Agel, *The Medium is the Massage with Marshall McLuhan*. Produced by John Simon. Conceived & Coordinated by Jerome Agel. Columbia Records, 1968.

like a pop record'⁵⁶⁶—this album predominantly prevails as an ostensible aural 'extension' and companion to a book of the same name published a year earlier.⁵⁶⁷ Although not penned by McLuhan himself, it is considered a ground breaking text in that it embodies the very essence of McLuhan's pioneering theories on media and technology—particularly with respect to his influential *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964).⁵⁶⁸ In many respects, the book constitutes an attempt to quite literally translate McLuhan's insights by way of presenting them in the form of a *new* kind of object: namely, a book where the very design ostensibly takes arms against the challenges, as well as the arguable competition, that is evoked by modern live media. It was particularly due to the efforts of Quentin Fiore and Jerome Agle—the former, its graphic designer and illustrator; the latter, its coordinator—that the book exists as a new kind of medium for communication. Indeed, its creators sensed that as cultural communication evolves and different media develop, what one would commonly refer to as a book, cannot, in effect, exist merely within the confines of its binding. Subsequently, attempting, to some extent, to mirror what they perceived as the manner in which knowledge is increasingly conveyed in contemporary society, Fiore and Agle concluded that *sound*—and particularly live sound, the human voice and the spoken word—was the most appropriate medium for extending McLuhan's notions and

⁵⁶⁶ Jeffrey Schnapp and Kara Oehler, "the first spoken arts record you can dance to," in *Sensate*, accessed October 10, 2015, <http://sensatejournal.com/2011/03/jeffrey-schnapp-and-kara-oehler-first-spoken-arts-record>.

⁵⁶⁷ Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (New York: Bantam Books, 1967).

⁵⁶⁸ Overall, it appears to constitute a pivotal reaction to the somewhat acute sense that what at the time was considered the more traditional form of genres and media (e.g., the industrial paperback book) would be required to 're-invent' themselves in light of the then new, and continuously developing, model of cultural communication (one which can be affiliated with cyber-culture, but is surely rooted in live media and television).

communicating them with greater sensory depth.⁵⁶⁹ Following a sense that a porous liminality is apparent between books (as artefacts) and other existing media, the album version effectively utilises audio clips and outtakes of McLuhan reading from his own works, which are often interrupted by obscure sounds and discordant voices.⁵⁷⁰ Beginning with the question ‘How do you like it so far?’, the aesthetic experience of listening to the album is simultaneously thought-provoking, amusing, bewildering and quite challenging.⁵⁷¹

Ultimately, to experience this recording as an AP artwork, one is required to find its distinctive internal logic—which, at its core, it is inherently related to McLuhan’s socio-cultural and philosophical insights. In other words, one needs to employ an ‘institutional’ listening: that is to say, to hear the recording with the ‘ears’ of NITA—and subsequently to evaluate it in accordance with the institutional structure of the aesthetic category. Otherwise, one is left with nothing more than an ostensible ‘brute’ listening, and thus will not be able to appreciate the album for what it is.⁵⁷² Indeed,

⁵⁶⁹ The book’s objective appears to be to exhibit the sense of ‘liveness’ that abides modern media. In these respects, it is a hybrid, of sorts, that plays with the classic conventions of what a book is supposed to be. It manifests as an amalgamation of images and text, graphics and typography, collages and montages, alongside a ‘re-mix’ of McLuhan’s insights and ideas. For further reading, see: Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Adam Michaels, *The Electric Information Age Book (McLuhan/Agel/Fiore and the Experimental Paperback)* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2012). In an act that quite consciously extends Fiore and Agle’s aural experimentation with McLuhan’s thought, this book also received an album version—a limited edition vinyl record—featuring a recorded live stage performance ‘version’ of the book’s conceit. See URL: accessed October 22, 2016, <https://wearethemasses.bandcamp.com/track/the-book-of-the-now>.

⁵⁷⁰ See USB flash drive for the full recording.

⁵⁷¹ With respect to performing for an audience who, in essence, ‘is not there’, Paddy Scannel points out, while the audience is ‘situated elsewhere’, attention must be paid to the ‘cardinal importance of context’. He argues that it is the ‘communicative nature’ of the output produced by radio that assigns it ‘an audience-oriented communicative intentionality’. It, in turn, ‘is embodied in the organization’ of its particular context, and carried out ‘down to last detail: there is nothing in the discourse of radio [...] that is not motivated, that is not intended to generate inferences fact that about what is being said by virtue of how it is being said’. Paddy Scannel, *Broadcast Talk* (London: Sage, 1991), 11.

⁵⁷² To conclude, for instance, that this LP is merely a ‘weird cacophonous experimental aural oddity’ would certainly be akin to concluding that Jackson Pollock’s *Blue Poles* (1952) are ‘ill-spilt paint droppings’, that Barnett Newman’s *Onement VI* (1953) is a ‘bad example of a wasted canvas’ or that Mark Rothko’s *Number 10* (1960) ‘looks nothing at all like Mr. Harold Macmillan’s front door’. Similarly, it would be just

much like Warhol's *Brillo Box*—and, in fact, as with any artwork, for that matter—the aesthetic properties of recordings such as the vinyl LP 'version' of McLuhan's *The Medium is the Message* cannot be found in the recording itself. Although these kinds of recordings might arguably be perceived as ostensible borderline case-studies, and unique as they may be—as Sprinzak no doubt succeeds in demonstrating—they nevertheless deserve a deeper examination as sub-(institutional)-categories in their own right, belonging to the general 'mother' institution of AP.

Now, in similar respects, it should also be emphasised that the audio recordings of live events do not (and for the most part, cannot) constitute AP artworks. Even if a live performance may be predominantly text-based—such as, for instance, what Sprinzak would perceive as a 'text-sound' work, or, alternatively, a live reading—the very fact that these kinds of events occur in front of a live audience alters the internal logic. In other words, these performances cannot be identified as purely *aural* for the simple fact that they were not explicitly devised for the aural medium and were not exclusively created within its distinctive aesthetic confines. By way of illustration, consider the studio-recorded version of the Monty Python's *Cheese Shop* sketch—included in their 1973 album, *The Monty Python Matching Tie and Handkerchief*—as opposed to the original version, which aired on the troupe's revolutionary television series, *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. Although the same performers—John Cleese and Michael Palin—deliver in both versions the same text, there prevails a notable difference between the two versions: explicitly, pertaining to the interaction between

like regarding the more so-called 'Avant-guard-ish' tracks, for lack of a better term, that are featured on the *Yoko Ono/Plastic Ono Band* (1970) as nothing more than 'raw, un-listenable and completely meaningless shrieks'. Indeed, these would all constitute the *wrong* type of evaluation. Ultimately, without appropriately acquainting one's self with the distinct artistic institution to which they belong, one will be unable to understand, experience or appreciate them, on their own terms, as artworks.

Cleese and Palin. Indeed, the rhythmic ‘ping-pong’ of the dialogue, as well as the overall timing of their delivery, appear much faster on the album.⁵⁷³ As this album did not include performing to a live audience—as opposed to their TV and stage shows—Cleese and Palin were required to alter and ‘fine tune’ their performance so that it would comply with the requirements of the medium of *sound*.⁵⁷⁴ Similarly, while the particular *Live at Drury* version of their immortal ‘Dead Parrot’ exists only as an audio recording, it nevertheless not an aural performance. To be sure, an audio recording of a live performance constitutes nothing more than an aural documentation of a live event.⁵⁷⁵

6.4 Comedy Albums and Funny Audiobooks as a Sub-Institutional Category

I would argue that what in the case of *Matching Tie and Handkerchief* would customarily be labelled a ‘comedy album’, can in fact, ultimately be evaluated as a unique kind of AP artwork. As such, it conceivably deserves a sub-(institutional)-category of its own. Indeed, with this album in particular, I find this applies in more ways than one: explicitly, due to the fact that it happens to be cited as the world’s first ‘three-sided LP’.

Now, while it is obviously not possible for a vinyl LP to consist of more than its two ‘designated’ sides, when one acquaints oneself with the internal logic of the Pythons, engaging with their surreal humour, one is sure to realise why promoting the sales of this record by underlining its possession of *three* sides is not an embarrassing miscalculation. The joke here works on an additional level, as the LP in question has in

⁵⁷³ See USB flash drive for the ‘Cheese Emporium’.

⁵⁷⁴ Knowing how to perform for an audience in this medium is surely a crucial aspect with any kind of material. Conceivably, with comedy, it constitutes an even greater challenge.

⁵⁷⁵ The fact that they should be considered purely as documentation does not, and indeed should not, in any way reflect on the artistic quality and value of that live performance that is captured on the recording. Nevertheless, their historical, scholarly and nostalgic significance notwithstanding, the recordings cannot be aesthetically evaluated as AP artworks.

fact been designed in such a way that one is in fact able to play a 'third' side: this was done by including an additional groove on one side, which is in effect heard depending on where the needle of turntable is placed. The satisfaction of literally being able to play three sides on an object that possesses no more than two is rewarding both in respect of the Pythons' humour and in respect of the aesthetics of the medium.

In the same vein, one could also consider the audiobook version of American comedian David Cross's *I Drink for a Reason* (2009)⁵⁷⁶—a selection of sarcastic essays and politically-incorrect social commentaries—also constitutes a recording that can only be fully appreciated as AP artwork within the so-called 'confines' of the medium itself. As the recording begins, the listeners should immediately be struck by the fact that the speaker's voice that one hears reading the preface—the 'read by the author' guarantee notwithstanding—is *not*, in fact, that of Cross.⁵⁷⁷ Next, two-and-a-half minutes into the preface, it becomes evident that the un-identified narrator (whom some listeners might, conceivably, be able to recognise as American comedian H. Jon Benjamin), is not really doing justice to the material (i.e., he fails in his delivery of Cross's distinctive style of comedy). A distant voice is suddenly heard in the background, growing louder as it seems to be advancing into the recording studio. It is immediately identified as a rather bewildered David Cross. A short altercation ignites between the two speakers: they argue about who it was in fact that was hired to record the book. It takes a little over three minutes for Benjamin (whose identity is by now revealed), to reluctantly leave the

⁵⁷⁶ David Cross. *I Drink For A Reason* (Hachette, 2009).

⁵⁷⁷ On the one hand, the front cover of the commercial release clearly states that the book is 'read by the author, and 'featuring the voices of Jon Benjamin, Kristen Schaal, and Robot', as well as 'musical guests' Les Savy Fav and Yo La Tengo. See URL, accessed 26 September 2016, www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/david-cross/i-drink-for-a-reason/9781600246487. Nevertheless, this kind of opening to the recording is not what one would customarily expect.

studio. Then, having finally assumed his role as author-narrator, Cross begins reading his book from the beginning, effectively ‘forcing’ the listeners to hear the preface once again—only now allowing them to hear the text as it ‘should be’ performed.⁵⁷⁸

To be sure, this is not necessarily because the text can only be performed by its author, but rather because the particular author of this specific written text happens to possess the ability to manifest that text’s internal logic as an aural performance. As Benjamin is himself no stranger to comedy, and, in fact, happens to be a close friend and collaborator of Cross, I would argue that in what otherwise could have been deemed a ‘poorly-constructed’ audiobook, Benjamin’s ill-performed delivery of Cross’s material is quite deliberate. In brief, it was part of a comedy routine, constituting a self-reflective joke, which both acknowledges and is dependent upon the medium of the audiobook.⁵⁷⁹ Cross himself, as is evident throughout the recording, is very much aware of the fact that he is addressing an audience. He even explicitly ridicules the listeners for not purchasing the actual ‘proper’ book. In addition, to emphasise for the listeners the tone of the text, for instance, Cross makes a point of indicating to the listeners when he is using a word in quotations or where the printed text includes a footnote. For example, he explicitly explains that whenever he says the words, ‘as I’m writing this’, what he actually means is ‘as I’m reading this’. He also makes it clear to the listeners

⁵⁷⁸ See USB flash drive for the audiobook version of David Cross, *I Drink For A Reason*, disc1, tracks 1-4.

⁵⁷⁹ A similar gag is utilised in the audiobook version of John Cleese’s autobiography *So, Anyway...* (2014). Here, the recording begins with Cleese speaking to the sound engineer. The latter explains to Cleese his contractual obligation to read the publisher’s introduction page—a task that Cleese confesses to find the boring. He asks the sound engineer what else they could do, and the latter suggest to him that they ‘could get Mike do it, if he didn’t mind’. The Mike in question is established as none other than Michael Palin, who just happens to be ‘in the other studio, downstairs’. Cleese embraces the idea, and the sound engineer is heard leaving the studio to go and get him. When Palin arrives, he and Cleese engage in what can only be described as a Pythonesque exchange. Palin ends up recording the ‘intro’ to Cleese’s autobiography, and is apparently forced to sit through Cleese’s own reading—only to ultimately record its ‘outro’ on his behalf as well. See USB flash drive for John Cleese, *So, Anyway...*, unabridged, read by the author (Penguin, 2014), 00m00sec-03m11sec.

that whenever he says the word ‘healthy’ he is in fact using quotations: ‘You can’t see the book. I mean, you can, should you wanna go leap through it, but for some reason you bought this thing, and are listening to it, so just know that ‘healthy’ is always in quotes. Let’s move on. Engineer? Sorry about that last part. But, you know, I’ve a responsibility to my listening audience.’⁵⁸⁰ At a later point, a voice is heard interrupting Cross, asking him if he was certain whether the passage he was reading is indeed taken from his own book—which it was not.⁵⁸¹ Furthermore, the audiobook version includes a variety of expressions, which, while sounding natural in everyday spoken conversation, do not in fact appear in the printed version his book. This kind of narration, which effectively adds words and comments that do not exist in the printed (and, as such, considered complete and finite) work, would surely not have been acceptable with a work fiction. Nonetheless, since this particular book constitutes a collection of essays, and when considering Cross’s stage persona, comedy style, and speech rhythm, it would appear as though the personal tone and everyday phrases contribute to the book’s iteration as an aural performance.⁵⁸² Indeed, they amplify the manner in which this kind of material should be performed in this medium. Effectively, I would argue, they constitute an additional example that justifies the need to conclude the audiobook’s aesthetic category.

⁵⁸⁰ See USB flash drive, *I Drink For A Reason*, disc1, track6, 04m22sec.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, disc2, track1, 01m55sec.

⁵⁸² See USB for additional recommended recordings in the same vein: Shalom Auslander’s *A Foreskin’s Lament*; Alan Alda’s *Things I Overheard While Talking to Myself*; Nora Ephron’s *I Remember Nothing*; and Fran Lebowitz’s *The Fran Lebowitz Reader*. This is merely a small number of works that, as an author-read audiobook, can greatly enrich one’s aesthetic expertise, predominantly due to the ability of these particular authors to convey their own (literary-)voice, literally, in their *own voice*. Nonetheless, as alluded to earlier, I shall approach this issue from a slightly different perspective in Chapter 8, utilising the unique pseudo-autobiographies of Barry Humphries’s fictional personages.

6.5 Audio Commentary Tracks as Aural Performances

An Audio Commentary Track is a supplementary audio track, commonly regarded as a ‘special feature’ included among an assembly of ‘bonus material’ on a film’s release on the medium of DVDs.⁵⁸³ Commentaries predominantly consist of either a lecture or, as their name implies, comments, which can be delivered by one or more speakers. A commentary customarily plays in real-time and should correspond to what is seen on the screen.⁵⁸⁴

The very first commentary track was featured on a Laser-Disc for the film *King Kong* (1933), released by the Criterion Collection in 1984, having licensed it from RKO. According to Jonathan Turell, CEO of the Criterion Collection, he would ‘probably give credit to Bob Stein, who was my former partner and founder of Criterion and Ron for coming up with the idea’.⁵⁸⁵ The track was recorded by Ron Haver, director at the LA County Museum of Art, and the commentary itself was unscripted. According to Turell,

⁵⁸³ In brief, the technology of the disc-based video format (consisting of the now out-of-circulation LaserDiscs, the ever-popular DVDs and BluRay Discs), enables the addition of alternate audio tracks to accompany feature films and television programmes. The standard types of alternate audio tracks usually take the form of either dubbed-dialogues (in different languages) or superior sound-encodings (such as Dolby Digital or DTS) which are supposed to enhance the experience of the ‘home cinema’ viewer. Special features predominantly consist of interviews with a particular film’s cast and creators, as well as making-of and behind the scenes documentaries. With respect to the institution of AP, one may also come across certain bonus material, in addition to the audio commentaries, that comply to some degree with the institution of AP. For example, Elliott Gould’s reading of *The Passion of Anna* (featured on the 2004 MGM release of The Ingmar Bergman Special Edition DVD Collection); Alec Baldwin’s reading of Stephen Vincent Benét’s *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, recorded in 2003 exclusively for the Criterion Collection (Spine #214).

⁵⁸⁴ Some of the commentaries that feature multiple voices were either recorded together (i.e., with all commentators in the same room) or on separate occasions (i.e., they were later edited together in order to compose a cohesive commentary). Some commentaries are scene-specific (i.e., they only cover selected scenes of the film); others carry throughout the entire length of the film; some commentaries may have large gaps in between the comments; others may consist of nonstop ramblings. Commentaries by actors and directors usually possess a very different feel from those carried out by scholars and critics. Commentaries can be either serious or entertaining; they may either present useful and insightful academic, historic or technical information on the craft of film-making or they can serve as an occasion, as it were, for the reminiscences of the film’s creators. Sometimes commentaries are constructed out of already existing interviews, or are recorded without the speaker actually viewing the film (or selected scenes thereof) in real-time.

⁵⁸⁵ This quote refers to an e-mail correspondence I had conducted with Mr. Turell.

Haver simply sat down in a room, in front of a VCR, watched the movie and simply talked. The following is a transcript of how the commentary begins:

Hello ladies and gentlemen. I am Ronald Haver, and I am to do something which we feel is rather unique: I am going to take you on a lecture tour of *King Kong*, as you watch the film. The Laserdisc technology offers us this opportunity and we feel it's rather unique, the ability to switch back and forth between the soundtrack and this "lecture track". I would like to be able to tell you, during the course of the film; some of the stories of the making of it; about the personalities involved [...] we hope you will be able to appreciate more fully with this laserdisc edition. I've seen the film almost two hundred times since I first saw it in 1952, and I do have a great deal of knowledge that I think would be fairly interesting to most of you—especially about, as I say, the behind the scenes events in the making of the film [...] Now, I won't talk constantly, there will be stretches of silence—so don't think there's anything wrong with your player—it's just at that particular time there really isn't too much to say.⁵⁸⁶

Since then, however, most commentators have scripted what they are going to say. The perception of and approach towards audio commentaries is two-sided. On the one hand, directors such as Terry Gilliam or Martin Scorsese,⁵⁸⁷ who appear to relish in revisiting their works and elaborate on their artistic intentions, or Quentin Tarantino, who evidentially enjoys commenting on other people's films.⁵⁸⁸ For the audience—their

⁵⁸⁶ See USB flash drive for the complete track. Haver begins speaking at 06m06sec.

⁵⁸⁷ Scorsese also recorded a number of commentaries for the films that had affected him as a director and shaped his artistic vision. For example: *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp*, *Black Narcissus*, *The Red Shoes* and *The Tales of Hoffman* (dir. Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger – in 1943, 1947, 1948 and 1951; respectively); *The Set-Up* (dir. Robert Wise, 1949). Scorsese's commentaries for his own films are quite engaging. In the case of his own film, *Who's That Knocking at My Door?* (1967), Scorsese begins the commentary by stating that this is *not* in fact a commentary, but rather background information on the making of his film. See USB flash drive for the complete track. While this may constitute nothing more than an issue of semantics, I would argue that this does give some insight with respect to how one should listen to his comments. In other words, it is effectively an instruction to aesthetically evaluating the commentary.

⁵⁸⁸ Tarantino has recorded more commentaries for other people's films, rather than for his own works. For example: the commentary he recorded along with film scholars David Chute and Elvis Mitchell for the film *King Boxer* (aka *Five Fingers of Death*; dir. Chang-hwa Jeong, 1972); the track recorded with director Jack Hill on Hill's *Switchblade Sisters* (1975;); and his 'guest' participation in one (of the *five*) commentaries recorded for *Hot Fuzz* (dir. Edgar Wright, 2007). These types of commentaries—and especially in the case of the *Hot Fuzz* commentary 'extravaganza', as it were—can perhaps be seen as 'fan-designed' for the simple fact that essentially their contents revolve around almost any film that one could think of, aside from the film the commentary is being recorded for.

fans—to hear them speak about their works prevails as an immensely rewarding personal encounter. On the other hand, directors such as Woody Allen and David Lynch have expressed their assertion that a film should essentially speak for itself and to speak about a film—not to mention speak *over* a film, as all commentaries do—simply cheapens, de-mystifies and degrades the art of cinema. Arguably, for them, it appears to be exactly the same as a magician revealing his/her secrets, thereby destroying the illusion and rendering the magic trick pointless. Nonetheless, I would argue that one is able to perceive a commentary track as a unique kind of AP artwork. At the very least, commentaries have the potential to become one, predominantly are made for a listening audience—and some of which indeed address the audience directly. Surely, the main reason one listens to a commentary track to begin with is to attain some added element to one’s aesthetic experience. For instance, the commentary track on the 2015 Criterion release of *Fellini Satyricon* (1969) is quite unique in that it essentially consist of an aural ‘adaptation’, of sorts, of a memoir, *On the Set of “Fellini Satyricon”: A Behind-the-Scenes Diary*, written by Eileen Lanouette Hughes. The track is thus, essentially, an aural performance, told in the first-person, played over the feature, and it depicts Hughes’s experiences on the set. While it rarely corresponds with what one actually sees on screen (as audio commentaries are ‘supposed to’ do), it is nevertheless personal, informative, and indeed evokes a unique aesthetic experience.⁵⁸⁹ To be sure, much like the manner in which audiobooks highlight the nature of the first-person narrative, audio commentaries can, potentially, give one the sense that the commentator not only is in the same room, watching the film with one, but also that s/he is speaking to one directly.

⁵⁸⁹ See USB flash drive for the Criterion Collection commentary track of *Fellini Satyricon* (1969).

As I will presently demonstrate, some filmmakers have utilised this medium in such a manner that results in an aesthetically rich and unique kind of aural performances. As such, the following examples will reinforce my contention that some commentaries, under certain circumstances, effectively require a sub-(institutional)-category of their own.⁵⁹⁰

This Is Spinal Tap (1982), directed by Rob Reiner, is, in a nutshell, a comedy that *pretends* to be a documentary about a British rock group.⁵⁹¹ In the world of the film, the documentary was made by one Marty DiBergi, who, in reality, is portrayed by Reiner himself. When released originally on DVD by the Criterion Collection (following their earlier Laser Disc edition), it included two fairly standard commentary tracks: one featuring Reiner alongside producer Karen Murphy, and editors Robert Leighton and Kent Beyda; and the other featuring the three principal actors, namely Christopher Guest, Michael McKean and Harry Shearer. Both tracks were informative and

⁵⁹⁰ Arguably, one might similarly consider certain voice-over narrations in film and television as potential aural performance. Most prominently, possibly the first of its kind, can be seen (or rather heard) in the 1942 re-release of Charlie Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* (1925), for which Chaplin recorded an aural narration. Although it does not constitute a commentary track *per se*, his narration is inherently performative. As it is delivered to his audience via spoken word, it can effectively be perceived as an AP artwork—much like the more unique audio commentaries discussed in this section. To be sure, some films incorporate a voice-over narration that prevails as a distinct character in its own right: e.g., to name but a few, *Sunset Boulevard* (dir. Billy Wilder, 1950); *A Clockwork Orange* (dir. Stanley Kubrick, 1971); *Goodfellas* (dir. Martin Scorsese, 1990); *The Shawshank Redemption* (dir. Frank Darabont, 1994), and *Fight Club* (dir. David Fincher, 1999). At the same time, these narrations differ from Chaplin's in that they all are delivered either by a character (or some version thereof) who appears in the film itself. Chaplin's narrator is clearly not his iconic tramp. Nonetheless, Chaplin utilises the narration as a vehicle for performing the story. Indeed, although it is considered very much part of the visual film, I would argue that it is consequently experienced as an aural performance. In the same vein, one can consider the Ron Howard narration in the remarkable American comedy series *Arrested Development* (2003-2006; 2013), in which the narrator prevails as a distinct and inherent off-screen character.

⁵⁹¹ Although customarily referred to as a 'mockumentary', and while it surely is considered a milestone in the development of the pseudo-documentary-comedy genre, their intention, as Christopher Guest points out, had never been to 'mock' anything or anyone in particular. Indeed, I find that to love the ridiculous and absurdity of people's behaviour is not the same as ridiculing them. Ultimately, the film became the first project in a line of similar pseudo-documentary comedies—directed by Guest and featuring a mostly regular ensemble cast—all employing a unique kind of improvisational-based performances, one which is framed within a well-constructed story outline and a strict character study.

entertaining. Later, in 2000, MGM Home Entertainment released its 'Special Edition', which included a commentary delivered by Nigel Tufnel, David St. Hubbins and Derek Smalls, namely the three principal *fictional* characters (portrayed by Guest, McKean and Shearer, respectively). According to Eckart Voigts-Virchow, this commentary

is by definition *a posteriori* and can never be part of the spatio-temporal world of the narrative. This is an interesting case, however, because both the initial narrative 1 and the subsequent audio narrative 2 are fictional. In this way *This is Spinal Tap* extends the narrative space into the paratrack.⁵⁹²

Unlike appearing 'in-character' on a talk show—for the purpose of promoting a film, for instance—the commentary constitutes a performance in its own right. It effectively prevails as an entirely new feature-length narrative, delivered to the audience through the spoken word. Although it is heard as the film plays forward, and while the speakers may refer to what is seen on screen, it is nonetheless experienced as an aural performance, and can therefore be identified as a unique kind of AP artwork. As the commentary both corresponds with and is dependent upon the original film, one cannot discard the original film and simply focus on the track itself.⁵⁹³ Fundamentally, one must (a) be acquainted with the band members, for the fictional characters that they are, and (b) be mindful of the fact that the film itself is fundamentally a finished product. Indeed, to experience the comprehensive aesthetics of this commentary, one must engage with the original film. Only then can one identify that the performance of the three actors—manifested through the behaviour of the three characters—follows the same kind of predominantly improvisational expertise.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹² Eckart Voigts-Virchow, "Paratracks in the Digital Age," in *Intermedialities*, ed. Evelyne Keitel, Gunter Süß and Werner Huber (Trier: WVT, 2007), 134.

⁵⁹³ See USB flash drive for the in-character *This Is Spinal Tap* Commentary.

⁵⁹⁴ Arguably, most of the non-lecture type of commentaries are ostensibly improvised as well—since the speaker/s (i.e., the director, actors or members of the film's creative team), customarily have not seen

As I will later demonstrate with my third case study, examining the audiobook version of pseudo-autobiographies, I find that this is much more than merely playing a so-called tongue-in-cheek game with the audience. Rather, it demonstrates a successful application of a distinct performative internal logic, within the framework of the internal logic of the aural medium. The end-result is especially unique in that it extends the existence of the fictional characters. It enables the fictitious band members to allude to and comment on how DiBergi's documentary about them consequently turned out. Although the in-character *Spinal Tap* commentary is no doubt an exception, it is nevertheless not one of its kind. It is, however, the *first* of its kind and has served as inspiration to both the few in-character commentaries that have surfaced from time to time, and to what can surely be identified as a genre of 'comedy commentaries'. To be sure, utilising the commentary track, as a sub-(institutional)-category of AP, appears to easily be employed for comedic purposes. Evidently, in addition to the in-character commentaries, there exist a number of ostensibly fake and spoof commentaries.

An equally interesting attempt, albeit not as successful or as ostensibly fine-tuned, exists in the form of the in-character commentary track made for the Australian film, *Snide and Prejudice* (1997) directed by Philippe Mora. This film also takes on the guise of a documentary, unveiling the story of a mental institution, whose occupants suffer from fantasies and delusions pertaining to WWII. The main protagonists in the film are resident physician, Dr. Sam Choen (portrayed by Rene Auberjonois), and a patient named Michael Davidson (portrayed by Angus Macfadyen), who lives under the

the film in quite a while and they usually speak whatever comes to their mind as the film progresses in front of them. Commentaries featuring film scholars or experts, on the other hand, might very well have notes or an entire written lecture at their disposal during the recording. Yet, with *Spinal Tap* the improvisational nature prevails as an essential part of, and to a large extent, *is* the performance.

impression that he is none other than Adolf Hitler. Unlike *This is Spinal Tap*, which ostensibly announces itself as an outrageously funny creation—inferred from the opening monologue from its fictitious director—*Snide and Prejudice* appears to abide by an inherently darker type of humour, which effectively takes a somewhat slower pace to sink-in. In addition to the standard commentary track—featuring writer-director Mora and actor Macfadyen discussing the challenges the latter faced in approaching his role—the creators have included an additional track that constitutes an ostensible panel discussion between the two aforementioned *characters* and Mora—who appears to be portraying himself, or rather a certain ostensible version thereof. Indeed, rather than listening to Philippe Mora, the writer-director of *Snide and Prejudice*, one appears to be listening to ‘Philippe Mora’, the director of the ‘documentary’ about the mental institution. The track reveals that Davidson is feeling much healthier, taking his medication, still being treated by Dr. Sam Cohen, and that he no longer believes that he is in fact Hitler. Effectively, as with having the fictional characters of the fictional band comment about the fictional documentary that was made about them, the creators of *Snide and Prejudice* succeed in extending the existence of the given characters that inhabit a finished work. The audience, to a large extent, is invited to play an ostensible game with the filmmakers. In wilfully suspending one’s disbelief, one is expected to accept the reality of the fictional characters and bear witness to a narrative that exists beyond the narrative of the film itself. Consequently, the characters assume a pseudo-real status as self-aware agencies, which become almost as real as they might have been, had the pseudo-documentary been a real one. This is precisely why I would argue that these commentaries, as AP artworks, ‘work’ remarkably well. What appears to enable it is a prevailing assumed pretense of reality shared by the performers and the

audience alike. To be sure, having a character in different types of films comment about themselves as if they are real would be a completely different matter. With the characters in pseudo-documentaries, one does not require investing any resources in thinking of oneself *as if* one is real due to the fact that one considers oneself real from the very beginning.

The 2001 Universal DVD release of Joel and Ethan Coen's *Blood Simple* (1984) is another interesting example. This release features a track recorded by Kenneth Loring, a restoration artistic director for 'Forever Young Films'. Although not explicitly pointed out in the DVD itself, Loring is in fact a fictitious character (portrayed by British actor-comedian Jim Piddock) and 'Forever Young Films' does not exist in actuality. Yet, this track assumes the guise of an ordinary commentary, which effectively sets out to deliver a lecture about the film, and was created by the filmmakers explicitly for the DVD release.⁵⁹⁵

In an attempt to amplify the authenticity of what is essentially a ninety-five-minute long joke, the filmmakers included bonus features on the DVD with a number of short interviews with Mortimer Young, head of 'Forever Young Films' (portrayed by actor George Ives). To be sure, as a so-called standard commentary—that is to say, one that features a film critic or some knowledgeable person attempting to inform one about the filmmakers' creative approach to their craft—this track does not constitute a very good one. Comments such as Loring stating, 'but, ehm, more on myself later, during the slower parts of the movie', could never have been made in the context of a real commentary. Nonetheless, once one understands that this track is actually a well-

⁵⁹⁵ See USB flash drive for the Universal commentary track to *Blood Simple*.

constructed joke, one would be required to evaluate it in accordance with its own terms. For example, on a very basic level, one would need to ask if it is funny, why it is funny, and whether the joke actually works.⁵⁹⁶ Consequently, the commentary should be heard, understood and experienced as a parody—one that works in accordance with the style and framework of the internal logic of the Coen brothers' *oeuvre*.

A similarly notable spoof commentary appears on the 2003 Universal DVD release of *Monty Python's The Meaning of Life* (1983). Reminiscent of the equally Pythonesque gag employed in the 2001 Sony DVD release of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975), utilising the medium of including 'Subtitles for Those Who Didn't Like the Film', the producers of the Universal DVD employed a commentary track entitled 'Soundtrack for the Lonely: a soundtrack for people watching the DVD at home alone'. As with *Blood Simple*, this too is essentially a feature-long joke. In brief, what the audience is listening to is the sound of a man (portrayed by Michael Palin) who is watching the film alone in his humble abode. Every so often, he is heard muttering

⁵⁹⁶ In some respects, I would argue that this particular commentary could be compared with Orson Welles's legendary 1938 radio adaptation of *The War of the Worlds*. Drawing on all the conventions of what a standard commentary track should sound like, I find that the so-called *faux* commentary made for *Blood Simple* misleads the audience by endowing one with the false sense of authenticity, and, effectively, runs the risk of not being identified by one and all for the joke that it is. Conceivably, Welles's broadcast—while prevailing as perhaps the most famous radio production of all time—can be identified as an example of an AP artwork that fails to manifest its own internal logic. Explicitly, it did not distinguish itself as an aural performance. As history reveals, the majority of Welles's audience simply did not realise that they were supposed to experience the broadcast as a pre-conceived radio drama. The listening experience became 'too real'. So much so, that the audience actually believed that earth was under attack by beings from another world, which subsequently led to mass panic. Now, deceiving his audience may have been part of what Welles had in mind, yet he surely could not have anticipated the extent to which the events of that evening had unfolded. In this respect, I would argue that although the broadcast may have followed the internal logic of a radio newscast (or, at least, the manner in which the medium would presumably cope with an attack from outer space), it did not necessarily follow the internal logic of performing a literary/dramatic work. Indeed, had Welles either (a) more properly complied with the internal logic of what an aural performance is, or (b) succeeded to manifest the ostensibly new internal logic of a pseudo-realistic radio broadcast, the mass panic could have been avoided. Moreover, as the performed work originated in the genre of science-fiction, it seems problematic, aesthetically, to deliver a work that amplifies the un-real through a manner that regards it as a real live occurrence. (Arguably, this had affected one's ostensible immunity, even if one did in fact identify the elements of performance in Welles's broadcast).

aimlessly at the screen in front him, munching on the odd snack, speaking over his telephone, or being yelled at by his next-door neighbour to 'turn it down'. As the track progresses, along with the film, the somewhat darker tale of this man gradually unveils. Now, although this track does not feature a person speaking directly to an audience, it is nevertheless experienced by the audience as an aural performance—and quite a unique one at that.

7. Samuel Beckett's *Molloy*: An Aural Case Study (2)

7.1 *Molloy*: A Complex Case Study

In the introduction to this dissertation, I referenced Barry McGovern's audiobook rendition of Samuel Beckett's three novels,⁵⁹⁷ alluding to his suggestion that Beckett's prose almost literally cries out to be read aloud—which, in effect, constitutes a performance. Indeed, one of this study's major objectives aims to explain precisely why. Having (a) constructed and explained in detail what the institution of AP is, and thereby (b) illustrated both what does and what does not count as an AP artwork, I now come full circle: I return to the audiobook that initially ignited my interest in exploring these types of works. Focusing particularly on the novel *Molloy* (1955)—while highlighting the manner in which it corresponds with the complementary two novels that together form Beckett's 'trilogy'—I propose to articulate an explanation accounting for my initial assertion that the reading aloud of Beckett's prose is indeed a performance.

As stated earlier, I find the medium of the audiobook to be the most appropriate medium for performing texts which one might identify as extended personal monologues. Effectively, my exploration of *Molloy* endeavours to advance this study's observation of the aural manifestations of literary texts that distinctly question the very concept of authorship and identity. Whereas Huck's first-person narration of his own

⁵⁹⁷ Initially written in French between 1946 and 1949, and published in 1951, *Molloy* was subsequently translated into English by Beckett himself and published in 1955. It was followed by *Malone Dies* (1956) and *The Unnamable* (1958), both of which were also originally published in French (in 1951 and 1953, respectively) and later translated into English by Beckett. Although originally written as three individual works, they are commonly regarded as the components of Beckett's 'trilogy' and have accordingly received a number of omnibus publications—constituting the last book published in Beckett's lifetime. As Rónán McDonald puts it, 'The three novels that make up the Trilogy have come to be regarded as among the prose masterpieces of the twentieth century'. Rónán McDonald, *The Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Beckett* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 87.

so-called memoir constitutes a very interesting, albeit not entirely convoluted case study in which Twain's irony and input constantly prevail, Beckett's first-person narrators are significantly complex. As I will show, his narrating protagonists—particularly in *Molloy*, and in light of the 'trilogy' as a whole—deliver a predominantly fragmented first-person account of their own story. Their narratives call into question the authorship and identity of both the writer of the words that they speak, as well as of their own existence as the narrator who speaks them. Consequently, an audiobook version of Beckett's prose appears to amplify the complexity pertaining to the authorship and identity—predominantly as the narrators address their implied auditor through literal and concrete voices.⁵⁹⁸

In an interview concerning his adaptation of Beckett's novels into a one-man-show (a recorded version of which will be addressed later on) renowned Irish actor, Jack MacGowran, explains that although he was admittedly 'baffled' by his initial reading of Beckett's prose, there nonetheless was 'some inner thing' that made him 'know there's a quality here that needs an expression'.⁵⁹⁹ Recounting a conversation they conducted about this matter, MacGowran quotes Beckett saying, 'I admit that my word on the page is difficult, but if it can be interpreted by [...] being spoken, it would take on a dimension of understanding that one mightn't get from reading it'.⁶⁰⁰ Interestingly enough, in the same vein, McMillan and Fehsenfeld cite Beckett as confessing to the playwright Jean

⁵⁹⁸ With Beckett, the designated medium is customarily considered particularly essential. He himself predominantly objected to having his works performed through a different medium than that for which a particular work was originally written. At the same time, it is evident that he was much more lenient with his prose. As McGovern points out, 'adaptations of prose works are legion—on stage, TV and radio. [...] many of these adaptations were authorized by Beckett himself or given his blessing'. McGovern, "It's a Question of Voices....," 29-32. As has been established, when one engages with any AP artwork, one should be mindful of the extent to which it may exist as an adaptation.

⁵⁹⁹ Jack MacGowran, interviewed by Liam Nolan. Excerpt. (circ. 1966). See USB flash drive, 03m50sec.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 03m57sec.

Reavey that he never wrote a word without actually saying it out loud before putting it on the page.⁶⁰¹ To be sure, this not only effectively complements MacGowran's recount of what Beckett had told him, but these two references also strengthen McGovern's intuitive insight about there being something in the text itself that cries out to be read aloud. As McMillan and Fehsenfeld point out, Beckett is known to have worked on all aspects of the voice with regards to the performances of his works: namely, the speed and tone of the various utterances, as well as in which exact direction (i.e., spatially, on the stage) a certain character would be speaking.⁶⁰² Although one might argue that this predominantly applies to the stage works, it is quite plausible to assume that Beckett may have employed this as an ostensible methodology in writing his prose fiction as well. To some extent, in identifying that the text seeks out to be spoken, a performer effectively allows the printed word on the page to return to or re-establish itself as the original spoken word that Beckett uttered to himself before putting into his writing.

Whereas *Huck Finn* received numerous audiobook versions, *Molloy* received only two professional unabridged audiobook releases: one by RTÉ, narrated by McGovern, and the other by Naxos, distinctive in that it is narrated by *two* performers—Sean Barrett and Dermot Crowley.⁶⁰³ Nonetheless, as with my previous case study, my intention here is (a) to identify—at least in broad strokes—the most essential strands that constitute the generally accepted internal logic of *Molloy*, and subsequently (b) to compare and evaluate the different audiobook versions of the novel as AP artworks. McGovern's suggestion, for instance, that Beckett's prose elicits an actual reading aloud

⁶⁰¹ Douglas McMillan and Martha Fehsenfeld, *Beckett in the Theater: The Author as Practical Playwright and Director* (London: Calder, 1988), 16.

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ Samuel Beckett, *Molloy*, unabridged, read by Sean Barrett and Dermot Crowley (Naxos Audiobooks, NA531912, 2003).

can be identified as an inherent aspect of its internal logic. As will later be addressed, one might similarly identify a particular strand in the overall internal logic of all three novels: that is to say, the 'trilogy' as a whole appears to evoke what particular *kind* of reading—or at least what limited range of *possible* readings—the texts themselves conceivably require.

Summarily, in order to identify what the internal logic of the novel is—or, at least what it predominantly pertains to—one is required to consider and be mindful of the following key facets: (a) the predominantly unreliable identity of the novel's narrating protagonist; (b) the contentious possibility that there might in fact be more than one such protagonist; (c) the conceivable relationship that prevails between the narrators in all *three* novels; (d) the distinctive thematic threads and *ars poetic* literary devices embedded in *Molloy*—all of which predominately pertain to the ostensible tools one utilises in order to substantiate one's own existence (e.g., the very acts of writing, narration, and speaking aloud one's thoughts, as well as the questionable authenticity of memories and the extent to which one can rely upon the voices one hears in one's head); and (e) the conceivable existence of a distinctive Beckettian writing style—persistent not only throughout the 'trilogy' as a whole, but also correspondingly associated with Beckett's entire body of work. It, in turn, can be associated with certain implicit qualities such as tone, cadence and rhythm—as well as, to some extent, a particular diction and accent.⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰⁴ Albeit, arguably, un-self-consciously—as the themes that abide in his work are customarily acknowledged as universal—Beckett's writing appears to be imbued with his own native Irish speech patterns. Indeed, while Beckett seldom deliberately mimics or endows his character with particular accents, there nevertheless appears to prevail a certain sense of 'Irishness' to his work. It is evident not only with respect to the language that most of his characters speak, or the ostensible music that informs their speech, but also particularly in the *milieu* that inhabits his prose. Consequently, it can be argued that it is part of the text's internal logic and should thereby appropriately be identified in a putative

Ultimately, in conjunction with my initial case study and exploration of the aural manifestations of *Huck Finn*, my intention now is to utilise *Molloy* in order to underline just how crucial the choice of casting the right narrator actually is. On the one hand, as I will show, both versions most definitely comply with what an AP artwork should be.⁶⁰⁵ On the other hand, however, each version elicits a different kind of aesthetic evaluation—which is inherently connected to the understanding of the novel’s assumed internal logic.⁶⁰⁶

7.2 *Molloy* and the Trilogy: The Whole vs. One of Its Parts

Any attempt to describe the plot of *Molloy* will prove a difficult task, and I shall therefore address the overall ‘story’ merely in broad strokes. Yet, it can be established that the novel is divided into two parts, each consisting of its own narrative, and that both are delivered to the readers by two supposedly different protagonists.⁶⁰⁷

The first part of the novel is spoken by a character named Molloy: a crippled derelict who owns a chainless bicycle. He appears to have no rationale for existence,

performance. A plausible argument could likewise be made that Beckett’s work simply *sounds* better in an Irish accent. This will later be made clear through the concrete analysis of the recordings.

⁶⁰⁵ In brief, when examining the manner in which they comply with the institution of AP, both recordings consist of an existing written text which was (a) recorded by a performer and (b) presented *as* an audiobook to (c) a designated audience. In both cases, the narrators are professional, experienced and accomplished actors. As (audio-)performers, they participate with understanding in the act of creating an AP artwork. Accordingly, the designated consumers of these audiobooks constitute a set of persons who are prepared to take upon themselves the responsibility of understanding and experiencing these recorded narrations *as* AP artworks.

⁶⁰⁶ As will be explained, the deficiency in Barrett and Crowley’s rendition is rooted in the explicit artistic *choice* employed by Naxos to have the novel delivered by two different actors. Indeed, McGovern’s performance is the better of the two. Not only does his performance successfully embody what shall be determined as the internal logic of Beckett’s text, but it also prevails as a captivating example of what a good aural performance should be.

⁶⁰⁷ To a large extent, these two narratives can be perceived as two extended monologues. As will later be addressed more explicitly, identifying them as such contributes both (a) to McGovern’s intuitive contention that the text itself elicits its *own* performance, and (b) to the notion of the aural medium constituting the most obvious art form for certain texts.

save his quest of returning to his mother's house, coupled with the basic human necessity of surviving in what he perceives as an unfriendly world. As Paul Davies explains, 'Beckett's characters are mostly homeless, culturally and physically, and move just like machines [...]. It is made clear that they once had a home, a culture, education and parentage, not to speak of a metaphysical or spiritual "home"'.⁶⁰⁸ The novel begins with Molloy residing in his dead mother's room. He seems to have no recollection either of how he got there or how he was eventually rescued from what one later learns was the ditch where he previously ended up.⁶⁰⁹ In this room, Molloy writes. Completing but a few pages every day, he composes—in fiction—his own account of his obstacle-ridden journey home.

In the second part of the novel, the readers are introduced to the character of Moran—its assumed narrator.⁶¹⁰ Like Molloy, Moran too is on a quest: to find Molloy. Rendering his character something of a hybrid between a secret agent and a sleuth, Moran is given his assignment by an undescribed (although not insignificant) superior named Youdi, with whom he communicates via a messenger named Gaber.⁶¹¹ Moran's character can be described as opinionated and conventional, and he appears to be an

⁶⁰⁸ Paul Davies, "Three Novels and Four *Nouvelles*: Giving Up the Ghost Be Born At Last," in *The Cambridge Companion to Beckett*, ed. John Pilling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 46.

⁶⁰⁹ That the novel begins with what is effectively the accomplishment of his quest is addressed later on.

⁶¹⁰ As stated, the novel puts into question matters of authorship and identity. Thus, although Moran essentially introduces himself—thereby arguably assuming authorship of a monologue of his own—his narrative, as will later be made clear, may not necessarily be his, and, similarly, one may dispute whether it is in fact he who narrates it.

⁶¹¹ The inclusion of an undescribed character in a medium composed of words seems to resonate with Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, which features perhaps the most famous 'unseen' and at the same time constantly-present character in the history of Western theatre (i.e., Godot). In the same vein, Beckett's employment of a blind character in his *All That Fall*—a play that was written for the 'blind' medium of radio—could likewise be identified as a kind of aesthetic inconsistency, and thereby as a comment on the nature of the medium itself. Indeed, these cases demonstrate the manner in which Beckett utilises his particular choice of medium for the purpose of endowing his works with a distinctive internal logic. As will later be explained, *Molloy* (and, indeed, the 'trilogy' as a whole) is obsessed with the fundamental question of what the novelistic medium is: writing and narration. Consequently, the protagonists' quests seem to be rooted in these two activities.

outwardly devout puritan. As his narrative progresses, he continually asks himself philosophically difficult and somewhat self-torturing questions.⁶¹² Gradually identifying with the subject of his inquiry, Moran's journey consequently leads him in search of his own self—which in effect results in his finding Molloy, albeit not in the literal sense.⁶¹³

Each narrative can be perceived as the antithesis of the other—not only in light of the novel's structure, but also in terms of the narrating character who is delivering the story to the readers. They both appear to take the form of their narrators' continuous ramblings—which, conceivably, revolve around anything and everything, and at the same time are about nothing in particular.⁶¹⁴ Nonetheless, one needs to be able to read beyond the words on the page.⁶¹⁵ As Davies points out, 'the rambling, formless appearance [...] is only skin-deep'.⁶¹⁶ Similarly, H. Porter Abbott argues that 'though the trilogy is technically endless, it defined a progression which made, in retrospect, an arrow of meaning. It organized what went before and gave the various

⁶¹² Quite often in Beckett's work, the comedy stems from what could be identified as a bleak, poignant and poetic view of human existence (and, indeed, non-existence). While tragicomedy and black comedy have existed in dramatic works as early as Sophocles, it also suggests the philosophical *milieu* that Beckett's writing is usually associated with: namely, existentialism—or rather to the manner in which this tradition is represented by authors and works such as Albert Camus's *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) and Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1943). In the same vein, MacGowran points out that on reading Beckett's novels he found 'they had a great dramatic and humorous effect—either ironic or what they call today "black humor", sardonic humour—but humour of a very definite sort'. See USB flash drive for MacGowran's interview with Nolan, 00m15sec–00m31sec.

⁶¹³ According to McDonald, 'the story of Molloy and Moran may, as some critics hold, be a perplexing inversion—the initial bourgeois robustness of Moran mutates during his narrative to the debilitated character which so resembles the object of his search, Molloy'. McDonald, *The Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Beckett*, 88.

⁶¹⁴ Irish literary critic, Vivian Mercier, famously described *Waiting for Godot* as a play in which 'nothing happens, twice'. Vivian Mercier, "The Uneventful Event," *Irish Times*, February 18, 1956, 6. One might similarly be tempted to claim that the two monologues which constitute *Molloy* are in fact nothing more than the ostensibly out-of-sync verbal meanderings of two unrelated and, arguably, semi-deranged narrators, who fundamentally 'say' absolutely nothing, twice. Likewise, the 'trilogy' as a whole could be regarded as a complex amalgamation of streams of a somewhat haunted consciousness.

⁶¹⁵ When listening to the audiobook versions, one is required to be mindful of what resides beyond the ostensibly diffused and incoherent speeches. Of course, this would also depend upon the performer's ability to deliver and manifest the fact that there *is* something more to the text than the text itself.

⁶¹⁶ Davies, "Three Novels and Four *Nouvelles*," 47.

parts in their turn a kind of belonging'.⁶¹⁷ In his attempt to identify what I would regard as their institutional fact, Davies asserts that these narratives are necessarily 'cohered by a compelling [...] circular logic'.⁶¹⁸ Indeed, succumbing to the arguable temptation of reducing the novel's literary substance to nothing more than formless ramblings would merely leave one with the 'brute' fact of the matter. Yet, in seeking to identify its institutional fact, *Molloy* can be experienced as an outstanding work of modern fiction—and arguably Beckett's *magnum opus*.⁶¹⁹ Inevitably, the two ostensibly separate monologues of Molloy and Moran can be construed not only as very much connected to each other—as well as seeming to resonate with the other narratives of the entire 'trilogy'—but also as possessing an innate significance (i.e., a distinct embodied meaning, of sorts) and therefore they do in fact 'say' quite a lot. For the most part, Molloy and Moran seem to convey their thoughts (or thought processes), insights (for whatever they might be worth), as well as occasional (inherently fragmented) memories. Thus, despite appearances, their ramblings should not in fact be regarded as ramblings at all.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁷ H. Porter Abbott, "Beginning Again: The Post-Narrative Art of *Texts for Nothing* and *How It Is*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Beckett*, ed. Pilling, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 110.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ Correspondingly, an encounter with, for instance, Jackson Pollock's *Full Fathom Five* (1947) or, perhaps, *Number 18* (1950) should most definitely *not* lead one to conclude that these paintings are in fact an explicit deceit, effectively consisting of different 'versions' of blots, drippings, and spritzes of paint, unintentionally scattered upon a large canvas. To be sure, as NITA clearly demonstrates, one not only can see these works as legitimate paintings, but also potentially identify them as artistic masterpieces—ranking among the highest achievements in abstract expressionist painting.

⁶²⁰ I find that the novel uniquely conveys the 'unscripted' nature and ongoing 'ever-editing' flow of human cognitive consciousness. For instance, Molloy appears to be situated in such isolation that he is merely able to resort to the fractured thoughts and distant memories within his consciousness. Arguably, this was Beckett's perception of the human condition at its most fundamental. The novel demonstrates this through the idiosyncrasies of Molloy's thinking process, as they manifest in his narration. I am reminded of the long-running radio programme, *Just a Minute*, an improvisational panel-based comedy show, which also found its way to television. The stated objective of the participating panellists is to speak for an entire minute about some given subject, without hesitation, repetition or deviation. Although literature usually conceals them, attempting to create an artistically coherent flow of thought upon the printed page, Beckett does not. As the novel progresses, Molloy, who essentially narrates 'himself', employs all three, effectively demonstrating Beckett's insights in respect of the lapses in one's consciousness.

In what constitutes a fitting indication of what the internal logic of the novel should be—or, at least, the manner in which it should be approached—McDonald maintains that

[I]f the point of a novel, its aesthetic effect as it were, is to withhold clarity of theme or rational ‘message’, then explaining that novel, translating it into coherent themes, is in a sense to lose it. Critical approaches to the trilogy are thrown back on themselves: ‘reading’ the trilogy immediately asks questions about how the trilogy should be read in so far as it challenges many of the procedures and conventions underlying critical interpretation. As ever, we need to proceed with caution, and with proper critical circumspection. An attentive encounter with Beckett’s fiction is one which is alert to the quality and nature of the voices, the structure of the story, how the narrative is being told as much as what it ‘means’. There is little point in pillaging these texts for readily packaged themes or clear messages, no point in seeking to iron out their dislocations and difficulties. On the other hand, we cannot simply ignore the challenge to interpretation that these elusive texts pose, eschewing their ambiguities and perplexities for the appreciation of a nicely caught cadence. Even if we fumble the questions, it might not be a bad starting point to try to identify what some of them are.⁶²¹

A close reading of their narratives appears to reveal that Molloy and Moran express discrete philosophical attitudes pertaining to human existence. As Davies suggests,

Beckett’s fictions confront [...] a conflict between two powerful forces. One is the [...] *cogito*, abstract reasoning, the conscious mind, determinism, [...] the imposition of extrinsic order. The historical index of this force is the Cartesian Enlightenment and the empirical tradition [...] Beneath, above and against this force, is the opposite force [...] which does not respond to analysis; [...] the actual *unfoldment* of existence, that is, something which we know [...] but which is beyond our powers of comprehension.⁶²² [emphases in original]

In appearing to represent these two forces,⁶²³ Molloy and Moran effectively embody two sides of the same proverbial coin—an adherent of a currency that can be utilised

⁶²¹ McDonald, *The Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Beckett*, 89–90.

⁶²² Davies, "Three Novels and Four *Nouvelles*," 43.

⁶²³ Davies explains that ‘Beckett’s narrators embody the spiritual emergency of the Cartesian consciousness. [...] The Cartesian split goes against the spiritual ecology of the human mind just as the smoke does against the delicate equilibrium of the baleful insects. [...] Three aspects of the Cartesian

for transacting with the complementary two novels.⁶²⁴ In *Malone Dies*, for example, Malone—the narrating protagonist—is bedridden, and helpless, just like Molloy. He too is ultimately awaiting his own death, and is similarly deprived of both the physical strength and the mental capacity to change his condition. Unlike Molloy, he appears to hold a distinctly religious Christian outlook—especially with respect to the promise of a better life after death.⁶²⁵ While this arguably bestows Moran with a purpose of some kind, or perhaps an ostensible reassurance of what he might expect after death, his outlook also seems to represent Beckett’s comment on the degree to which institutional restrictions, for lack of a better term, quite literally dictate what one is essentially *permitted* to reflect upon during one’s lifetime. Molloy, on his part, appears to convey the belief that one’s life is deprived of choice—and that one lives one’s life moment to moment, while clashing from time to time with the occasional figure of authority that the world confronts one with. Although he is crippled (arguably, not only in the physical sense), he seems determined to ‘go on’.⁶²⁶ Thus, to some extent, Moran also seems to

separation spring from Beckett’s pages with exceptional force. The first is in the realm of the storyteller’s discourse, the question as to whether words can tell the truth or not [...]. The second is in the realm of the storyteller’s images: Beckett’s celebrated evocation of humans shut up in a small circular space [...]. The third is [...] what in traditional philosophy used to be called *prima materia*. [...] These three issues run deep in all Beckett’s poetry, drama and later fiction. But it is in the trilogy that they make their most obvious and memorable, not to mention accessible, impression’. *Ibid.*, 45–47.

⁶²⁴ Abbot, for instance, argues that a ‘central theme’ of the ‘trilogy’ is the ‘bewildering multiplicity of the speaking subject’. Abbott, “Beginning Again,” 112. Correspondingly, Iain Wright’s assertion that all three narrators ‘are ceaselessly at work in a deconstructionist activity—foregrounding their own textuality, decentring the texts they inhabit, subverting subject positions, denaturalizing language—the issue is misery and meaninglessness, and that activity is what they seek continually, but unsuccessfully to escape from, back into a world of solid foundations, solid signifiers’ [emphasis in original]. Cited in P.J. Murphy, “Beckett and the Philosophers,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Beckett*, ed. Pilling, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 223.

⁶²⁵ As McDonald points out, ‘Moran’s Catholicism is witheringly portrayed at the start of his narrative, while his supposed pilgrimage to see the “Turdy Madonna” revisits the early conflation of maternity and excrement in Molloy’s mind’. McDonald, *The Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Beckett*, 93. While it is after Moran’s condition deteriorates that he begins to be preoccupied with innately theological questions, ‘the list he contrives is a dark, quasi-blasphemous parody of the doctrinal catechism’. *Ibid.*

⁶²⁶ Beckett develops this attitude into its poetic coda in *The Unnamable*, where he concludes the novel, and thereby the ‘trilogy’ as a whole, with the narrator uttering his famous last words: ‘you must go on, I

represent all that Molloy is not or cannot be. Indeed, whereas Molloy appears to be free despite his incapacitated state, Moran, although fundamentally free, leads a rather limited life, unable to accomplish the task of ceasing to be.⁶²⁷

As one engages with the novel on a deeper level, it becomes evident that the act of writing resides in its core. Indeed, both Molloy and Moran are consumed with writing down their thoughts and making up stories. In doing so, they rekindle their past, give shape and form to their memories, and document their own lives in the form of a fragmented fictional narrative. They effectively utilise their writing to *define* their own identities—and thus, they are *compelled* to write.⁶²⁸ Furthermore, as they both habitually write reports, the very act of writing is also essential in defining them.⁶²⁹

As a developing character in one three-part narrative, Malone too appears to share with his literary auditors—Beckett’s readers—his acceptance of that which he

can’t go on, I’ll go on’. Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable*, in *Three Novels: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable* (New York: Grove Press, 2009), 407.

⁶²⁷ John Calder, for instance, depicts the novel as ‘the first person monologue of [...] an old man, lying in bed and waiting to die’. John Calder, notes to Samuel Beckett, *Malone Dies*, unabridged, read by Sean Barrett (Naxos Audiobooks, NA531912D, 2004), 7. Malone, he asserts, ‘is not a nice old man: his ‘bitterness’ at having had to live at all, his spite against others he has known, and his sour memories which make up the real or imagined stories he tells himself between naps and other thoughts, make that clear enough; the tone is fiercely ironic, [...] and, because of its extravagance, also very comic. [...] Malone makes it clear that he is resigned to his forthcoming death’. *Ibid.*, 7–8.

⁶²⁸ As Calder points out, Malone ‘is not in a hurry to die; boredom is worse, but he has an inventive mind and can think up little stories, even if they are not entirely made up’. *Ibid.*, 8. He goes on to assert that ‘as the novel—and Malone’s ebbing consciousness—nears its end, the stories become wilder and more sadistic and a Dante-like demon appears, Lemuel, surely from Hell, who in Malone’s imagination kills the characters one by one. *Ibid.*, 9. Thus, for Calder, ‘Malone’s mind, the real hero of this novel, can make as much out of a trivial incident that it has invented as of a major one, changing the story half-way through, changing the name of a character on a whim or going back to start again’. *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶²⁹ While Molloy is not sure whom his report is for, or indeed why he is writing it to begin with, he is nevertheless compelled to do so. ‘There’s this man that comes every week [...] He gives me money and takes away the pages [...] When he comes for the fresh pages he brings back the previous week’s. They are marked with signs I don’t understand’. Samuel Beckett, *Molloy*, in *Three Novels* (New York: Grove Press, 2009), 3. Moran’s reports are focused on the subject of the person he is looking for, which is, as aforementioned, the character of Molloy, and his reports are to be given to his supervisor. In effect, they both write *about* writing, or the rituals thereof, and at the time report about what they write. To some extent, Beckett’s readers (who are engaged with the novel *Molloy*), are also the implied audience of the *characters* themselves. As will soon be explained, just as Molloy and Moran are ostensibly compelled to write, they also *require* an audience who will read their output.

cannot change. He is very much aware of the fact that his pencil, increasingly disintegrating with every page, parallels his own life, which is nearing its last breath. At the same time, Malone is constantly attempting to delay his death by means of writing. In brief, he writes (and narrates) stories featuring characters who reside somewhere, 'out there', far away, and beyond the pages. Much like Molloy—and as will presently become clear, much like the narrator of *The Unnamable*—his state of paralysis notwithstanding, Malone endows *his* fictional creations with precisely that which he himself lacks: the capability to journey the world, freely and unburdened. An argument could surely be made that experiencing *Malone Dies* as an audiobook has the potential of intensifying and enriching one's sense of Malone's awareness of his own mortality. It is at the heart of one's aesthetic experience. Readers should no doubt be aware—at least in the back of their mind—that Malone's existence is tied in with the continuously depleting number of pages. Indeed, the novel exists from cover to cover. The listening audience of the audiobook would likewise be mindful that the narrator's so-called life expectancy is dependent upon the recording's running time. Thus, the aural performance cannot exist beyond its prescribed intrinsic count-down. No matter who the assumed narrator is, having the physical novel at hand will forever serve as a reminder to who the text's author actually is. An aural recording, however, can be said to bestow the fictional narrator with greater power. With Beckett's 'trilogy' in particular, as the narrators apparently attempt to assume ownership over the texts themselves—while the printed work shall forever remain overshadowed by the imprinting of Beckett's name, an aural performance ostensibly assists in *making* the narrative their

own.⁶³⁰ Consequently, the act of writing, coupled with the act of *narration*, are established as two distinct self-reflective themes.⁶³¹ Indeed, as literary devices, they can be traced throughout all three novels—and thereby be identified as distinct connective threads.⁶³²

All three novels seem to intentionally blur the boundaries between that which resides within the ‘trilogy’ and that which exists beyond its pages.⁶³³ There no doubt exists an inherent relationship between all three novels and the characters who both inhabit and narrate them.⁶³⁴ As Catherine Laws point out,

The ambiguous relationships between Molloy, Moran and the author undermine our sense of narrative origins. The question of authority is permanently in doubt, not least because the worlds of the two men are in many ways very similar; the objects, events and ideas of one story are frequently repeated in a related form in the other, and even dissimilarities are often effected by the stated absence or denial of that which appeared in the other story, rather than by the actual inclusion of thoroughly different material. Identity is therefore put

⁶³⁰ Malone, for example, appears to claim ownership over *Molloy*—the novel—and thereby raises an important question regarding the literal existence of characters who are, for all intents and purposes, fictional. As this can be identified as one aspect of the novel’s internal logic, a good audiobook narrator—who effectively ‘owns’ the aural performance—should in this case be able to manifest the manner in which the *character* endeavours to assume a ‘real’ possession of a fictional work.

⁶³¹ In some respects, it could be argued that readers experience the three novels intermittently as (a) the ‘brute’ fact of what they actually are—i.e., the distinctive works of Samuel Beckett, and (b) the ‘institutional’ fact of what the text appears to be—i.e., the individual works of the fictional characters themselves. For example, as Malone’s narrative progresses, it appears as though his stories—a fictionalised biography, of sorts—ultimately form a mirror image of Malone’s own life. I would argue that Malone’s ostensible self-created *doppelgänger* resonates with the splitting of *Molloy* between two different narrators—who may themselves in fact prevail as a duplicated representation of one single character. This is predominantly why the Naxos choice of two different narrators is problematic.

⁶³² When reading the ‘trilogy’ as a whole, it becomes evident that Beckett’s narrators are very much aware of their place in the world. Indeed, they know full well that their journey in life is confined solely to the stories they tell. This is why the act of narration in particular possesses the potential of becoming extremely intensified when one experiences the audiobook version of these novels *as AP artworks*.

⁶³³ This is most evident when considering the author of the novels, the narrating characters, their possible direct or indirect relationship to each other, or the manner in which they correspond both with the so-called ‘real’ world of the readers and their own fictional ‘Beckettian’ world.

⁶³⁴ Despite alluding to a prevailing difference between the three novels, I find that Calder does the exact opposite: he not only demonstrates the manner in which they correspond with each other, but he also insinuates a common artistic thread. Indeed, although originally written as three individual works, quite a number of eminent scholars have advocated that they share more than might initially meet the eye. Even if one does find an inherent connection between the three novels, the fact that some kind of connection *does* exist cannot be ignored. Merely asserting that they are ‘totally unconnected’, as he does in his notes, moves one further away from seizing its appropriate internal logic.

into question, and this is extended in *Malone Dies* [...] As J. D. O'Hara points out [...] its focus is the actual process of writing, but this is also an inevitable consequence of the textual duality of *Molloy*. This explicit association of writing with the necessary but futile attempt to evolve an objective and unified history of the self becomes most unbearable in *The Unnamable*: the repeated demonstration of the impossibility of self-presence, and the resultant need continually to invent others, destabilise the coherence of subjectivity.⁶³⁵

Completing the cycle of Beckett's 'trilogy', the narrating character in *The Unnamable* is deprived of any distinctive identity.⁶³⁶ Throughout the novel, the solipsistic narrating protagonist remains, by its own admission, 'a big talking ball, talking about things that do not exist, or that exist perhaps, impossible to know, beside the point'.⁶³⁷ Evidently, 'he' not only has no name but also no body.⁶³⁸ Yet, his ability to *speak* remains.⁶³⁹ It is his most distinctive characteristic, and perhaps all that he has. Isolated, confined to his own contemplations, he accordingly utilises words and his power of speech in an attempt to assume or substantiate his own identity.⁶⁴⁰ Nonetheless, his attempt is due

⁶³⁵ Catherine Laws, "Music and Language in the Work of Samuel Beckett" (PhD diss., University of York, 1996), 149–50.

⁶³⁶ This resonates with Malone, who manifests his presence and/or existence by an apparent unwillingness (or rather, a literal inability) to refer to himself in the first-person. At the same time, the contradiction in terms notwithstanding, as he narrates the novel, Malone appears to have a similar inability to speak about anything other than his own self.

⁶³⁷ Beckett, *The Unnamable*, 299.

⁶³⁸ While an argument could be made that for this reason one should, in fact, regard this character as an 'it', I refer him as a 'he' because he corresponds directly with the narrating protagonists of the previous two novels in the 'trilogy'.

⁶³⁹ As Calder asserts, this novel 'might almost have been written to be read aloud, catching the nuances of the thinking mind and the change of tone from random speculation to storytelling to desperate panic. It is a compulsive voice, asking questions, seeking answers without expecting to find them, always a little surprised at its own ability to reason and to keep going'. John Calder, notes to Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable*, unabridged, read by Sean Barrett (Naxos Audiobooks, NA533712D, 2005).8

⁶⁴⁰ According to Davies, 'Beckett's depictions of confinement within a closed space are known even amongst those who have never seen a Beckett play, or read his novels. [...] Sometimes it is merely a thought or comparison in the narrator's imagination; sometimes, as in *The Unnamable*, the narrative image itself is of a being, a person, trapped in a jar constantly'. Davies, "Three Novels and Four *Nouvelles*," 52. He later points out that 'The Cartesian split, embodied by Beckett in the infernal jar, imprisons the soul and prevents its communion with the life which is its own essential sustenance. This is Beckett's unique picture of existential anguish'. *Ibid.*, 57. In essence, the narrating character in *The Unnamable* proclaims his existence by way of both narrating 'himself' and personifying *two* particular characters. The former, arguably, highlights the classic philosophical notion that words and speech *create* reality (i.e., if, for instance, one does not *say* the words 'Let there be light', light simply cannot be); the latter,

to fail. Predominantly in Beckett's works, one seems to require an additional personage who is able to validate one's existence. The speaker in *The Unnamable* has no such 'other' person do so, except perhaps the readers of the novel. This, I would argue, is further intensified through the audiobook versions: the voices become concrete, and the listeners are rendered as a literal 'other' to hear them.⁶⁴¹

In some respects, it could also be argued that the narrating characters in *Molloy* function as their own audience. Since they *require* an audience, appearing to address their narrative to whoever is willing to listen to them, the readers (and listeners) might be perceived as a proxy, of sorts—for an ostensible imagined audience—that enable the narrators to sound out their thoughts and speak aloud to themselves.⁶⁴² In *The Unnamable*, all that the speaker is left with—and, conceivably, all that the readers are left with as well—are resonating disembodied voices, governed by a kind of liminality.⁶⁴³

emphasising the line that Beckett draws between all the narrating characters in the 'trilogy', utilising stories and fiction in trying to define who they themselves are.

⁶⁴¹ In the same vein, consider the last words spoken by the character of Vladimir to the character of the Boy at the end of Act II in *Waiting for Godot*: In his reply to his question 'What am I to tell Mr. Godot, Sir?' Vladimir says to the Boy, 'Tell him . . . (*He hesitates*) . . . tell him you saw me and that . . . (*He hesitates*) . . . that you saw me. (*Pause. Vladimir advances, the Boy recoils. Vladimir halts, the Boy halts. With sudden violence.*) You're sure you saw me, you won't come and tell me to-morrow that you never saw me! *Silence. Vladimir makes a sudden spring forward, the Boy avoids him and exit running. Silence. The sun sets, the moon rises. As in Act 1 [...]*'. Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (New York: Grove Press, 1954), 59–60. That Beckett specifies Vladimir's sudden violent outrage when wishing to make sure that the boy indeed saw him is crucial. Not only does it relate to the circular nature of the play—indeed, the act of *waiting* for Godot (who never appears onstage)—but it also emphasises the importance of one's having the assurance from someone other than one's self as to whether or not one actually exists. Since one can indeed doubt one's own words, one requires the 'testimony' of another.

⁶⁴² According to McDonald, 'The overarching tone of the anguished voices who narrate these stories, these exhausted, dilapidated tales held in such contempt by their tellers, is one of bewilderment. [...] But whatever the narrators' perplexity, and however repetitious and bewildered the language that registers it, the prose is at the same time enduringly calm and serene. [...] If Moran is not fully sure why he is pursuing Molloy, what the reasons are for Youdi to be issuing his reports, then this information is also withheld from us. In this respect, the text does not just *express* bewilderment and confusion, it *enacts* it'. McDonald, *The Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Beckett*, 88–89.

⁶⁴³ These voices appear to reside between the actual space he inhabits, and that which he hears inside his own head. The internal monologue of the narrating characters in the 'trilogy'—and perhaps primarily of that in *The Unnamable*—is quite reminiscent of the internal monologue with which Beckett endows the main protagonists in his radio plays: namely, Henry in *Embers*, Voice in *Cascando* or Words in *Words and Music*, to name but a few. What is more, although I refer to this as an internal monologue, it is

Ultimately, more than any other narrating character in the 'trilogy', this speaker (or, arguably, this 'version' of him) seems to be most in need of an imagined auditor to speak to. According to Abbot, it is in the later passages of *The Unnamable* that Beckett's prose

culminates the steady, inexorable progress of the 'trilogy', a progress that contextualizes it and, in so doing, to a certain extent naturalizes it. If the trilogy is not impeccably linear, if it enacts a gradual progress of unravelling and disembodiment rather than the triumphant arrival at a goal, its progressive disembodiment nonetheless belongs to a narrative; and the narrative in its turn conforms to the oldest pattern of story-telling, the voyage or quest.⁶⁴⁴

Thus, endeavouring to identify the audiobook versions of *Molloy* as AP artworks, and subsequently evaluating their aesthetic nature, quite simply *necessitates* one to try and pinpoint not only the particular and individual internal logic of *Molloy* as a singular work in its own right, but also to consider its intrinsic connection to the other two novels. As McDonald puts it,

Successively, the stories within the whole move further and further away from a recognisable physical world, as the characters become first more debilitated and then, in *The Unnamable*, no longer recognisably human. At the same time resonant themes of the nature of the self and subjectivity, of the urge or the imperative to tell stories, of the relationship between language and the world, of the nature of suffering and of experience, of the ramifications of human solitude, are explored in a controlled prose of tremendous grace and formal eloquence.⁶⁴⁵

Once establishing, for instance, that Beckett appears to endow his characters with what can be identified as quite concrete and no doubt distinctive voices, certain questions should be raised particularly with respect to narration. Beckett's work is famous for incorporating the voices that his characters hear in their heads. Some of the creative

nevertheless very much above the surface insofar as its literal existence is in the form of printed words. In an aural performance, it prevails above the surface through the spoken—and, indeed, *heard*—words.

⁶⁴⁴ Abbott, "Beginning Again", 106.

⁶⁴⁵ McDonald, *The Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Beckett*, 87–88.

choices in recording Beckett's prose as audiobooks would entail, for instance, making the decision of whether or not the characters are talking to themselves, whether or not they are aware that someone is hearing what they are saying, and whether or not what on the printed page might seem like the thoughts of a character should *sound* more like the thoughts or voices that one hears in their head—rather than direct speech. Thus, ascertaining whether or not the two monologues are, in fact, supposed to be read (or rather *heard*) as if they are indeed narrated by two *separate* characters becomes a matter of prime significance.

The Naxos recording, as stated, made an explicit choice of employing two actors. Once setting aside the question of talent and capability, and despite their possible relevancy to the institution of AP, in appreciating their recording as an AP artwork, one must consider and question the very choice of employing them both. While Barrett and Crowley may indeed be regarded as accomplished actors, their apparent success in delivering the material does not resolve the problematic nature of the aesthetic choice of having the novel read by two different performers.⁶⁴⁶ Fundamentally, this must be questioned in light of its internal logic and whether or not the choice itself complies with it. Indeed, as an artistic choice, one should be able to justify its particular artistic rationale: that is to say, it should constitute the result of an explicit exploration of the work, rather than an educated guess. (As aforementioned, even if its aim is to ostensibly interrogate or challenge the original internal logic of the novel, it invariably springs from that very logic).

⁶⁴⁶ It appears as though they both succeed in lending the written pages a dramatic aural 'presence', thereby endowing the fictional characters (who in their essence are narrators and storytellers themselves) with a distinctive voice of their own. It can only be assumed that they base their dramatic portrayal of Beckett's characters on the existing dramatic nature of the text's narrative, causing a reader to 'hear' the words s/he is reading in a very specific rhythm, which is unique to Beckett.

In continuing what I began exploring in my previous case study—and as I intend to fully illustrate with my third—I find this ultimately invites questions pertaining to whether or not, and to what extent, one is able to accept a fictional character’s *extended* existence: that is to say, its own ostensible endeavour to reach beyond the confines of the printed pages—the context and particular circumstances of the text’s fictional world—and sustain a continued state of existence. As an aesthetic experience—one which utilises the property of the human voice, effectively employing performers for aurally conveying to an audience an intimate personal monologue—the implied narrative voice is consequently intensified when examined through the workings of the institution of AP.

7.3 Molloy: The Implied Narrator(s?)

Conceivably, Beckett’s splitting of the novel into two parts and endowing each one with a different narrator, while at the same time naming the novel after only one of them—implies that Molloy and Moran are in fact a *single* schizoid-character, whom Beckett split in more ways than one. Indeed, this aspect is essential for evaluating the aesthetic nature of the novel’s audiobook versions *as* AP artworks, which are supposed to succeed in manifesting and exhibiting the novel’s internal logic.

To some extent, neither Molloy nor Moran can be trusted as narrators. An attentive reader, and in this case, *listener*, would always seem to question the validity of their narrative. As McDonald points out, ‘often in fiction, third-person narrative purports a degree of “impartiality” [...] as if we are being told a story for the purposes

of reportage'.⁶⁴⁷ Explicitly referring to Molloy and Moran, he maintains that unlike 'the knowing, often sneering hauteur of the third-person narrator in Beckett's early forays into narrative fiction, these lonely men [...] are lost and confused. [...] The first-person narrator in Molloy [sic] seems to know very little indeed'.⁶⁴⁸ He concludes that 'the multiple selves discerned by the speaking "I" throughout the novel, the confusion between creator and creation, between first and third person, of present and past, is partly ascribable to this difficulty of speaking or articulating the self'.⁶⁴⁹ In the same vein, Davies maintains that

The language of Beckett's novels does not only tell a story, transparently as it were, but it also reflects, as it tells, on the means of telling. This trick has many names, one of which—the 'narrator narrated'—has been current since the rise of the Modernist movement. Beckett's narrations are littered with second thoughts and comments which question the validity of what was put forward first.⁶⁵⁰

On the one hand, Molloy's and Moran's narratives express their reflections upon their past and the world they inhabit, coupled with an ever-increasing sense of doubt with regard to their own existence.⁶⁵¹ On the other hand, they both are arguably quite aware—or at least appear to be more aware than not—that *their* story is in fact already written.⁶⁵² Thus the particular choice employed by Naxos is inherently problematic as it

⁶⁴⁷ McDonald, *The Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Beckett*, 83.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁶⁵⁰ Davies, "Three Novels and Four *Nouvelles*," 58.

⁶⁵¹ Notions concerning the condition and definition of identity appear to occupy all three narrators. Molloy, for example, recounts that his mother had never referred to him as 'son', but rather as 'Dan'. He states that he does not know why, as his name is not Dan: 'Dan was my father's name, perhaps'. Beckett, *Molloy*, 13. Malone, for his part, seems to demonstrate an obsession with making an inventory of his past professions. One could assume that his attempt to list all he has done and achieved would somehow assist in understanding who he is, or what kind of man he is, thus making clear his place in the world. Should not the listener of the audio version be led to the same aesthetic 'state' by the performer? In speaking about his own writing, Beckett has been cited as saying that 'It means what it says'. Davies, "Three Novels and Four *Nouvelles*," 44. Ultimately, should not the intertextuality of the novel also be addressed, to some extent, when considering its performance?

⁶⁵² While the readers know that the novel itself was penned by Beckett, as the novel progresses they also ostensibly bear witness to narratives that seem to be in the *process* of being written and being told.

essentially *forces* a listener to accept an explicit reading of the novel: one that effectively embraces Molloy's and Moran's perceptible ambiguities—thereby conceiving of them as two completely different characters. As aforementioned, one can identify the act of writing as the defining quality of Molloy's and Moran's existence. Within the workings of *Molloy* as an audiobook, the innate need of Molloy and Moran to put things into writing is translated into sound. In effect, their characters become similarly *compelled* to speak aloud that which they write. What is identified on the page as the characters narrating their thoughts to the readers of the novel is transformed into literal voices.⁶⁵³

To regard Molloy and Moran as 'characters', as McDonald indicates, 'may be a misnomer here, for there is too much porousness between these figures, too much fluidity and uncertainty of identity, too much perplexity, for the unified, stable self'.⁶⁵⁴ Indeed, nowhere does the novel explicitly clarify whether or not the fictional narratives by Molloy and Moran are uttered by the same individual.⁶⁵⁵ In fact, one could assume that the two are ostensible variations of one another—each endowed with an implied distinctive voice. Arguably, a perceptive reader should be able to quite literally *hear* the

Indeed, both Molloy and Moran deliver their narratives themselves (i.e., in the first-person) while at the same time appear to be reflecting 'aloud' (in writing) on the very act of telling their story.

⁶⁵³ A well-performed audiobook version of the novel can potentially enhance the idea that narration itself—or, alternatively, the notion of one ostensibly narrating oneself *ad infinitum*—can be identified as a form of existence, and perhaps survival. Indeed, listening to concrete 'I' voices narrate a text that the very act of narration is part of its core can—again, when well-performed—constitute an immensely rewarding aesthetic experience. Although audiobooks should not, as previously emphasised, substitute for the reading of the novel, they *can* provide an added dimension to one's aesthetic experience of certain particular works.

⁶⁵⁴ McDonald, *The Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Beckett*, 88.

⁶⁵⁵ Moran, for instance, seems to believe in will power, action, reason, habit, and control. He ostensibly rambles on and on in a manner that is characterised by logical deductions. This creates a sense of fragmented thoughts, running in, through his head—and then, out, through his mouth, at about the same speed. Although Molloy also appears to manifest in his narrative a similar kind of fragmented thought—speaking his mind and sounding thoughts as things occur to him—his thinking process appears to function in a slightly different manner, that better accords with his assumed personality. Indeed, an argument could be made that each narrative follows a different kind of internal logic which is specific to the individual nature of its character. Molloy's narration, for example, could be perceived as a verbal manifestation of his unconscious mind and Moran's that of his perceived super-ego.

manner in which each character utters each word and composes each sentence, as well as identify the breaths and pauses that abide in between their spoken thoughts.⁶⁵⁶ Put simply, one is expected to read between the lines: that is to say, to conduct a close reading of their meandering monologues—effectively trying to identify whether the manner in which they narrate themselves manifests a kind of ostensible voicing of their own consciousness.⁶⁵⁷ At the same time, nowhere is it explicitly clarified that Molloy and Moran *are* one and the same either. Indeed, their similarities notwithstanding, each of them—as literary *characters*—appears to possess his own distinctive momentum.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁶ While this may not be easy to undertake, once achieved, the aesthetic experience is immensely rewarding. It is, in fact, bearing witness to a manifested internal logic at work. It is in this respect that a good audiobook version of the novel (which appropriately captures and manifests its internal logic, as an aural performance) has the potential of making one's aesthetic experience even more rewarding.

⁶⁵⁷ Anthony Minghella's 2001 film adaptation of Beckett's *Play*, for instance, uniquely demonstrates the manner in which a particular aspect of given work's internal logic can be properly maintained when transformed to a different medium. In brief, one of the most prominent aspects in *Play* can be found in Beckett's specific and strict stage directions pertaining to the use of the spotlight. Minghella successfully applies the employment of spotlight in the theatre, effectively translating it into camera movements and film-editing. His cinematic adaptation thus embodies and exhibits this particular aspect of the internal logic of the play. Indeed, even though a different medium is used, this aspect not only remains ostensibly intact, but also is preserved in its so-called newly delivered medium. Minghella's film is part of the *Beckett on Film* project—a joint venture of BBC's Channel 4, Ireland's RTÉ, the Irish Film Board, and artistic director of the Gate Theatre in Dublin, Michael Colgan—which adapted all of Beckett's nineteen theatre plays for the big screen. See: Colin Duckworth and Anna McMullan, "The Blue Angel Beckett on Film Project: Questions of Adaptation, Aesthetics, and Audience in Filming Samuel Beckett's Theatrical Canon," in *Drawing on Beckett: Portraits, Performances, and Cultural Contexts*, ed. Linda Ben-Zvi (Tel Aviv University, the Assaph Series, 2004).

⁶⁵⁸ By way of illustration, consider the following passage, in which Molloy contemplates his own flatulence: 'And in winter, under my greatcoat, I wrapped myself in swathes of newspaper, and did not shed them until the earth awoke, for good, in April. The Times Literary Supplement was admirably adapted to this purpose, of a neverfailing toughness and impermeability. Even farts made no impression on it. I can't help it, gas escapes from my fundament on the least pretext, it's hard not to mention it now and then, however great my distaste. One day I counted them. Three hundred and fifteen farts in nineteen hours, or an average of over sixteen farts an hour. After all it's not excessive. Four farts every fifteen minutes. It's nothing. Not even one fart every four minutes. It's unbelievable. Damn it, I hardly fart at all, I should never have mentioned it. Extraordinary how mathematics help you to know yourself'. Beckett, *Molloy*, 25–26. On the one hand, one could perceive it as nothing more than toilet humour. On the other hand, it could also be examined as Beckett's parody of the Cartesian approach to logic and reasoning. Arguably, just as with Duchamp's *Fountain*, the flatulence passage could be regarded both as a 'brute' fact (i.e., a text about farts) and as an 'institutional' fact (i.e., a literary text of importance and magnitude). In order for Molloy to understand or make sense of the very nature of his bowel activity, he concludes that it is essentially (or rather, rationally) good for nothing save his act of counting the number of 'noises' he manages to produce.

Notwithstanding, a close reading of their thought processes—for instance, the manner in which they exhibit their (mis)understandings of the world, or the particular style and rhythm that shape both their narrations—will reveal that the two complement each other in more ways than one. Indeed, as McDonald puts it, ‘even though the profane may be the opposite of the sacred, they both deploy the same vocabulary and structures of thought’.⁶⁵⁹ Ultimately, the line that one might draw between the characters becomes less visible as the novel progresses. The similarities between Molly and Moran should be accessible to a reader (i.e., who effectively engages with the novel in its original chosen medium). Yet, as alluded to earlier, a well-executed audiobook version of the novel can surely enhance them. Since all three novels have received an aural iteration—and, explicitly in McGovern’s case, all three narrated by the same performer—they are not only able to heighten and enrich one’s aesthetic experience of *Molloy* in its own right, but also broaden one’s understating of the ‘trilogy’ as a whole. Indeed, as aforementioned, listening to an *actual* human voice, performing Beckett’s text—a narrative (perhaps two) which gives the impression that it is still being told as it progresses—creates a unique additional level to aesthetically experience the novel.⁶⁶⁰

Molloy and Moran each appears to abide in his own isolated state of existence.⁶⁶¹ This, in turn, should also be made audible in an aural performance of the

⁶⁵⁹ McDonald, *The Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Beckett*, 93.

⁶⁶⁰ One is able to identify a thematic thread in Beckett’s work (evident in his prose as much as it is in his texts for the stage) that appears to both revolve around and demonstrate an inherent fascination with the human voice—or, more precisely, with the voices that one experiences, or indeed literally hears in one’s own head. In *Molloy*, this fascination is explored through the narratives of Molloy and Moran, and appears to be further developed in the succeeding two novels.

⁶⁶¹ As Davies points out, the general isolation of Beckett’s characters ‘is not that of never having been or never having had, but the isolation of separation—the *lessening* of contact, the *weakening* of musculature, the *wandering* of mind, the fading of destination. The emphasis on separation leading to isolation is crucial, and is imaged and discoursed upon constantly by Beckett’s narrators. Their predicament is epitomized in the person of Molloy [...]. In the prose and plays alike, the same description fits them all: the homeless, wandering, ageing male, with [...] speech impediments; general sensory

text. In narrating each section of the novel by themselves, they in effect literally narrate *themselves*, and thereby promulgate their very existence. In sustaining, perhaps prolonging, their fictional existence by narrating themselves—conceivably, until they will no longer be able to do so—they are ostensibly supplying evidence of the fact that they certainly *were*. It is their way to attain affirmation—as much for themselves as from whomever it may be who encounters their narratives.

A good aural performance should thus be able to highlight this sense of the characters through the narration itself. To be sure, the discovery, insight and recognition that one's life essentially constitutes a prolonged state of dying is something of a recurring theme in Beckett's work.⁶⁶² Consider the opening lines of the Speaker in the play *A Piece of Monologue*,⁶⁶³ the final words uttered by Pozzo in *Waiting for Godot*,⁶⁶⁴ or the famous visual image of Winnie's predicament in *Happy Days*.⁶⁶⁵ Both narratives in *Molloy* similarly either begin at their ending, or, alternatively, end at a point which

confusion; a special fondness for small objects; [...] a tendency to aporia (purposiveness without purpose); hatred of sexuality, conception and birth; isolation from relationships with human beings; varying degrees of cripplement; and a rarely failing sense of humour in the midst of these deprivations. By describing what seem to be distinct individuals who are ultimately re-reflections of the same human state, Beckett is able to illustrate the human consequences of a philosophical perspective, without naming it directly'. Davies, "Three Novels and Four *Nouvelles*," 46–47.

⁶⁶² In essence, one does not choose to be born into this world. At the time, one knows full well that existence is not only limited but also undetermined and tentative. This notion (perhaps recognition) also entails that one's lifetime will surely contain more suffering than pleasure. While this depends on pure chance—when, where and to whom one is born—in the end, which may be closer to the beginning than one might realise, death is certain (perhaps the only certainty). With death comes the disappearance of everything one holds dear, beginning with one's notion of consciousness, one's idea of one's own individuality and self-awareness. This, as far as Beckett is concerned (as is evident throughout his work), comprises the absurdity of life.

⁶⁶³ 'Birth was the death of him. Again. Words are few. Dying too. Birth was the death of him'. Samuel Beckett, *A Piece of Monologue*, in *Collected Shorter Plays* (New York: Grove Press, 1984), 265.

⁶⁶⁴ '[...] one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you? (*Calmer.*) They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more.' Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, 58.

⁶⁶⁵ In the beginning of Act 1, Winnie appears 'Imbedded up to above her waist' in the centre of a mound; Later, at the beginning of Act 2, she is 'Imbedded up to neck, hat on head, eyes closed. Her head, which she can no longer turn, nor bow, nor raise, faces front motionless throughout act'. Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1961), 7 and 49, respectively.

mirrors their beginning.⁶⁶⁶ As a literary device, this manifests in the ‘trilogy’ as a whole, expressing a perspective that can be identified throughout Beckett’s writing.⁶⁶⁷

7.4 Embodied Voices: Sounding Beckett’s Characters

In experiencing *Molloy* as an AP artwork, one must be mindful of the fact that the professional performers featured on the recordings are portraying characters who are themselves narrators. As the characters are created through writing and narration—writing about the very nature of speaking, speaking about the very nature of writing, and arguably perceiving both these activities as a particular form of sustaining their own existence—it may lead one to discover certain aspects of the novel’s internal logic that one might very well have missed when merely reading the novel in print.⁶⁶⁸

Even if one identifies Barrett and Crowley as particularly good actors—or, indeed, as narrator whom are at very least technically proficient in delivering Beckett’s prose—the deficiency of the Naxos version lies in the explicit decision to regard Molloy and Moran as necessarily different agencies. Ultimately, albeit a valid artistic choice, to employ two different performers, thereby endowing each character with a distinct voice and palpable identity of his own, can be identified as a failure to interpret the aspect of

⁶⁶⁶ The first part ends with Molloy’s character lying in a ditch, waiting for help to come, and hoping to somehow manage to find his way to his mother’s house. The second part begins with the words ‘It is midnight. The rain is beating on the windows’, and ends with ‘It is midnight. The rain is beating on the windows. It was not midnight. It was not raining’. Beckett, *Molloy*, 87 and 170. This not only brings the end of the narrative back upon its own beginning, but also suggests that the narrator may not have been a reliable one.

⁶⁶⁷ Among the criteria Esslin found for a particular dramatic work to be considered ‘absurdist’ is that it ends at the same point where it began. While the novels comprising the ‘trilogy’ are not dramatic works, the idea that they might possess a similar kind of aesthetic to what Esslin considered absurdist, could potentially provide one with a key to revealing the internal logic of every Beckett text.

⁶⁶⁸ According to Calder, ‘actors have always loved reading *Molloy* and often, when heard, some of the puzzles and conundrums become clearer although this is incidental to the enjoyment of a text which can be frightening, moving and very funny’. John Calder, notes to *Molloy*, 7.

the novel's internal logic that is explicitly concerned with the identity of the narrators. Indeed, despite certain individual discernible traits or characteristics, the identity of the narrators is anything but palpable, all the more so when one considers *Molloy* in the context of the 'trilogy' as a comprehensive literary artwork. Consequently, as a misinterpreted reading of the novel, the Naxos release prevails for the listener as a manifestation of an aesthetically bad AP artwork.

I would argue that McGovern's aural performance of *Molloy* uniquely succeeds in demonstrating the somewhat obscure duality that exists between the two narrating characters. Since one might identify Molloy and Moran as two sides of the same proverbial coin, McGovern's achievement demonstrates that the two are not completely different characters. He succeeds in doing so throughout his rendition of the entire trilogy—which consequently suggests that all three narrating characters are either indeed one and the same, or that each of them represents some version of his ostensible predecessor. As McDonald points out, 'Each protagonist of *Molloy* starts by searching for someone else, but ends by returning to himself, or to a different (perhaps deeper) version of himself'.⁶⁶⁹ Arguably, the distinction between McGovern's rendition and Naxos's release could be resolved by stating that there is no 'right' choice and it is merely a matter of artistic license or interpretation. Nonetheless, in order to fully appreciate McGovern's achievement—which I believe should rank as one of the best aural performances in recorded history—the focus of one's attention should be on whether or not the interpretation accords with this particular novel. In other words, one should determine whether or not, and to what extent, the aural performance succeeds

⁶⁶⁹ McDonald, *The Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Beckett*, 92.

in appropriately complying with the internal logic of the novel's world. Naxos's audiobook, as stated, simply does not. McGovern, unlike Barrett and Crowley, demonstrates an ability to utilise his understanding of the novel and the various aspects of its internal logic, and that he knows what kind of performance the text itself requires. Employing two different actors to perform the novel's two parts as two discrete extended monologues—while at the same time making an attempt to convey the possibility of the two narrators being in fact two sides of the same coin, and thus more like one another than not—could have worked given a slightly different approach. (For example, one could direct the two actors to mimic or impersonate each other's vocal traits, intonation, pronunciation, and so forth—while, inevitably, throwing light on the particular style, tone and rhythm with which Beckett embedded the text).⁶⁷⁰ Even if one chooses to assume that Beckett's narrators are indeed completely different characters, part of the novel's conceit appears to be that their individual identity is always put into question. McGovern's performance demonstrates this quite clearly. It is surely amplified by the fact that it remains his voice throughout the recording of both parts of the novel. Additionally, his narration also demonstrates a clear understanding of how to perform within the particular confines of the aural medium. One can literally sense that he is not

⁶⁷⁰ I am reminded in these respects of John Woo's action-packed film, *Face/Off* (1997), and explicitly of the performative aesthetics employed by its two leading actors, John Travolta and Nicholas Cage: In brief, as the plot progresses, assisted by a dose of special effects, Travolta's generic 'good guy' ends up literally replacing his face with Cage's generic 'bad guy'. Consequently, each actor ends up playing two different personalities—thereby portraying the protagonist and antagonist simultaneously. Now, aesthetically, the manner in which Travolta (the 'good guy') assumes the role of 'bad guy' (who looks and sounds just like the 'good guy'), complies with the manner in which Cage (the actor) portrays the 'bad guy' before the two change places. Furthermore, Travolta's performance accords with the manner in which the audience—who is acquainted with both actors—would have intuitively expected Cage to portray a generic 'bad guy'. Cage, in turn, does the same, only vice versa. With respect to the Naxos recording, I believe that had Barrett and Crowley (or rather, the person who decided to cast them) approached their performance in a similar manner, the result could have made for a fascinating and rewarding aesthetic experience. Predominantly, it would have demonstrated that their interpretation complies with the generally accepted understanding of the novel's internal logic.

merely transforming the printed text into recorded form, but rather *performing* it for a designated audience. In what certainly corresponds with McGovern's aforementioned conjecture, Enoch Brater maintains that Beckett's language is 'performative' in the sense that it seeks a voice to speak it. His prose, in effect, *demand*s to be read out loud. It is an inherent property of Beckett's text.⁶⁷¹ One could thus argue that the putative voice of the speaker attains an ostensible personality in its own right.⁶⁷² A major aspect of a performer's job would entail seeking and finding the manner in which to realise that voice as an aural performance—by way of combining both the technical abilities pertaining to one's mastering one's craft as an actor, and one's informed intuition which evokes an imaginative interpretation of the written text as a blueprint for performance.⁶⁷³

In an editorial commemorating Beckett's centenary, Eric Ormsby argues that while the 'bare words' in Beckett's prose appear to be saying one thing, 'their shape and

⁶⁷¹ Enoch Brater, *The Drama in the Text: Beckett's Late Fiction* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4. In terms of this dissertation, this should no doubt be regarded as part of the internal logic of Beckett's text. Indeed, it demonstrates that there is a certain quality which is embodied within the text—a quality with which Beckett has endowed the literary voice of his speakers/narrators. That 'something' is what I earlier regarded as the sense that they appear to be literally compelled to speak. Brater maintains, for instance, that many passages in *Molloy* appear to be 'so wonderfully speakable: they are written for the performative voice, a resonant human voice, and they attain their full spontaneity only when spoken aloud'. *Ibid.*

⁶⁷² Although a voice would surely sound different to every reader, one might arguably compare it to the iambic pentameter in Shakespeare in that it should essentially be identified by all readers—i.e., as an indication of what a reading is supposed to sound like—and thereby constitutes an ostensible springboard for each individual putative performance.

⁶⁷³ Dickens, for instance, as Rubery points out, is 'to this day [...] routinely cited as an author better heard than read'. Rubery, *The Untold Story of the Talking Book*, 39. In the same vein, Knox, citing Rubery, claims that while Hardy's Wessex stories and novels inhabit a lesser degree of 'latent auralness' than that which exists in the novels of Dickens, they nevertheless do 'lend themselves to audio performance'. Knox, "Hearing Hardy, Talking Tolstoy," 128. Indeed, the notion that certain texts appear to 'lend themselves' to an aural performance—i.e., that they 'cry out' to be 'read aloud'—is crucial. Similarly implying that certain texts seem to *sound* 'better' when spoken aloud—or, alternatively, that they simply *require* being heard—Roach asserts that 'anyone who reads Shakespeare with the eye must feel the need to speak the lines'. Roach, *Spoken Records*, 11. I would argue that while it may not necessarily constitute a minimum requirement, it surely informs the creative process. In effect, it would contribute to the process of creating the audiobook. Consequently, when well performed, it should enrich one's aesthetic experience.

rhythm and intonation' are saying something else; 'however bleak the message, it is delivered with pungent vitality. [...] The impact of the prose [...] is most immediate when heard, onstage or in readings'.⁶⁷⁴ Referencing the Naxos recording, Ormsby maintains that both Barrett and Crowley 'demonstrate this brilliantly [...] The jagged eloquence of Beckett's prose, with its screeds against the treacherous body interwoven with sly allusions to writers as disparate as Langland and Dante, Kafka and Joyce, elicits a memorable reading from both performers'.⁶⁷⁵ I would argue, however, that Barrett and Crowley do not in fact 'demonstrate this brilliantly' at all. Their rendition of Beckett's prose is far from 'brilliant', especially when compared to McGovern's performance, whose vocal texture is simply captivating. As early as the opening lines, his deep voice, and the slow pace with which he endows his performances are almost hypnotic. He succeeds in conveying a clear distinction between what can be identified as direct speech and a thought that is spoken aloud as it enters the character's head.⁶⁷⁶ Crowley's tone of voice, on the other hand, does not appear to do so as successfully—as a result of his choice of different emphases. By way of illustration, consider, for instance, the following seemingly simple sentence. 'Yes, I work now, a little like I used to, except that I don't know how to work anymore'.⁶⁷⁷ Whereas McGovern complies with the precise given punctuation,⁶⁷⁸ Crowley's rendition makes the sentence appear as though it was punctuated slightly differently, something along the lines of *'Yes, I work, now, a little, like I used to, except that I don't know how to work, anymore'*.⁶⁷⁹ Coupled with the fact

⁶⁷⁴ Eric Ormsby, "No's Knife in Yes's Wound," *New York Sun*, April 5, 2006, accessed September 9, 2016, <http://www.nysun.com/arts/nos-knife-in-yess-w-ound/30381/>.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁶ See USB flash drive for the Barry McGovern recording, disc1, track1.

⁶⁷⁷ Beckett, *Molloy*, 3.

⁶⁷⁸ See USB flash drive for the Barry McGovern recording, disc1, track1, 00m32sec.

⁶⁷⁹ See USB flash drive for Crowley's narration in the Naxos recording, track1, 00m45sec.

that he has a somewhat higher-pitched voice, one can regard these elements as constituents of his vocal personality, which consequently forms a completely different kind of Molloy. Thus, while McGovern's Molloy sounds as if he is carrying the weight of his life experiences with him, Crowley's Molloy sounds ostensibly soft, as if he has yet to have undergone those same experiences.

In the same vein, Barrett's rendition of Moran's character evidently sounds rather soft-spoken.⁶⁸⁰ His voice is distinctly different from Crowley's. McGovern's Moran, on the other hand, is not at all soft-spoken, and arguably, at least to some extent, even harsh, or rather practical.⁶⁸¹ As a so-called 'alternate' version of Molloy, he consequently succeeds in making sound precisely like the experiences that shaped him. Although Barrett's Moran sounds less aloof, for lack of a better description, than Crowley's Molly, his rendition of the character is nevertheless not as developed as McGovern's.

Conceivably, it is to a large extent McGovern's sensitivity as a performer that enables him to identify the manner in which a written text seems to elicit a reading aloud—and thereby a putative performance. It would also imply that certain texts can have a distinct kind of voice—or rather, a limited range of possible kinds of voices, which would work best for a reading aloud of a particular given text. Now, on the one hand, one can surely argue that no written text—e.g., a script of a play or a text that constitutes a novel—is able to prescribe the precise manner in which one should perform it. Indeed, even when one follows implicit stage directions or when one is able to detect a certain tone embedded in the writing, these would surely not constitute

⁶⁸⁰ See USB flash drive for Barrett's narration in the Naxos recording, e.g., track40.

⁶⁸¹ See USB flash drive for the Barry McGovern recording, e.g., disc5, track1.

ostensible absolute determinants. On the other hand, as explicitly alluded to earlier, such aspects would determine the limited range of possibilities that are most appropriate for a given text. It is not that they define the one single manner in which a text must be performed, but they do set the preferred possibilities for a performative interpretation. The sensitivity of a reader or a performer—effectively employing one’s informed intuition—predominantly contributes to one’s ability of determining the kind of reading a particular text requires, and in effect the most appropriate kind of performance, delivered by a certain performer, within a specific medium.⁶⁸² In these respects, one could argue that Beckett’s literary voice and prose writing elicit a similar kind of range of possibilities for performance—much like that with which he endowed his stage plays, radio drama and television scripts.

While there is no single and distinct manner in which an ostensible ‘Beckett character’ must speak, the fact that there exist certain qualities (e.g., an implicit tone, cadence, rhythm and style) that together define what one identifies as a Beckett character to begin with, conceivably implies that there *is* a manner in which these kinds of characters *should* be interpreted. To a large extent, the characters in all three novels are beset by voices and sounds, and they all seem to stem from within: they are voices that reside in and are heard in the head, rather than by the ears.⁶⁸³ The notion that the ‘trilogy’ elicits a reading aloud could be perceived as one of the ostensible properties with which Beckett customarily endowed his texts. (Although the text itself is not

⁶⁸² As explained earlier, almost every written text—and especially those which are written with the intention to be regarded as performance texts—encompasses an explicit and limited range of plausible possibilities for a putative performing. Extensive or ostensibly elastic as the range of possibilities may be, it nonetheless would be limited by two points beyond which one cannot venture. Predominantly, the range would be determined by the commonly agreed upon internal logic of the text in question.

⁶⁸³ In many of Beckett’s works, the protagonist often appears to be hearing voices other than their own. Alternatively, they seem to be consumed by their own voices, either internally or externally (e.g., *Eh Joe*, *Embers*, *Footfalls*, *Krapp’s Last Tape*, *Rockaby*, and *What Where*).

necessarily prescriptive, it would seem that Beckett's writing does lend itself to communicating the implied embodied voices, which should prevail as the most appropriate kind of voices for a reading aloud). Thus, as a plausible aspect of the overall internal logic of his work, it would no doubt inform, to some degree, the putative performance of his texts—and would thereby particularly serve as a rather helpful guideline with respect to casting. This no doubt strengthens the idea that the narrating characters of Beckett's novels are *compelled* to speak. The audience too, as an *auditor*, arguably becomes trapped in the aural performance. Effectively, compelled to listen to the vocal output, the listeners—like the characters confined to the voices in their heads—are thereby confined to the voices entering their ears, making their way into *their* heads. Ultimately, their iteration as AP artworks surely enhances one's aesthetic experience of the novels.

In listening to McGovern's aural performance, one seems to identify a difference in the tone and the voice he employs when narrating each part of the novel.⁶⁸⁴ This arguably complies with the notion that the two might in fact constitute completely different characters. Yet, I find that the fact that McGovern records the entire novel himself is crucial. It is not just that one hears the same actor and is able to identify his voice in the two characters. Rather, while he endows the two narrators with somewhat different personalities of their own by slightly altering the tone of his voice, McGovern succeeds in expressing the similarities between the two.⁶⁸⁵ Although one might argue that highlighting the parallels between the two is not inherently necessary—and perhaps not even possible—I would argue that having one actor portray both narrators

⁶⁸⁴ See USB flash drive, e.g., disc2, track11; disc3, track2; and disc4, track9 (for Molloy); and See, e.g., disc5, track 12; disc6, track11; and disc8, track10 (for Moran).

⁶⁸⁵ See USB flash drive, e.g., disc1, track14; disc3, track8; disc7, track8; and disc8, track6.

creates a much more effective impact on a listener (i.e., in light of the aesthetic experience that a putative performance is able to evoke). Ultimately, as opposed to hearing two different actors, each providing a completely different voice and a predominantly individual style, listening to one actor—whose voice and overall approach to Beckett’s text seems to remain consistent throughout the entire performance—is surely more compliant with the internal logic of the work.

7.5 Beckett Audiobooks: Unabridged, Abridged and Ostensible ‘Concept Albums’

As stated earlier, the McGovern and the Naxos recordings currently prevail as the only unabridged audiobook versions available. There are, however, two prominent abridged recordings—consisting of a compilation of passages from all three novels: One, performed by Irish actor Cyril Cusack, released in 1963;⁶⁸⁶ the other, as alluded to earlier, constitutes an aural rendition of Jack MacGowran’s one-man-play, released in 1966,⁶⁸⁷ coinciding with Beckett’s 60th birthday. Seemingly, it might not seem fitting to compare these abridged versions with the unabridged manifestations of the novels. Nonetheless, I would argue that one *can* compare the recordings with respect to their aesthetic qualities as unique AP artworks. Indeed, the cuts to the texts notwithstanding, one should predominantly be able to identify whether or not, and the degree to which, Cusack and MacGowran have succeeded to manifest and exhibit the internal logic of Beckett’s text as an aural performance. Furthermore, as a comparative case study, the Cusack recording can more easily be compared with McGovern’s given that in both

⁶⁸⁶ Samuel Beckett, *Molloy / Malone / The Unnamable*, performed by Cyril Cusack, directed by Howard Sackler (Caedmon Records, TC 1169, 1963).

⁶⁸⁷ Samuel Beckett, *MacGowran Speaking Beckett* (Claddagh Records, CCT3CD, 1966). [Recording made under the personal supervision of Samuel Beckett].

cases an auditor engages with one actor who takes on a narration of all the protagonists. MacGowran's recording, however, as will presently be made clear, requires a slightly different perspective. While it too prevails as a performance by a single actor, it does not consist of readings from the 'trilogy' alone.

In the Cusack recording of the novels, the reading of *Molloy* plays for a little over 25 minutes, and those of *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable* run 15 and 17 minutes, respectively. The back cover of the LP sleeve states:

The epic concerns itself (to the extent that it *concerns* itself) with Molloy, Malone and the Unnamable. All three are writers, figments of one another, or their imaginations, or the author, or nobody. [...] trying to balance on the Cartesian fulcrum, *Cogito ergo sum*. It is a shaky business: they know that they think, but they are not at all sure they exist. There is no plot. No sequence, no incidents, no cathartic idea, only the hypnosis of immobility, impotence and the suspicion that none of it, including the audience, exists.⁶⁸⁸ [emphasis in original]

In considering, for instance, the difference in their characterisation of the narrator, it is quite evident that Cusack and McGovern have chosen two different paths. Explicitly, Cusack's voice sounds quite old (almost wrinkled). There also seems to be an ostensible deterioration in his reading—not so much of the narration itself, but rather of the narrating voice. Indeed, rather than forming a distinction between what could be argued to be three different narrators, this choice gives the auditor a sense that the one narrator is slowly fading away.⁶⁸⁹ Furthermore, as opposed to McGovern, Cusack's performance sounds less crisp-clear—not so much the sound quality of the recording, but rather the performance itself. In some respects, his narrator sounds somewhat intoxicated, drifting between strains of thought as he sounds them aloud. As an ostensible drunken patron of a local pub, he seems to be speaking to no one in

⁶⁸⁸ *Molloy / Malone / The Unnamable—Performed by Cyril Cusack* (Caedmon Records, 1963).

⁶⁸⁹ See USB flash drive for the Cusack recording.

particular, and at the same time to whoever is willing to hear him. In other words, he appears to be directing his words at a particular audience. McGovern's performance, however, sounds as if he is most definitely speaking directly to the listeners of the recording, making every word count—much like what one can sense as a reader when confronted with the text itself. In effect, whereas Cusack's narrator appears to struggle, at least in part, to have what he says sound clear and meaningful, McGovern appears to speak in such way that almost naturally, seemingly without strain, emphasises every single word. While both Cusack and McGovern succeed in evoking the fragmented speech patterns of narrators—effectively resonating loud and clear what one might identify as a not entirely lucid thought process—it would seem that McGovern manifests this aspect with more conviction. This surely manifests in a change of pace, rhythm and intonation. Arguably, if Cusack makes the character sound intoxicated, McGovern makes it work without the ostensible artistic excuse of alcohol.

Even when the narrator appears, in the text, to be hesitant or perhaps unsure of his own perception of the world he inhabits, McGovern's performance demonstrates that it is part of the nature of the character, and that he arguably has been in his current state of affairs for a very long time. Alternatively, it could be argued that when listening to McGovern, one can sense that the narrator is not so much at ease, but rather that he has just become used to the *habit* of narrating himself. While Cusack's narrator appears to be talking and sounding out his own thoughts more to himself (regardless of who may be listening to him at any particular time), with McGovern, although the narrator similarly seems to be primarily thinking aloud and talking to himself, it is nevertheless evident that he *needs* the words to be directed at some auditor. His performance demonstrates that it is not enough for him to merely sound out his thoughts to himself.

Rather, he requires an auditor. One of the most remarkable things about McGovern's achievement is that the designated audience of the audiobook seems to be *compelled* to listen, effectively consuming every meaningful (and potentially meaningless) word that the narrator utters. Indeed, unlike the Cusack and Naxos recordings, McGovern's performance is so engaging it almost forces one to listen to him. To be sure, if Beckett's narrator is compelled to speak, so much so that his very existence seems dependent on that fact someone else hears him speak), McGovern's performance appears to literally *create* an equal, and rather striking, need in his audience to listen to him. His performance conveys this sense powerfully to the listeners, who in turn are offered a fuller and richer aesthetic experience of the novel as an AP artwork. As alluded to earlier, he both communicates the text as is—following the punctuation and style of the writing as they appear on the page—and succeeds in endowing it with the proper tone and rhythm.

In her aforementioned book, Roach alludes to a number of recordings of works by James Joyce, featuring Cusack, Irish actress Siobhán McKenna, and American actor E. G. Marshall. Her evaluation considers three elements making that performance of the narrators particularly excellent. Explicitly, she identifies Cusack as being 'sensitive to the Ireland of Joyce's time and with vocal qualities comparable to those of Joyce himself'.⁶⁹⁰ Addressing the Cusack and McKenna recording of *Finnegans Wake* (1939), Roach asserts that 'it took especially quipped artists for the difficult language, vocal movement, touch of irony and innuendo, loveliness and harshness of this allegoric symphony.'⁶⁹¹ Now, to understand Roach's aesthetic evaluation of these recordings, one would be required,

⁶⁹⁰ Roach, *Spoken Records*, 75.

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 76.

predominantly, to possess at least some general notion of what precisely the ‘Ireland of Joyce’s time’ is, as well as to identify what exactly ‘vocal qualities’ and ‘speech texture’ are. In many respects, Roach appears to be alluding to the manner in which what one might identify as the internal logic of the text manifests in praxis by the actors in their performance.⁶⁹² Only having done so would one be able to recognise—as Roach does—whether or not Cusack, McKenna and Marshall succeed in utilising their craft to exhibit in their performance the idea of Joyce’s Dublin, and if so, the extent to which they do. Given the relationship between certain aspects of Beckett’s writing as those that abide in Joyce’s, I find Roach’s evaluation of Cusack’s performance indicates, at least to some extent, that a putative Cusack performance of Beckett *should* be aesthetically good. At the same time, her evaluation can also serve as an explanatory illustration to support an evaluation of Cusack’s performance of Beckett as aesthetically good too.

As previously stated, the narrators in Beckett’s prose seem to attempt to validate their existence by the act of narration. Indeed, speaking and narrating one’s own story, thoughts, consciousness—one’s very existence—as well as the notion of one being compelled to speak oneself up to the point at which one either is able to speak no more, or cannot but speak, is a continuous theme throughout Beckett’s oeuvre. (I have illustrated this earlier by examining the short dialogue between Vladimir and the character of the Boy in *Waiting for Godot*). Once Beckett’s prose takes the form of an audiobook—effectively bestowing the narrators with literal voice—if properly

⁶⁹² Knox, for instance, in examining ‘the implications of the voicing narrator’s presence’ in audiobooks, focuses her discussion on the novels of Hardy and Tolstoy. Although they are identified as two ‘very different figures in the nineteenth-century literary canon’, they are both ‘credited for their capacity to evoke the world of sound’. Knox, “Hearing Hardy, Talking Tolstoy,” 128. Quoting musicologist Murray Schafer, Knox points out that novelists such as Tolstoy and Hardy, as well as Thomas Mann, succeed in capturing the soundscapes of their own places and times. Ibid. Surely this also constitutes an apt description of Joyce’s ability to accurately depict the soundscapes of his time in his own writing.

performed, one cannot but ostensibly confirm their existence. Consequently, one could even go so far as to say that the characters become dependent upon the performer's ability to convey the text's internal logic thereby assisting in proving their existence.⁶⁹³

The liner notes for the aural compilation *MacGowran Speaking Beckett* state that the recording 'clearly associates Jack MacGowran, an established actor of the first category with the interpretation of the author's work. The actor has chosen passages from various books by the author to give expression to a particular aspect'.⁶⁹⁴ One can deduce what this particular aspect actually is from MacGowran's own recount, referring to his original idea for the stage adaptation of Beckett's prose:

Having read his novels so often and got to know him [Beckett] so well [...] I thought I'd love to do an anthology of his work—because there's a great unity in his writing. [...] I had to look for a theme, and a continuity [...] I didn't want to do a 'reading' in the sense that I think it can be boring to do a reading. Well, [...] I thought I'll do it as a performance, enacted in costume, in a composite figure of the 'Beckett tramp' [...] using most of the materials from the novels. [...] Using five of his novels, I found passages that linked beautifully and made the anthology a development. [...] I worked with Mr. Beckett [...]—and he made some little suggestions which were very useful, so that we got the linking and the continuity so much so that it now seems like a one-man play, rather than a one-man show.⁶⁹⁵

In the same vein, the album's liner notes also point out,

Having already experimented with a single-handed stage presentation [...] Mr. MacGowran, in response to the audience reaction and after consultation with the author, has made changes to give this

⁶⁹³ In *Play*, the character of 'M' utters the words 'Am I as much as ... being seen?' Beckett, *Play*, in *The Complete Dramatic Works*, 317. This question—perhaps the most essential philosophical contemplation in the entire play—might be applied to the aural incarnation of the narrators in Beckett's prose—effectively making their existence dependant on the auditor, and thereby rendering them merely as much as ostensibly 'being heard'.

⁶⁹⁴ C.L., liner notes to *MacGowran Speaking Beckett* (Claddagh Records, 1966).

⁶⁹⁵ See USB flash drive for MacGowran's interview with Nolan, 01m02sec–03m13sec.

composition an effect of something more than synthetic amalgam of stray texts.⁶⁹⁶

Although it too prevails as an aural compilation, MacGowran's recording in many respects constitutes a more complex case study than of Cusack—predominantly as MacGowran's selected passages are not restricted to the 'trilogy' alone. Effectively, in order to aesthetically evaluate this recording as an AP artwork in its own right, one is required to ascertain whether or not it appropriately evokes an ostensibly new internal logic, or to what extent it either re-thinks and comments on the original one. To be sure, one can scrutinise, for instance, the manner in which the chosen excerpts have been woven together, thereby consequently taking the form of a unified aural work. The fact that MacGowran himself, reflecting on his stage adaptation, explains that he 'could only use the novels [...] that were written in the first person'⁶⁹⁷ no doubt demonstrates that the passages were neither chosen or woven together arbitrarily. While one is arguably unable to consider this recording in the exact same aesthetic terms as one would MacGowran's live stage performance, one could, potentially, seek and find its internal logic in the same manner. Similarly, although one cannot evaluate this recording in the same manner that one would evaluate a complete and unabridged performance of the entire novel, one could nonetheless consider it in similar terms, as a sub-(institutional)-category of AP.

Ultimately, I would argue that much like the evaluation of what in the world of music is perceived as a so-called 'concept album'—e.g., The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967), David Bowie's *Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*

⁶⁹⁶ It is worth noting that MacGowran's performance also received a screen adaptation. See YouTube clip: "Samuel Beckett—Beginning to End," accessed March 21, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7zXy57O7bc>.

⁶⁹⁷ See USB flash drive for MacGowran's interview with Nolan, 02m59sec–03m01sec.

(1972), Jethro Tull's *Thick as a Brick* (1972) and Lou Reed's *Berlin* (1973), to name but a few—one should take into account the overall aesthetics of the recording as a whole. Effectively, rather than merely examining each passage individually, it is significantly more important to consider their particular order and arrangement. Although, with music albums, one might enjoy particular songs more than others, and while one may surely choose to skip over the odd song as one listens, I find that concept albums in particular manifest an explicit kind of internal logic—effectively rooted in their artistic concept. While there surely are some exceptions, the track listing on a concept album is predominantly more important than that on a mere 'best-of' compilation. Thus, in cases such as MacGowran's recording, one should examine not only the chosen passages themselves, but also the implicit conceptual reasoning for their particular order.

For example, although *Molloy* constitutes the first of the three novels, the selected passages in MacGowran's aural adaptation are neither utilised for one's initial introduction to his composite Beckettian tramp figure, nor are they the first passages heard from the 'trilogy' itself. Evidentially, the compilation begins with a section from *Malone Dies*, commencing with the words 'I shall soon be quite dead at last in spite of all'. It is followed by first-person passages from *Watt*, *From An Abandoned Work* and *Embers*. The passages from *Molloy* appear on the fifth and sixth tracks. The first begins with the words 'My mother never refused to see me, that is she never refused to receive me, for it was many a long day since she had seen anything at all'. The second—described in the liner notes as most memorable—consists of what is known as the

novel's 'sucking stone scene'.⁶⁹⁸ Next in line is a passage from *The Unnamable*, followed by additional first-person excerpts from *Endgame* and *Echo's Bones*. If there indeed exists an artistic rationale (i.e., for the specific choice of passages and their particular order)—and, as Beckett himself was involved, I would argue that there most definitely should be—it, in turn, would inform one's aesthetic experience and subsequent evaluation. Effectively, one would be required (a) to consider the original internal logic of the chosen passages (and the manner in which they should manifest as AP artworks), and (b) to identify (and consequently evaluate) the compilation in its own right—that is to say, as a new and distinct AP artwork, based on existing texts from Beckett. As such, it would thereby establish the sub-(institutional)-category of the so-called conceptual AP artwork.⁶⁹⁹

In the same vein, German composer and radio play director and dramatist Klaus Buhler directed in 2000 an *avant garde* Beckett-themed radio production entitled '*...the whole thing's coming out of the dark*'.⁷⁰⁰ It features readings of passages from *Molloy* (1951), *L'image* (1959) and *Company* (1980), all accompanied by sounds and

⁶⁹⁸ 'If the sucking habit of the narrator is strange, the manner in which he devotes himself to it is hilariously funny and Jack MacGowran knows how to squeeze out the comedy inherent in this seemingly uncompromising material'. C.L., liner notes to *MacGowran Speaking Beckett* (Claddagh Records, 1966).

⁶⁹⁹ As alluded to earlier, one's aesthetic experience and appreciation would also benefit from similarly examining the particular passages chosen for the Cusack recording with respect to the recording as a whole. Indeed, it too can be perceived more as an ostensibly 'conceptual' AP artwork, which utilises the novels—rather than prevailing merely as an abridged aural version. In these respects, as two kinds of adaptations, one might also consider the manner in which both performers approach the Beckettian narrator: e.g., Cusack's aforementioned ostensible drunk vs. MacGowran's self-confessed tramp. Consequently, one is required (a) to ascertain whether or not their performances successfully manifest the internal logic of Beckett's text, (b) to recognise whether or not their performance complies with the confines of the aural medium and the institution of AP, and (c) to identify whether or not—and if so, to what extent—their interpretations successfully exhibit their *own* internal logic as unique conceptual AP artworks.

⁷⁰⁰ The title draws on a comment made by Beckett in a letter he wrote to his American publisher in 1957. The comment concerned the origin and quality of his radio plays, and pertained especially to *All That Fall*. The production was created for German radio and produced for the 'intermedium' Media Art Biennia. Production credits: BR Radio Drama and Media Art/ORF/DLR/Kunsthalle Wien/ZKM Karlsruhe. It was also released on CD: ISBN 3-934847-00-5. See URL: accessed December 16, 2015, http://www.ubu.com/sound/beckett_whole_thing.html.

music. The texts are performed by actors Barry McGovern and Natasha Parry, alongside Beckett scholar and author Raymond Federman. The instrumental music featured in the production was composed by Uwe Dierksen of the Ensemble Modern. Following Buhler's direction, Dierksen's attempts to implement an ostensible musical equivalent to the novel's prominent 'sucking stones' sequence, in which Molloy narrates three inventive variations on the 'correct' manner in which one should suck sixteen pebbles—explaining how one should savour them by meditatively juggling them between one's coat or trouser pockets. As an aural performance—one which is not only derived from the same source material, but is also delivered by the same performer whose aural interpretation of the unabridged work constitutes a remarkable achievement in its own right—this passage alone might be utilised as an additional comparative case study. Nevertheless, just as with the MacGowran and Cusack recordings, these passages should be evaluated with respect to the production as a whole. While Beckett's text remains the same, and although McGovern's interpretation of performing Beckett may similarly demonstrate his exceptional understanding of how Beckett should be performed, his two performances are nevertheless delivered within two different contexts—each pertaining to a somewhat different internal logic. By the same token, while MacGowran performed his own one-man adaptation on stage, screen and an AP artwork, one cannot evaluate all the different iterations in precisely the same manner despite the fact they all predominantly consist of the same kind of adaptation. Indeed, his performance and the manner in which his character addresses his auditor differs in each case due to the internal logic of the medium. To be sure, speaking to a live audience, to a camera or to an imagined audience when recording the text in a studio yields completely different results. Consequently, while both the audiobook versions of

the novel and the production of '*...the whole thing's coming out of the dark*' are part of the same general aesthetic category (i.e., to the same 'mother institution' of AP), each of them belongs to a different kind of sub-(institutional)-category.⁷⁰¹ That this production incorporates the sound of musical instruments (primarily a trumpet) and sound effects adds to the sense of this production constituting a more concept-based aural interpretation. The short passages from *Molloy* in this production are distributed over a number of tracks, none of them longer than five minutes. The text itself is both cut and edited. It is meshed with the sound effects.⁷⁰²

On the one hand, the production of '*...the whole thing's coming out of the dark*' is, and therefore should be evaluated as, a radio drama. At the very least, that should be the point of departure when setting out to evaluate it. On the other hand, this production, to some degree, seems to be a rather nonstandard radio play, if not a completely experimental one. It demonstrates an attempt to decipher and better understand Beckett's prose works by filtering his texts through the realm of sound. One could understand the particular choice of fragmenting the text, creating repetitions and meshing the spoken word with sound effects as a means of utilising the aesthetics of the medium for the purpose of literally realising the *sound* that the text inhabits.⁷⁰³ In evaluating this production as a sub-(institutional)-category of AP, one would effectively

⁷⁰¹ Although one could attempt to evaluate the manner in which McGovern demonstrates the internal logic of Beckett's text in both instances, and while it might to some degree serve as an interesting comparison, I would argue that this may also be slightly missing the point. Yet, what might prove interesting would be to examine the manner in which both AP artworks succeeded in manifesting the internal logic of Beckett's texts within the aural medium—while at the same time bearing in mind that one case is a performance of the text itself and the other is an adaptation of the text (which therefore might even be attempting to create a new internal logic which may be influenced by, yet may not be restricted to, that of Beckett).

⁷⁰² See USB flash drive for '*...the whole thing's coming out of the dark*', tracks 3, 6, 10, 12, 16 and 19.

⁷⁰³ As such, it would comply with Sprinzak's aforementioned notion of 'text-sound art' more than it would with what a radio play is supposed to be.

better understand its particular interpretation of Beckett's work. With respect to Molloy's character, for instance, one could argue that this approach demonstrates his arguable compulsiveness or the scattered nature of his train of thought. Similarly, Molloy's seemingly grotesque movements are 'translated' into musical movements. Ultimately, when considering (a) the acts of breaking up the text and the inclusion of repetitions, (b) the intentional fragmenting of already half-fragmented sentences which are spoken by fragmented characters (who themselves speak and write in fragments), and (c) their being sound aloud as ostensible aural fragmentations—heard precisely alongside those which fade into the background, far into the darkness of the human skull—one could effectively conclude that 'the whole thing's' *not*, in fact, 'coming out of the dark', but rather out of one's head.

8. Author as Performer and the Autobiographies of ‘Nonexistent Personages’: An Aural Case Study (3)

8.1 Aesthetic Literary Qualities vs. Aesthetic Complexities of Aural Performance

As aforementioned, in the realm of audiobooks one comes across a large number of recordings read by the authors.⁷⁰⁴ As stated, despite the rather popular conception, an author’s reading does *not* necessarily entail that it would constitute a better performance than that of anyone else.⁷⁰⁵ Audiobook consumers seem to relish in having the opportunity of listening to the author of a particular literary work narrate their own work in their voice. This also seems to evoke a rather intense state of attentiveness. According to Roach, ‘listeners have the right to hope that when an author reads his own works he will convey what he meant in the way he meant it and that listening to such “informed” readings will bring them closer to the writer’s work’.⁷⁰⁶ Although concluding that ‘with careful listening one learns to discover [...] poets and authors who have met the challenge of the medium’, Roach at the same time asserts that ‘there are more uncommunicative, poorly read records by authors than by any other group’.⁷⁰⁷ Thus,

Without direction, writers [...] frequently have come off poorly. One cannot place a neophyte before a microphone, tell him to relax and expect him to do much more than try to avoid mistakes. What has

⁷⁰⁴ It should be noted that some authors may participate in the production of an audiobook in a number of ways other than in that of narration: namely, they may record a particular section from the printed work (such as the introduction, the foreword, or the afterword), or they may record what would comprise a so-called ‘bonus feature’ (usually an interview) which is specifically created and designated for the audiobook release. To some extent, these cases can be perceived as nothing more than a so-called gimmick or ostensible ploy designated to boost the sales, essentially contributing nothing of real substance. Nevertheless, whether or not their contribution is indeed significant (i.e., in its contribution to the aesthetics of the particular audiobook) would have to be evaluated on a case by case basis.

⁷⁰⁵ While s/he may indeed be responsible for creating the work to begin with—and thus should not only know it inside out and know it better than any other person—it should not be considered a given that s/he should also be responsible for recording the audio version.

⁷⁰⁶ Roach, *Spoken Records*, 51.

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 51-52.

often been recorded, in the case of the poet, has not been his poetry, but the audible record of his struggle as a poor reader. In the struggle he usually tries to listen to it himself so as to be correct. In the process he sets up a cycle from mouth to ear which excludes other listeners.⁷⁰⁸

In accommodating to any new medium—and, I would add, to any new aesthetic category—Roach asserts that ‘preparation and practice are necessary’.⁷⁰⁹ Appropriately, the task of the (audio-)performer—that is to say, his/her institutional role with respect to AP—should be unequivocally clear.⁷¹⁰ On the one hand, I concur with Roach’s implied assertion that an author or poet’s reading of his/her own work—counter-intuitive as it may sound—could prove to be not only the wrong choice for the text in question, but also quite ill-advised with respect to the medium involved. On the other hand, there are cases in which it appears to be abundantly clear that nobody but the author could have performed the particular text in question. Indeed, some authors can be said to be the only person who should record it—with their narration constituting the most appropriate reading of the text.⁷¹¹

As I will presently demonstrate, one such case can be found in the work of Australian performer-satirist-author-dadaist-comedian-artist, Barry Humphries. Now, in concluding my exploration of the manner in which audiobooks utilise and manifest the first-person narrative, explicitly focusing on Humphries’s pseudo-autobiographical

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid., 51.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁷¹⁰ In brief, a performer is required to bear in mind and possess an understanding of two sets of internal logic—that of the text in question and that of the aural medium. Albeit having demonstrated the internal logic of their work in its written form, many authors are simply unable to perform it. Nonetheless, if the decision is made merely for the sake of having the author’s work ostensibly documented as an aural recording in his/her own voice, it would not necessarily constitute an AP artwork.

⁷¹¹ Tracy, for instance, referencing what the collection of spoken word recordings at the University of Iowa consisted of, asserts: ‘Undoubtedly among the most interesting recordings of authors reading from their own works are Gertrude Stein and e e cummings, whose experiments with language and typography have made their work difficult of access on the page. Edith Sitwell’s recording of *Façade* is an exhibition of her verbal and vocal virtuosity that is hard to match in all of recorded literature, although James Joyce’s reading of a fragment from “Anna Livia Plurabelle” likewise reveals the vocal gifts of the author’. Tracy, “Echoes in a Bottle,” 27–28.

writing—or rather, on the manner in which Humphries transformed his own written texts into unique aural performances—his audiobooks consist not as one case study, but, in fact, as *three*.

Additionally, I would argue that the audiobook versions of Humphries's pseudo-autobiographies prevail as an even more complicated case study than that of Beckett. Now, this is not to say that the literary quality of Beckett's writing is overshadowed by that of Humphries. Rather, in comparing the audiobook versions of their works, it would seem that despite the evident elaborate properties that one finds in the aural iterations of Beckett's prose, Humphries's aural performances of his own work project a considerably exceeded aesthetic complexity. In what can surely be identified as a borderline-surreal case study, Humphries's aural performances are virtually labyrinthine. As I will show, whereas fictional autobiographies are customarily embedded with true biographical elements, Humphries's pseudo-autobiographical audiobooks put into question not only the identity of the narrating characters, but also their ostensible (non)-existence. Ultimately, one is unable to ascertain whether what one is listening to should be perceived as a novel (i.e., that written by Humphries), or as a literal autobiography (i.e., that written and effectively spoken by one of Humphries's own fictional characters). In accordance with his stage and screen works, Humphries's aural performances both test the boundaries of the mother institution and manifest the overlap between its sub-(institutional)-categories.

8.2 Dame Edna vs. Barry Humphries

There is little doubt about the fact that the personae known as Dame Edna Everage and Sir Leslie Colin (aka 'Les') Patterson exist in the world as Humphries's distinctive comic inventions. The brute fact of their being fictional characters notwithstanding, no problem whatsoever was posed in crediting each of them, individually, as the sole writer of *their own* autobiographies. Furthermore, when time came to record the audiobook versions of their published works, that they both ostensibly exist as 'nonexistent personages', seems to have presented no difficulties for either one to be chosen as the most appropriate *performer*. Quite the contrary: having them read their own work was in fact the most obvious choice.

Dame Edna's autobiography, *My Gorgeous Life: the Life, the Loves, the Legend* (1989), credits Edna as its author.⁷¹² It was also Edna, in the flesh, as it were, who had in 1993 recorded its audiobook version.⁷¹³ As Edna herself notes, '[...] Chances are you might think this is just another showbiz autobiography, written by a ghost for some stupid empty-headed glamour puss. No way! [...]'.⁷¹⁴ Sir Leslie's autobiography, *The Traveller's Tool* (1985) similarly credits Sir Les as its author.⁷¹⁵ Likewise, it was he too, 'warts and all', who in 2011 proceeded to record his own literary endeavour.⁷¹⁶ Despite the fact that it is Humphries who in actuality is responsible for penning 'their' so-called autobiographies, his name is not in any way credited or cited in either book—neither in their printed versions, nor in their aural incarnations. On the one hand, that Humphries

⁷¹² Dame Edna Everage, *My Gorgeous Life: An Adventure* (London: Macmillan, 1989).

⁷¹³ Dame Edna Everage, *My Gorgeous Life*, written and performed by Dame Edna Everage (Dove Audio, 1993). [Digitally Remastered by Phoenix Books, 2014].

⁷¹⁴ See USB flash drive for Edna's autobiography, track1. (Quote appears at 01m20sec).

⁷¹⁵ Sir Les Patterson, *The Traveller's Tool* (London: Michael O'Mara Books Limited, 1985).

⁷¹⁶ Sir Leslie Colin Patterson, *The Traveller's Tool*. Read by the Author (Tullamarine, Victoria, Australia: Bolinda Audio, 2011). See USB flash drive for Les's autobiography, introduction. ('Warts and all' reference at 00m39sec–00m58sec).

removes himself and that his name is intentionally omitted could be argued to be a mere *ars poetic* joke and explained by the fact that the designated readers of these books should obviously be aware that both the characters and their individual autobiographies have been devised and created by Humphries. Put simply, Humphries's designated audience both accepts and expects that that is just what he does. On the other hand, I maintain that these particular audiobooks demonstrate an idiosyncratic example of something which is quite unique in the world of performance—something that is distinctive to Humphries and his artistic voice (or rather, voices in this case).

Much like McGovern's performance of Beckett's three novels, Humphries's audiobooks, as AP artworks, manifest the manner in which his creations have to some extent managed to take on an almost literal life of their own—in effect extending well beyond the confines of their existence as performances.⁷¹⁷ Humphries's conscious artistic decision to transform their literary autobiographies into audiobooks demonstrates part of his unique ability to meticulously orchestrate and construct his characters as individual personages. His performance extends their presence on stage and screen, and having them pen 'their own' printed works, gives each of their individual

⁷¹⁷ While arguably this is true to a somewhat lesser extent with respect to Sir Leslie, it can surely be said to be a concrete institutional fact about Dame Edna. This is rooted in the fact that part of what I would consider as her character's internal logic—and surely part of the internal logic of what Humphries does as a performing artist—is that she, quite simply, 'is'. The very essence of the drag queen act, for instance, or that of the pantomime dame, centres on one seeing the man behind the act. In both cases, part of the internal logic of the performance is rooted in revealing and acknowledging the showmanship of the performer—which, in effect, is usually what the audience eventually applauds. Humphries, by contrast, does *not* reveal himself before Edna steps off the stage or goes off screen. The audience never gets to see the man behind the mask. At the same time, the audience knows he is in fact there all along. While Humphries may refer to Edna as an *actual* person—asserting they are not one and the same, and although Edna may similarly acknowledge Humphries's existence—asserting her horror of people's assumption that she is in fact a character being skilfully portrayed by him, Humphries *himself* does not appear to 'go beyond himself' to reveal his own self. Humphries quite simply allows Edna to *be*—allowing his audience to accept her as 'her', knowing full well that they inevitably *know* that 'she' is in fact he.

voices even more prominence. The fact that their ‘performance’ can be experienced in printed form is quite an astounding achievement.⁷¹⁸

Making matters worse, Humphries published two of his own autobiographies: *More Please* (1992)⁷¹⁹—winner of the 1993 J.R. Ackerley Prize for Autobiography⁷²⁰—and its revised update, *My Life as Me* (2002).⁷²¹ Interesting to consider, for instance, is the manner in which his preface to *More Please* corresponds with his prologue to *My Life as Me*—a work which Humphries himself regards as a ‘parallel memoir’.⁷²² In the former, Humphries states as follows: ‘I am already the subject of two generous biographies, and it is only the fear that my adventures might for a third time be profitably chronicled by another man that prompts me to relate my own story’.⁷²³ In the latter, he asserts:

Here and there, readers may recognise a coincident event or personage from my earlier volume, for this is a cubist, even a futurist, self-portrait that I offer the reader, observing myself from many angles at once as in the hall of mirrors at a fairground, and with whiffs of scent, incoherent voices, shards of music. I have changed the names of several of my dramatis personae who are still living, especially where their portrayal is of such accuracy as might inspire foolhardy litigation. I have honoured the dead by calling them by their real names.⁷²⁴

⁷¹⁸ So distinct a character is Edna that her autobiography quite literally becomes her. To some extent, one is able to compare Edna’s autobiography to Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* (1856). Although *My Gorgeous Life* is hardly an influential achievement in literary realism, the two do share at least one distinct commonality: namely, they both clearly manifest a male author’s writing exercise, focused on depicting, to the best of his ability, a fully formed (and, indeed, authentic) female character. I would also argue that Humphries’s and Edna’s frequent assertions that neither one is in truth the other, resonates with Flaubert’s famous assertion, ‘Madame Bovary, *c’est moi*’ (‘Madame Bovary is me’).

⁷¹⁹ Barry Humphries, *More Please* (London: Viking, 1992).

⁷²⁰ Paul Matthew St Pierre, *A Portrait of the Artist as Australian: L’Oeuvre bizarre de Barry Humphries* (Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), 137.

⁷²¹ Barry Humphries, *My Life as Me* (London: Michael Joseph, 2002).

⁷²² St Pierre, *A Portrait of the Artist as Australian*, 144.

⁷²³ Humphries, *More Please*, xi.

⁷²⁴ Humphries, *My Life as Me*, x.

In addition to these, Paul Matthew St Pierre lists no less than seven individual ‘life-tellings’, as he puts it, published over the years.⁷²⁵ He considers *More Please* to be one of Humphries’s greatest works—alongside his first novel, *Women in the Background* (1995).⁷²⁶ The latter, he maintains, appears to be something of a ‘mirror-image’ of Humphries’s own life.⁷²⁷ Furthermore, according to St Pierre, the parallels between Humphries and his novel’s main protagonist, Derek Quick, appear to be blatant, the novel can be said to consist as ‘a kind of displaced autobiography’, whose protagonist can either be identified as Humphries *himself* or be said to represent his *doppelgänger*.⁷²⁸ Humphries has been cited for saying that he may have indeed ‘unconsciously woven some autobiographical material into this fiction’.⁷²⁹ St Pierre similarly argues that Edna’s *My Gorgeous Life* can be said to be ‘only once removed’ from Humphries’s *More Please* and *My Life as Me*.⁷³⁰ Additionally, he asserts—quite rightly, I would argue—that while addressing Humphries’s autobiographies as ‘his’ *own* narratives might seem ‘redundant’, this can in fact highlight his unique literary talent.⁷³¹ Indeed, he explains that since one is sure to come across numerous cases in which an ostensible autobiography had in fact been penned by a ghost writer, one could argue that Humphries too had employed such a scheme. Nevertheless, as St Pierre puts it, ‘no one could ghost Humphries’ story’.⁷³²

Now, although this view is true, it is only partly so. Explicitly, I would argue that it is missing a so-called complementary qualifier, noting something along the lines of

⁷²⁵ St Pierre, *A Portrait of the Artist as Australian*, 138.

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*, xiii.

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*, 216.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁷³⁰ *Ibid.*, 216.

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*, 315n10.

⁷³² *Ibid.*

‘other than Humphries himself’. To be sure, Humphries tests the boundaries of performance and identity. He skilfully works on the edge, effectively extending the existence of his own performed personages. He transferred them from the worlds of the stage and screen to the world of printed words, only to subsequently reinstate their assumed status by ostensibly re-animating *their* words in the form of an aural performance. In this respect, I maintain that no one other than Humphries himself could ghost write his own story. While one should not question whether Humphries himself had indeed written his own autobiographies, one might question the extent to which those autobiographies are authentic depictions of his own life story.⁷³³

Further complicating matters, in what was promoted as a behind-the-scenes glimpse into Edna’s notable rise from her life as a simple Melbourne housewife to the heights of ‘Mega-Stardom’, Humphries also penned *Handling Edna: The Unauthorised Biography* (2009).⁷³⁴ It too received an audiobook version, performed by Humphries himself.⁷³⁵ While the book indeed credits Humphries as its author, it is nevertheless unveiled as a work that had been written (and, subsequently, performed) by a somewhat different Barry Humphries—an assumed alternate version of his own persona.⁷³⁶ In brief, the book depicts his life as Edna’s long-time manager and appears to be dedicated to unravelling *his* exhaustively researched account of *her* life.⁷³⁷ As

⁷³³ St Pierre does in fact state that Humphries himself might be arguably identified as the so-called ghost writer of his own *Women in the Background*, especially since the authorship of the novel is apparently assumed by its main *fictional* protagonist. *Ibid.*, 199. Indeed, the extent to which Humphries may have taken literary liberties in the construction and delivery of his own life story could in effect render him his own ostensible ghost writer, employing the format of the autobiography as yet another exercise in his distinctive approach to performance.

⁷³⁴ Barry Humphries, *Handling Edna: The Unauthorised Biography* (Sydney: Hachette, 2009).

⁷³⁵ Barry Humphries, *Handling Edna: The Unauthorised Biography*. (Orion, 2010).

⁷³⁶ See USB flash drive for Humphries’s narration, e.g., 00m00sec–01m30sec.

⁷³⁷ According to St Pierre, unlike with *More Please* or *My Life as Me*—and, I would add, unlike with *My Gorgeous Life* and *Handling Edna*—Barry Humphries, ‘the historical person, as distinguished from the implied author’ does appear in *Women in the Background*. St Pierre explains that this is the result of (a)

Handling Edna was published five years after St Pierre's study, it is therefore not referred to at all. Had St Pierre indeed been able to include it in his study, it would have proven to be a very interesting addition, particularly in light of his fifth chapter, 'Autobiography as Mockery, or Barry Humphries in Mock Turtle'.⁷³⁸ Accordingly, Humphries—as the narrating *character* in his own *Handling Edna*—surely complies with St Pierre's assertion that 'Humphries' "Barry Humphries" in *More Please* and *My Life as Me* is, by implication, an artistic creation, an ironic readymade and a processional person: the implied author's implied narrator'.⁷³⁹

Complying with what in print appears in the form of the author's depiction of his conversations with Edna and his inclusion of their written correspondences, the audiobook version appropriately delivers Edna's so-called guest appearances. As Humphries evidently reads Edna's letters *as* Edna—rather than having Edna read them 'herself'—his aural performance in this case appears to elicit an aesthetic conundrum, of sort, albeit a highly satisfying and entertaining one. Indeed, this audiobook does not feature Dame Edna in full form. Humphries (or, arguably, this particular version of him)

the book in question being a *novel*—a work of fiction and imagination, (b) the fact that he has already penned two volumes of autobiography—and thus "has no need to boil his cabbages thrice", and (c) his extended fictionalization of himself, which manifesting in a number of different versions: namely, 'Barry Humphries' in Dame Edna's act, 'Brian Humphry' in Sir Les Patterson's act, and 'Dr. Humphries' in his theatre programs and promotional material. Effectively, there is no essential need for Humphries to 'cast himself' as the protagonist of his own literary endeavour as well. St Pierre, *A Portrait of the Artist as Australian*, 217.

⁷³⁸ At the same time, while I am happy that my own study benefits from the new attention I bestow upon the internal logic of Humphries's *aural* performances—his audiobooks *as* AP artworks—given the scope of St Pierre's study, I find it regrettable that he fails to investigate the audiobook versions of Humphries's works. In fact, but for (a) alluding in his preface the 'seventy-two audio recordings' among what constitutes the 'art' that Humphries 'is usually identified with', and (b) citing the audiobook releases of *My Gorgeous Life* and *More Please* in his appendix, St Pierre not seem to consider these at all. *Ibid.*, x, and 281-82, respectively. Although St Pierre does mention Edna's role as the narrator in Sergei Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* (1936), the reference is brief and it does not appear to be sufficiently analysed with respect to its nature as an AP artwork. *Ibid.*, 82 and 147.

⁷³⁹ *Ibid.*, 139.

does not go the extra performative mile in voicing Edna *as* Edna herself.⁷⁴⁰ Furthermore, the fact that he narrates the novel as himself (or, again, the assumed version of himself), both intensifies and enriches one's aesthetic experience.⁷⁴¹ As St Pierre explains it, alluding to Humphries's own autobiographies,

Humphries' *soi-même* autobiographical identity is a dialectic *idem*-identity (sameness) and *ipse*-identity (selfhood), in which sameness has priority over selfhood. [...] His autobiographical utterance [...], is not, *ipse dixit*, true because 'he himself said it'. It is true, *idem*, because it has been spoken previously: it is a speech or narrative readymade, a replica of Humphries' life-so-far. [...] Even though Humphries-himself (*lui-même*) is a man of kingly singularity [...] he is, *lui-même/soi-même*, the 'same him/herself', the 'same oneself' as everyone in his audience. In contradistinction to his mirror-image, his 'I' is, *idem*, indistinguishable from that of any other *soi-même* person who has lived.⁷⁴²

To some extent, a comparison could be made between the manner in which Humphries plays with (or, rather, comments on) the representations of the self in art and performance, and Warhol's aforementioned readymade *Brillo Box* installation: Indeed, just as Warhol presents his audience with an artwork that is literally *indistinguishable* from the product found at one's local supermarket, Humphries, by the same token, presents his audience with a readymade persona—an alternate replicated version of himself—that appears to be *indistinguishable* from Humphries.⁷⁴³

⁷⁴⁰ One can literally hear that it is essentially 'Humphries reading as Edna' rather than 'Edna reading as herself'. This is emphasised by the fact that the audiobook is credited to have been 'read by Barry Humphries'. It should be underlined that on more than one occasion, and in various individual appearances, both Humphries and Edna make it abundantly clear that they are most definitely *not* the same person. They both have made extensive comments on this issue. Had Humphries intended this recording to form a 'double-act' of sorts, the final product would no doubt have credited them both.

⁷⁴¹ As I will later show, in Humphries's narration, *as Edna*, of *My Gorgeous Life*, precisely the same thing occurs in reverse when Edna vocalises her own interactions with 'Barry Humphries': that is to say, one does not in effect hear Humphries's 'own' voice, but rather Edna's 'take' on what he sounds like.

⁷⁴² St Pierre, *A Portrait of the Artist as Australian*, 145.

⁷⁴³ Although no longer in circulation, it must be noted that both *More Please* and *Women* have been subjected to Humphries-narrated audiobook renditions (released by Penguin Audiobooks in 1993 and Reed Audio in 1996, respectively). St Pierre does not explicitly address these recordings in his book, although he does reference them in his appendix. *Ibid.*, 282. Arguably, the fact that these recordings exist can be said to strengthen my assertion that the novels themselves can be perceived as a kind of

To be sure, the audiobook versions of Patterson's *The Traveller's Tool*, Edna's *My Gorgeous Life*, and Humphries's *Handling Edna* all comply with the institution of AP, and can all thereby be defined as distinct AP artworks. Ultimately, complying with R2, all three consist of existing written texts, which are recorded by a performer solely for an aural format (notwithstanding their previous existence on stage and screen), and are effectively delivered to an Artworld public, consisting of either Humphries's fans or consumers of AP artworks. (This all takes place within the context of a particular Artworld-system, which is, in essence, the institution of AP itself). Appropriately, complying with R3, Humphries constitutes the (audio-)performer. The mere fact that he performs these books 'in-character' demonstrates that he undoubtedly is purposefully creating an AP artwork. That his narration can be identified as a performance—created explicitly for a designated audience—cannot be disputed. The audience, for its part, and in compliance with R4, has to be prepared to take on the responsibility to understand a particular recorded written-text as an AP artwork.⁷⁴⁴

While his work can be said to incorporate elements of low comedy, what Humphries does is in fact not only highly stylised, but also extremely witty and profoundly intellectual. His performance employs a distinctive kind of aesthetics, which

performative exercise on Humphries's part. One might, for example, choose to compare between the manner in which Humphries performs 'himself' in his autobiography, *More Please*—as opposed to the manner in which he performs the alternate version of himself in *Handling Edna*. As stated, this recording is no longer available. However, there is interest in comparing the manner in which Humphries performs the ostensible 'version' of his own self in narrating *Handling Edna*, and the manner in which he delivers 'his' life story in narrating his *own* autobiography *More Please*. One could examine whether or not, and to what extent, there might exist differences in his intonation, his delivery, the manner in which he voices his own text, and so forth.

⁷⁴⁴ It is no doubt essential that one be aware of the fact that these books are recorded 'in-character' by an established performer. Even if one does not necessarily consider oneself a fan of Humphries or part of his designated audience, that would nevertheless entail an understanding of what he does. Accordingly, if one is unaware of that fact, all that one is consequently left with is the ostensible brute fact—and would thereby experience these audiobooks either as (a) the boring confessions of a stardom-obsessed megalomaniac in Edna's case, or (b) the obnoxious pure-drivel ramblings of a bodily-functions obsessed buffoon in Les's case.

is precisely dependent upon playing a game with his audience. Even when conducting interviews in the guise of Dame Edna (interviews that are essentially part of Edna's show) *her* interviewees—predominantly performers in their own right and/or individuals who are no strangers to the stage—become, almost without their realising it, part of the audience who is watching Edna interview them. In other words, they simultaneously accept that they are being interviewed by a very real and very vivid Dame Edna, and, they are also fully aware that the person who is interviewing them is in fact performing to, with and in front of them. In utilising the fact that everyone plays along, Humphries is able to deliver what is revealed as his fine-tuned and razor-sharp satire. One is thus confronted with a variety of apt comments on such issues as the concept of celebrity and its place in culture, the very nature of what is perceived as reality within the context of performance—the various masks that one either puts on or pulls off in everyday life, and even, to an extent, the very essence of what art actually is. In these respects, Humphries is literally unmatched.

By way of comparison, consider the fictional autobiography, *I, Partridge: We Need to Talk About Alan* (2001),⁷⁴⁵ depicting the life and times of one Alan Gordon Partridge. Just like Edna and Les, Alan Partridge is a fictional character—a non-existent personage—invented in the 1990s and portrayed by English actor-comedian-impressionist-writer, Steve Coogan.⁷⁴⁶ Although one might find *I, Partridge* allocated to the 'Humour' section of one's local bookshop, it is essentially just as much an autobiography as the books of Edna and Les. Accordingly, the audiobook version is

⁷⁴⁵ Alan Partridge, Rob Gibbons, Neil Gibbons, Armando Iannucci and Steve Coogan. *I, Partridge: We Need to Talk About Alan* (London: HarperCollins, 2001).

⁷⁴⁶ Partridge constitutes the brainchild and collaborative invention of Coogan, alongside Scottish satirist-writer-director, Armando Iannucci, and English comedian-writers, Stewart Lee and Richard Herring.

narrated by Coogan 'in-character'. Unlike Edna and Les, however, Partridge does not receive the sole credit for penning the autobiography.⁷⁴⁷ The recording gives a full run-down of names to whom the work is credited. Immediately thereafter, Coogan announces, '*This is Alan Partridge*'. The manner in which he delivers these few small words, emphasising his very first utterance as Partridge, makes it sound as if he officially assumes authority over the printed text that he is narrating—and in effect making it clear to the listeners that the audiobook should be experienced through the voice of Partridge himself.⁷⁴⁸ This ostensible affirmation of his own identity does not (perhaps even cannot) appear in the printed version and evoke the same effect. It is utilised as a device through which Coogan asserts his role as Partridge, speaking explicitly to the listeners of the audiobook, as he elicits their undivided attention.

Although apparently a very successful character, Partridge pales in comparison to Humphries's creations. Not only with respect to successfully creating a virtually concrete personage (rather than a mere character, sophisticated as it may be), but also in the level and sophistication of his comedy. Notwithstanding, Partridge's creators do seem to be playing an ostensible game with their audience, reminiscent of both Humphries's work, and, to some extent, the aforementioned Spinal Tap band members.⁷⁴⁹ Ultimately, to fully appreciate the extent of Humphries's performance

⁷⁴⁷ In the printed book, the name 'Alan Partridge' appears above all the *real* authors. In the audiobook, only having explicitly pointed out that one is listening to a book 'by Alan Partridge, with Rob Gibbons and Neil Gibbons, Armando Iannucci and Steve Coogan' does Coogan proceed to read the book. Nonetheless, and albeit to a less successful extent than Humphries, the creators of Partridge seem to be playing a similar game with their audience: in the printed version, the name 'Alan Partridge' is evidently presented in a much larger typeface than all the other writers; in the audiobook, Coogan is heard running through real authors' names quite rapidly.

⁷⁴⁸ See USB flash drive for Coogan's narration of *I, Partridge*. 00m00sec–01m11sec.

⁷⁴⁹ It is apparent not only in their release of a fictional autobiography performed by the fictional character himself, but also in the DVD releases of the 1997/2002 television series, *I Am Alan Partridge*, in which there is a featured commentary track of Coogan, alongside one of his co-stars, Felicity Montagu, both in-character. I shall later dedicate a section specifically to examining the notion Audio Commentaries as AP

artistry, one is predominantly required to employ a 'willing suspension of disbelief'. With Les, the more vulgar, tasteless and utterly disgusting he appears to be, the more laughter he elicits from the audience;⁷⁵⁰ with Edna, one essentially comes to accept her as an actual persona by complying with her own estimation of herself: namely, a simple Melbourne housewife who sincerely believes that she is nothing less than a 'megastar'.

The distinctive type of storytelling that Humphries employs, as Edna, in *My Gorgeous Life* is precisely what *makes* it *her* story. Indeed, one simply cannot help but literally hear Edna's voice in one's head when faced with the text alone. At the same time, as St Pierre points out, 'Edna Everage is not a storyteller: she is, as she states throughout *My Gorgeous Life*, a biographer. [...] She does not presume to tell a story because there is none'.⁷⁵¹ When one listens to the audiobook version, hearing Edna tell her own story, one's aesthetic experience of Humphries's unique brilliance as a performer is effectively intensified. The audiobook begins with Edna noting that 'all the persons in this book exist and are called by their real names. Anyone objecting to this

pieces. Arguably, that it required four different people to compose *I, Partridge* as opposed to one individual creating two singular works may not be an entirely fair point to raise, yet it nevertheless contributes to establishing Humphries as a remarkable and prolific creative genius. Nevertheless, Coogan himself is quite a remarkable performer. In fact, in the context of this dissertation, I would argue that Coogan's own autobiography, *Easily Distracted* (2015), presents a much more interesting case study, its lacking a so-called 'character' notwithstanding. I will later in this chapter further elaborate on this matter, in comparison to *Handling Edna*, as well as with respect to what Coogan already in his introduction to *Easily Distracted* refers to as 'doing' a 'version of' himself.

⁷⁵⁰ 'Leslie Colin Patterson, in his original incarnation as Entertainments Officer at Sydney football club, was intended to convince his audience of his working-class authenticity. But his character developed [...] and gained the international status as Australia's Cultural Attaché [...] The fact that most healthy women are sexually attracted to Sir Les contributes in no small measure to my pleasure in inhabiting him. A cautionary figure, as well as a comic one, Les Patterson is that part of me that didn't stop drinking. [...] It was always wonderful and exhilarating to walk into my dressing-room at the theatre and slip into a vast and clammy "fat suit", obscenely and priapically padded, then to don a deeply stained powder-blue Hong King suite, "kipper" tie and finally a pair of two-toned, Cuban-heeled shoes of a monstrous design, fashionable in the early seventies. A boozy make-up swiftly applied and a clip-on denture of crooked, nicotine-stained teeth complete the transformation. Audiences adored this genial and foul-mouthed figure, and he even wrote a book called *The Traveller's Tool*, a manual needless to say [...] A new edition, *The Enlarged and Extended Tool*, is surely called for'. Humphries, *My Life As Me*, 221-222.

⁷⁵¹ St Pierre, *A Portrait of the Artist as Australian*, 185.

could find themselves in costly and interminable litigation'.⁷⁵² Now, the manner in which these words are spoken by Edna—and especially her utterance of 'interminable litigation'—manifest her almost devilish relish in the very thought of going through the process of suing someone. As a performer, Humphries's choice to have Edna conclude this statement with a small quaint giggle merely enhances the listening experience. The mental image one conjures up of the smile that surely appeared on Edna's face is so strong that it is virtually built-in to his performance. Although the giggle does not appear in the original text. (Not even as an ostensible stage direction. Indeed, the original text is, supposedly, a proper autobiography—and not a dramatic text). Nonetheless, the giggle is, conceivably, very much implied. As stated, the novel consists of Edna's autobiography, written by her, told in her own voice. It is, in effect, Edna's voice that a reader would hear in the mind's ear when confronted with the text.⁷⁵³

Could there have been another choice?—Yes, quite obviously. One might choose to speak the aforementioned opening sentence very seriously. Perhaps in a manner that would imply some impending disastrous circumstances for those objecting to Edna's naming of names. However, would it have worked? That is to say, would it have managed to exhibit and manifest the internal logic of 'Dame Edna's autobiography'? It is highly unlikely. If, hypothetically, the book's audio copyrights would have only been made available long after Humphries's natural death, and if a gifted performer would have managed to narrate the book in a manner that would comply with the internal

⁷⁵² Dame Edna Everage, *My Gorgeous Life*, 00m24sec.

⁷⁵³ Moreover, if one is adequately acquainted with Edna's character, her mannerisms, the tone of her voice and her odd vocal exclamations, one is arguably supposed to hear the giggle as well. At the very least, one should be able to envision some variation thereof, that would work in accordance with Edna's character. Consequently, it can be argued that in choosing the most appropriate performer for the audiobook re-incarnation of her autobiography, literally nobody other than Dame Edna herself could do.

logic of Edna's character, it might have presented an interesting case study—the inherent difference from a performance by Humphries himself notwithstanding. Arguably, such a recording could be evaluated either as an aural interpretation of an established (fictional) character, or—what seems more appropriate in Edna's case—as an aural performance that is based on an actual person's autobiography. This is precisely why I find that no one other than Humphries himself could have been cast to portray or narrate his characters *'in-character'*.

By way of comparison, consider the audiobook version of *Chronicles: Volume One* (2004), the autobiography of American singer-songwriter-artist and folk legend, Bob Dylan, as performed by acclaimed American actor, Sean Penn—whose narration, evidently, does not try to perform the text 'as' Dylan (i.e., 'doing' or imitating his distinctive voice).⁷⁵⁴ Indeed, one of Dylan's ostensible trademarks—or, at least, one of the inherently identifiable characteristics of his persona as a performer—no doubt manifests through his distinct vocal qualities. So much so, in fact, that it has been subject to as much parody and impersonation as Dylan's musical style has been subject to emulation and interpretation. Effectively, when one reads his writing—especially an autobiography, depicting his own personal story—one essentially cannot help but hear Dylan's voice in one's head. For reasons beyond understanding, Dylan did not record the audiobook version himself. It surely would have constituted an interesting case study, as well as, presumably, served as an example of a good AP artwork.⁷⁵⁵ Now, while

⁷⁵⁴ Bob Dylan, *Chronicles: Volume 1*, abridged, read by Sean Penn (Simon & Schuster, 2004). See USB flash drive for Penn's reading, e.g., disc1, track1.

⁷⁵⁵ Similarly, consider the audiobook version of Bruce Springsteen's autobiography, *Born to Run* (2016). The differences and commonalities between the two notwithstanding, Springsteen's status and stature in the history of American singer-songwriters is surely no-less legendary than Dylan. Fundamentally, Springsteen too possesses what can be identified as a unique artistic voice, as well as a distinct literal one. Having Springsteen perform his own autobiography adds to one's aesthetic experience of listening to him tell his own story, in his own words, through his own mouth. In some respects, this also adds a certain

it would surely be easy to succumb to the temptation of reading the entire book as Dylan, I would argue that what is quite interesting about Penn's performance is that it manifests an understanding of Dylan's artistic voice, rather than an attempt at matching the *sound* of his actual voice. Indeed, Penn's narration succeeds in capturing and conveying a number of different shades or tones of Dylan's assumed persona, without making it seem as if he is mimicking him. Arguably, had he done so, the result would have made for an aesthetically bad AP artwork. Rather, his performance succeeded in identifying the internal logic of the writing, the manner in which it should be conveyed in the form of an audiobook, coupled with some idea of what the internal logic of Dylan as a cultural figure is supposed to represent.⁷⁵⁶

Autobiographies on the whole—particularly those of people whose profession centres on performance, and who just happen to possess the kind of voice that appears to be almost custom-made for the aural medium—having their autobiography performed by anyone other than them can rarely be justified. If audiobooks of first-person narratives are able to create the sense that a particular text is ostensibly delivered personally to the listener by the narrating character, this sense is amplified by the audiobook version of autobiographies that are told by the author him/herself. By way of illustration, consider, for instance, the audiobook version of Judi Dench's

level of prestige for the consumers who chose to invest in listening to an audiobook as a more fulfilling aesthetic experience, rather than ostensibly settling for reading the book. See USB flash drive, Bruce Springsteen, *Born to Run*, read by the Author (Unabridged; Simon & Schuster, 2016), e.g., track1.

⁷⁵⁶ At the same time, I would argue that Penn's achievement constitutes a unique exception in the way in which he captures the internal logic of Dylan's writing, which becomes even more evident when one listens to the unabridged version of the book—released a year later—with the narration by Nick Landrum. A comparison between these two recordings also demonstrates that whether or not a recording happens to be abridged should not factor in ascertaining its aesthetic quality. Indeed, despite the fact that he narrates an abridged version of the text, Penn's performance surpasses that of Landrum. See URL for online sample: Bob Dylan, *Chronicles: Volume 1*, narrated by Nick Landrum (Unabridged; Whole Story Audiobooks, 2005), accessed March 10, 2017, <https://wholestoryaudiobooks.co.uk/product/chronicles-volume-one>.

autobiography, *And Furthermore* (2012), in which Dench is only heard reading the preface. Dench begins by asserting, 'I don't in anyway consider this to be an autobiography. I've neither the time nor the skill to write one', and concludes with her stating, 'I have enjoyed—and still am enjoying—a wonderful life, and made some friendships I cherish deeply, many of which appear in these pages, and that is one of the most important reasons why I am happy to put all this on the record'.⁷⁵⁷ In the recording, Dench adds a sentence proclaiming 'And here is one of these friends, and she is going to read the rest of the book. Samantha Bond'.⁷⁵⁸ Put bluntly—and with absolutely no disrespect for Ms. Bond—I would argue that to produce a recording of Dame Judi Dench's account of her own life, without having it read by Dame Judi herself, is pointless. Moreover, I find that to read the text itself while, guided by one's informed intuition, ostensibly 'hearing' Dench's voice in one's own head can, to some extent, constitute a more rewarding aesthetic experience. Unlike similar audiobooks where an author can be heard reading a preface or afterword, the fact that Dench is merely heard momentarily, only to subsequently consign the reading to Bond, could even be experienced as a tactless tease on behalf of the production. Indeed, Bond's talent and performative abilities notwithstanding, her overall narration might even prevail as an ostensible annoyance, as one is consequently deprived of the opportunity to hear Dench narrate the complete book in her own voice—which would arguably constitute the primary reason why one would be interested to purchase an audiobook version of her book to begin with. By the same token, had the audiobook versions of, for instance, the diaries of acclaimed English actor Alec Guinness—*Blessings in Disguise* (1985) and *A*

⁷⁵⁷ Judi Dench, *And Furthermore* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2010), xv.

⁷⁵⁸ Judi Dench, *And Furthermore* (Unabridged; Orion, 2010). See USB flash drive for Dench's preface to *And Furthermore*, and see also sample of Bond's reading from Chapter 1.

Positively Final Appearance: A Journal, 1996-1998 (2008)—or even the autobiography of accomplished English actor Brian Blessed, *Absolute Pandemonium: My Louder Than Life Story* (2015), been performed by anyone other than their authors, one's aesthetic experience would no doubt have suffered greatly.⁷⁵⁹ Indeed, in such cases, one's informed intuition simply identifies that due to the remarkable performative qualities of these individuals, listening to any other narrator would ostensibly be unacceptable.⁷⁶⁰ Fundamentally, I am doubtful that had one performed Humphries's works in the same way that Penn performs Dylan's book, the result would have been as good. Indeed, in considering his characters in the context of their own utterance, Humphries is the only person who is able to perform their words appropriately. His portrayal of these characters elicits both a distinct visual image of what they look like and an embodied aural sound of the manner in which they speak. Effectively, the characters themselves are embodied with the written text. Since one cannot but hear their voices when reading the text, to actually hear Humphries perform his own work enhances one's experience.

Now, in literally performing her own autobiography, Dame Edna demonstrates an inherent awareness that she is making the recording specifically for a designated audience: namely, *her* audience—the people who know who she is, who love and admire

⁷⁵⁹ See USB flash drive for the Alec Guinness recordings; and See URL for online sample of Brian Blessed's narration of his autobiography: accessed February 6, 2012, http://www.audible.co.uk/pd/Biographies-Memoirs/Absolute-Pandemonium-The-Autobiography-Audiobook/B012BNLA66/ref=a_search_c4_1_1_srTtl?qid=1495982592&sr=1-1.

⁷⁶⁰At the same time, if a renowned performer happens to no longer be alive, one could settle for a kind of performance that one's informed intuition would find as an acceptable effort in doing justice to the original author-performer. Consider, for example, the Derek Jacobi reading of the letters of John Gielgud. See John Gielgud, *Gielgud's Letters*, edited by Richard Mangan, read by Derek Jacobi (Orion, 2004); and See USB flash drive for sample of the BBC radio version.

her, and who crave to know more about her. She is clearly addressing the *listeners*.

Examples indicating this awareness can be heard in the following sections:

[...] And let's face it, I am a survivor with a story to tell, and this is it. It's a funny thought that there will be millions of people listening to this best-seller, some voluntarily, many as a compulsory school subject, who never heard of me.⁷⁶¹ [...] I am naturally into reincarnation, listeners.⁷⁶² [...] Twenty-four hours and three Valia later, my J [*—that's plural for Valium—*] my Jumbo touched down in Melbourne.⁷⁶³

This so-called aside, aimed at explaining the correct grammatical use of the plural form of Valium, clearly indicates Edna's awareness of her audience. At the same time, it assists Humphries in achieving an additional laugh by choosing explicitly such a word for Edna to underline. Although such an aside may also appear in print, its aural representation in the audiobook version, allowing one to actually hear the voice that one would otherwise be required to imagine, constitutes a much more rewarding aesthetic experience.

I was already thinking of *you* my listener, my millions of listeners who would want to know it all.⁷⁶⁴ [...] My listeners would not have thanked me if...⁷⁶⁵ [...] did she have to entertain millions on stage, screen, television and tape?⁷⁶⁶ [...] I meant to mention my three brothers, Roy, Ethel, and Lorie, and chances are, it will come as a big, well eye opener to a lot of my listeners⁷⁶⁷ [...] This mustn't go any further, listeners, but I've always thought Madge had [*Enda pauses. She then whispers the following word*] 'tendencies'⁷⁶⁸ [...]

⁷⁶¹ See USB flash drive for Dame Edna, *My Gorgeous Life*, 00m59sec.

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*, 05m15sec.

⁷⁶³ *Ibid.*, 07m17sec.

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 08m35sec.

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 11m35sec.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 13m00sec.

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 20m55sec.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 27m43sec.

The effect of the pause and the whisper can be only grasped in the audiobook version of this text, for while it may still be very funny on the page, the pause and whisper enrich one's aesthetic experience in a way which the text itself simply cannot do.

Frankly, listeners⁷⁶⁹ [...] As I anticipated, listeners, [...] ⁷⁷⁰ I know that a certain element of my listeners, a small one, I hope, is expecting to hear lurid and permissive details about my wedding night. But this is not that kind of programme, I'm sorry, but it isn't. ⁷⁷¹ [...] Even as I *speak* these words [...] ⁷⁷² [my emphasis] She won't thank me for mentioning that fact in this fearless recording. ⁷⁷³

Later in the recording, Edna is heard saying that 'had any of my readers felt that an evening was ruined even before it began, that was how I felt that night'. ⁷⁷⁴ Arguably, keeping the word 'readers' rather than replacing it with 'listeners' (which appears a number of times in the audiobook) could be perceived as a failure with respect to the adaptation. ⁷⁷⁵

When Edna recounts that 'a deep sob passed through my body, as my eyes filled with scalding tears', her reading and description convey her being almost on the verge of tears. ⁷⁷⁶ While one is constantly reminded that they are listening to Edna's personal story, one is also very much aware that it is a complete fabrication. Nonetheless, it is Humphries's performance that enhances the sentiment that Edna wishes to convey. Despite her existence as a fictional character, one accepts that one is listening to her telling her own story. Indeed, one relishes the different levels of hilarity and

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid., 01h21m26sec.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid., 01h24m41sec.

⁷⁷¹ Ibid., 01h35m49sec.

⁷⁷² Ibid., 01h40m39sec.

⁷⁷³ Ibid., 01h41m37sec.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid., 54m23sec.

⁷⁷⁵ The same can be said for the following section: 'I suggested these tasks caringly, *listeners*, and as occupational therapy, to stop her becoming morbid. I'm sure that grief-counselors *reading* this will back me to the hilt' [emphasis added]. Ibid., 02hr10m42sec.

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid., 12m10sec.

grotesqueness in the completely fabricated life story that Humphries has devised for Edna. In allowing Edna to narrate her own story, Humphries extends the range of his performance and achieves a new level of surrealism, which effectively re-affirms Edna's ostensible existence as a literal agency in her own right. While one is well aware that one is experiencing a performance delivered by Humphries, one is simultaneously captivated by Edna's storytelling. That *her* storytelling, as she engages with her audience by vividly reconstructing various scenes from her own past, is all part of Humphries's 'shtick', becomes almost irrelevant. Indeed, one wilfully suspends one's knowledge of her existence as Humphries's creation and accordingly accepts the pseudo-autobiography of his fictional character as *her* story.⁷⁷⁷ That Edna goes on to explain the manner in which she chose to tell the story, i.e., to perform the written text, adds to the vividness of the performance. Thus, the listener's experience is enhanced by Edna's explicit, albeit inaccurate account of the manner in which she decided to convey her own story to her listeners. While she describes her approach as 'deliberately detached', to describe Edna's narration as 'detached' could not be further from how it actually *sounds*. To a large extent, unless one were very well-acquainted with Edna's character and personality, it would be almost impossible for one to hear in one's head the dissonance between what Edna regards as a 'detached' account, the manner in which her account appears on the page, and the actual manner in which she narrates the text.⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁷⁷ 'I am now coming to a part of my story [*one hears her almost breaking into tears*] which has never been told. This is a secret Norm and I have kept for many years, listeners. But now it must be told'. Ibid., 01h37m07sec. '[...] I've told this terrible story in a deliberately detached way. Because I re-live it, possums, every time I think about it'. Ibid., 01h39m03sec.

⁷⁷⁸ Consider, for example, the passage where Edna conveys her near-drowning experience, having attempted to save the life of her friend, Madge Allsop: 'With no thought for myself, as per usual, I plunged into the aqua sea and struck out in the direction of my floundering friend. Only when I was out of my depth with the salt water searing my throat did I remember that I could not swim! [...] I tried to make my

Ultimately, this pseudo-autobiography could be perceived, at least on some level, as a text that is designed to be performed. Indeed, much like McGovern suggested with respect to Beckett's prose, *My Gorgeous Life* similarly appears to cry out to be performed—only that in this case it cries out, in Edna's voice, to be performed by none other than Edna herself. Furthermore, to an audience who is acquainted with their staged personification, it is quite easy to imagine each Edna or Les sitting in the recording studio narrating their own works. In this respect, I would not be surprised to discover that Humphries actually recorded these books in full costume. While it is, on the one hand, completely irrelevant due to the nature of the aural medium, it might on the other hand, be very relevant to Humphries as a performer—particularly as he is delivering a first-person narrative as ostensibly 'real' personae.⁷⁷⁹

In addition to having Edna tell her own story, Humphries also endows Edna with the ability to tell the story by employing a number of different voices for other characters. Consider, for instance, the passage where she describes her uncle, Victor. He is first introduced to the listeners when Edna proclaims that 'as I looked at his small

life flash before me but it wouldn't. I must have blacked out, but seconds later I came to. [...] I saw the face of my rescuer [...] my young savior carried me in his arms and laid me gently on the sands. [...] At that moment I felt, and I am not ashamed to confess this, listeners, as though that [...] young warrior could do with me as he liked'. Ibid., 36m22sec.

⁷⁷⁹ To some extent, one could consider Harold Pinter's radio play, *A Slight Ache* (1958) in similar respects. Explicitly, with respect to the fact that one of its three characters (a Matchseller) does not utter a single word, and onto whom the two other characters (Edward and Flora) gradually project their own realities. While the play has also been performed on stage, the *visible* silence of a mysterious mute figure is surely different from that of an un-seen one. Indeed, the idea that a radio play even permits the 'presence' of a character who does not speak, surely makes one contemplate whether or not he exists at all. Now, many radio productions—including one from 2002 starring Pinter himself—credit only two performers. What I find interesting in respect of whether or not Humphries performs his characters' autobiographies in full costume, is questioning whether or not, and to what degree, would the performers of *A Slight Ache* be affected by the physical presence (or, indeed, lack thereof) of a third performer. Conceivably, just as Humphries's performance would benefit from a narration in full costume, the cast of Pinter's play would benefit from the presence of a third performer—his muteness notwithstanding. In this respect, if one were made aware that Humphries is in full costume or that there is indeed a third cast member, it could, potentially, re-direct or fine-tune one's interpretation and aesthetic evaluation of the performances.

and vulnerable form, it was impossible to believe that he had once been called “The Butcher of Borneo”⁷⁸⁰. She then proceeds to impersonate her uncle, or speak in his voice.⁷⁸¹ It becomes quite evident in the recording that it is indeed *Edna’s* voice that is making the attempt to produce a different voice—rather than an attempt on Humphries’s part to produce a completely different voice for Victor’s character that would in effect not resemble Edna’s voice in any way. In a different passage, however, when one hears the line ‘What seems to be the trouble’⁷⁸²—which consists of Edna’s quoting of a male character—one cannot similarly claim to hear Edna’s distinctive voice within the quote. This could therefore be construed as something of an inconsistency with respect to Humphries’s performance. In essence, the listeners may not find this particular segment as fine-tuned as the others and it is not as clear whether that line is spoken by Edna or rather demonstrates Edna’s attempt at vocalising the voice of a character who is supposed to sound like a young man. The source of this confusion appears to be rooted in the fact that the said line is spoken in the same intonation that is identified with Edna’s character (or rather, that which listeners have grown to identify her with). An additional passage demonstrating a similar distinctive vocal ambiguity can be heard when one is introduced to the character of Mr. Mushinski, the Russian hedge-clipper. Although depicted by Edna as ‘ghastly foreign-sounding’, when Mushinski is quoted as saying “‘You’re a pretty little girl”, said a ghastly-foreign sounding voice. “Can I help you catch something?””,⁷⁸³ the first part of the quote sounds very much like Edna, and thus not matching her own depiction of what Mushinski is supposed to sound like.

⁷⁸⁰ See USB flash drive for Dame Edna, *My Gorgeous Life*, 07m40sec.

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 07m51sec.

⁷⁸² *Ibid.*, 13m42sec.

⁷⁸³ *Ibid.*, 26m02sec.

It is only from the second part of the sentence and onwards that one can literally hear in Humphries's performance *Edna's* attempt to portray the said 'ghastly foreign' quality. Nonetheless, the vast majority of the other individuals and characters mentioned in the book are portrayed through Edna's narration by Edna herself.⁷⁸⁴

In this respect, the performance is incredibly consistent, with the exception of two characters: Edna's husband, Norman (aka Norm), and the character referred to as 'Les'. The latter makes his appearance in the book as Edna's date for her first big dance.⁷⁸⁵ While his full name is not mentioned, one can but assume that readers of the printed book may have indeed suspected or at least had very little doubt that the 'Les' in question is none other than Humphries's second most well-known character, Les Patterson. In print, this assumption can be justified by his character's depiction, coupled with what should be one's assumed acquaintance with Humphries's work. In the audiobook, Humphries's performance leaves no doubt—it is indeed his own Leslie Colin Patterson.⁷⁸⁶

As an off-stage character, albeit quite present in Edna's on-stage references, Norman is hardly as vivid a character as Les Patterson—with whom Humphries's audience should be well acquainted from various appearances on stage and screen. The audiobook, presumably for the first time, enables Humphries (or rather Edna, as the

⁷⁸⁴ Edna can be heard speaking in the voice of her mother and singing a bedtime lullaby; she can be heard as her father; as Madge; as a group of Nazis celebrating (in caricaturised 'broken' English) Hitler's birthday party. *Ibid.*, 42m26sec. Likewise, as the book takes on the guise of a 'real' autobiography, Edna can also be heard speaking as people whom the readers/listeners may potentially be acquainted with: namely, Peter Cook, Barry Humphries, and the Queen of England.

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 53m15sec.

⁷⁸⁶ Due to the distinctive manner in which Humphries constructs his characters, one can almost imagine that the segments featuring Les are not actually read by Edna, but rather by Les himself. On the one hand, this is yet another example of Humphries's unique talent. On the other hand, as this book is supposed to be performed by Edna, it may be somewhat problematic, as far as the internal logic is concerned, that Les sounds 'too much' like Les, and not as if *Edna* is trying to speak in Les's voice.

narrator) to endow Norm with a distinct voice of his own. To some extent, Humphries's aural performance almost makes it seem as if a completely different actor has entered the recording studio to portray Norman's character, rather than sounding as if Edna is ostensibly 'doing' his voice.⁷⁸⁷ Consider, for example, the segment where Edna mentions that she had 'got a nice long aerogram from Norman', followed by her stating that 'only the postscript irritated me slightly: *You'll be pleased to hear the kiddies haven't mentioned you once since you left. So don't worry.*'⁷⁸⁸ By way of comparison, when Edna narrates a letter from Madge, one clearly hears that it is Edna who is reading Madge's words, while employing a slightly different intonation.⁷⁸⁹

Humphries himself also makes an appearance as one of the characters in Edna's account of her own life. Nonetheless, while he may appear to be Humphries's own self, the aural manifestation of his character (or alternate version thereof) is ultimately delivered through *Edna's* voice and speech patterns, rather than his own. Edna describes in her book how she came to meet Humphries and how she contributed to his acting career.⁷⁹⁰ It is particularly in the light of her account that I find it interesting to

⁷⁸⁷ Another distinct voice that is heard on the recording, making a very short appearance, is that of a character named Kevin Farelli—a reporter for the fictional 'Morning Murdock', who informs Edna about her winning the 'Lovely Mother Quest'. Ibid., 01h45m25sec. He too is not performed 'through' Edna. Rather, Humphries bestows him with a voice of his own, albeit one that sounds quite similar to that of Les. I can but assume that it follows his attempt to capture some kind of Australian authenticity.

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid., 01h53m47sec.

⁷⁸⁹ In this section, she goes between her reading of Madge's letter and commenting about it, which is in the text, and expressing various reactions to it, as part of her performance, such as releasing a small amount of air in disapproval or irritation. Ibid., 01h54m52sec.

⁷⁹⁰ Consider, explicitly, the following passage: 'The last letter was one of the most important in my life [...] it was from a young actor planning a variety show about Australian suburban life. He was playing the role of a housewife who'd just been on her first overseas trip and he wanted to "pick my brains", he said, for his research. I snorted, weird types are starting to write to me now. This one sounds a bit of a "Sissy" too. He's planning some kind of a show where he dresses up as a woman and makes fun about the wonderful Australian way of life. What kind of homes do people like that come from? He's probably breaking his parents' hearts. [...] I met Mr. Humphries in a restaurant downtown. To be perfectly honest, I enjoyed my lunch. [...] We parted with a promise that I would come to a few rehearsals and help him with his female impersonation. Though it made me a bit uncomfortable, in fact almost sick, to think of a man trolling around in women's attire. I'm sorry, but it did. Perhaps it was his mention of a fee that twisted my arm. [...] Barry had the cheek to peer into the auditorium to solicit out praise. *How was that? Pretty good, I*

consider a similar account of the same first encounter, as presented in *Handling Edna* by Humphries (or rather, 'Humphries', as an additional peculiar version of himself). As a self-proclaimed 'unauthorised biography', the book sets out to right the wrongs and express the ostensible truth about the relationship between Humphries and Edna:

Hitherto the public has been confused, and in some cases deceived, by divergent accounts of Dame Edna's life and origins. Some of these accounts and wild speculations have been verbally diffused and rumour and hearsay have been transmuted into 'fact'. Many have been published in books and academic theses, and there is now a considerable apocrypha bearing Edna's name. It should be said that the author of this memoir has himself contributed to these legends and obfuscations for reasons, largely indefensible, which are set out in the text that follows. The reader is exhorted to ignore all other accounts, withal bearing the weight and authority of Academe, and accept what follows as the 'onlie true historie'.⁷⁹¹

Now, on the one hand, this elaborate endeavour might very well be construed as merely more of the same: that is to say, having written a version of himself, as depicted by a fictional character (which he in fact created and is thereby responsible for), Humphries proceeded to create an additional version of himself, writing in its own voice. While presumably more authentic than the version of himself depicted by Edna (which, lest we forget, *is* Humphries himself), this alternate 'Humphries', writing as the 'real' Humphries—and, in the audiobook, appears to sound precisely like him as well—is effectively just as ostensibly real as *Edna's* Humphries.

Arguably, one might be tempted to dismiss *Handling Edna* as yet another item in Humphries's ostensible assembly line—a prolonged, tired, game that he has been playing with his audience for a number of decades. Similarly, as a new addition to his

felt, He said. There was a long dark silence, broken at last by a cultured woman's voice. *Pretty good I don't think. Pretty awful, more like it. I've never seen such twaddle and hoo-ha on the stage in all my life. And I've just been to the West End of London.* That woman's voice was mine'. Ibid., 02h20m20sec.

⁷⁹¹ Humphries, note to the reader, in *Handling Edna*, xi.

well-oiled 'shtick', it might even be perceived as a lesser effort: conceivably, to create an alternate version of oneself is much easier, and thus less impressive, than to create a complete autobiography for—and, indeed, *as*—a fictional character. On the other hand, however, I would argue that it is precisely in these respects that *Handling Edna* should be identified as a fascinating artistic effort—one which is effectively amplified and enriched by its audiobook version, performed by Humphries himself as his own altered version.

I wish I had kept the postcard she sent me in June 1955 – fifty-four years ago! But why should I have kept it? What early scrap of which collectors now call 'Ednabilia' was worth preserving in those far-off days, before Fame unwisely smiled upon her? This was just a stage-stuck young Melbourne mother writing to a young actor seeking his advice. Her handwriting, if I recall, was studied but childish. The fact that her letter was written in green ink with circles over the 'i's should have alerted me immediately to the serious danger of an ensuing correspondence. '*Dear Mr Humphrey*', she had begun... If the green ink had not warned me of the impending danger, my misspelt name should have. [...] *Dear Mr Humphrey, you don't know me from a bar of soap, but I am a prematurely young housewife from the dress circle suburb of Moonee Ponds...* Moonee Ponds was a drab working-class suburb on the 'wrong side of the tracks', as my mother would have described it. It in no way deserved the fashionable fifties epithet 'dress circle', usually applied by estate agents to suburbs commanding panoramic views. The postcard continued: *...I read a write-up about you in The Argus doing some of your skits at Melbourne Uni and I am desirous of teeing a meeting because my girlfriends say I've got real talent....* I paraphrase slightly, but the enthusiasm, one might even say *chutzpah*, of this young woman's letter somehow engraved it my memory.⁷⁹²

When Humphries is heard reading Edna's letter to him, he unmistakably performs Edna's words *as* Edna herself—that is to say, he reads her words in-character, rather than sounding like someone (or, a version of himself, in this particular case), making an effort to 'do' Edna (i.e., read it as himself, but trying to assume her voice). While this

⁷⁹² See USB flash drive for Humphries, *Handling Edna*, 02m05sec.

might seem somewhat self-evident since Edna is his invention, one could argue that the listener in effect is confronted with *two* different personages. It literally sounds as if they are both in the studio—and they both quite obviously are as they are both Humphries. To some extent, just as with the individual autobiographies of Edna and Les, it appears as though *Handling Edna* also cries out to be read aloud. Here, no one other than Humphries could be regarded as an appropriate person to perform the book, in his own voice, as an altered version of himself. In its printed form, *Handling Edna* constitutes another in a line of alternate quasi self-deprecating reflections, in which Humphries endeavours to underline and convey his relationship with his own creation. Evidently, he not only was required to regard Edna as an entity in her own right (just as one naturally does), but also to regard his own self as such—in effect creating another ‘him’. In its audiobook form, Humphries’s literal necessity to effectively ‘handle’ Edna, struggling with his responsibility with respect to her action, becomes an immensely gratifying aesthetic experience for an audience—who are both in on the game and at the same time willing to accept the conceit of his performance and suspend their disbelief.

One can find a similar approach to the idea of performing oneself in Steve Coogan’s introduction to his autobiography, *Easily Distracted* (2015). The following is a transcript from the audiobook version:

Hello. My name is Steve Coogan, and I'm reading my autobiography, which is entitled 'Easily Distracted'—so titled because it was one of the comments that my teacher put in one of my school reports, *ehrm*, with very good reason. *Ehr*, just a note to let listeners know that I won't be doing a perfectly well-modulated ‘RADA’ rendition of the text, and, ehm, if I stumble occasionally, well, that should, eh, add to the visceral pleasure and honesty of my imperfect delivery. *Erhm*, so, off we go – Ehm, Acknowledgements [...] Introduction: Most of my life has been spent wanting to be someone else. If I pretended to be other people, then I didn't have to be me. [...] When I did stand-up, I did impressions. When I did my act, I would do a rather distant, pompous version of

myself. I affected a very, *er*, sort of received pronunciation, *erh*, accent, because I thought it would make me sound more, *er*, [I don't know **said as one word**] palatable. Emm, I've had a slightly schizophrenic relationship with my accent— [**brief sighs**] if I'm with the, eh, you know, if I'm with, ehm, a load of 'toffs' [?] then I'll, I'll sort of affect their accent, and if I go up to Manchester I start to sound like Liam Gallagher—which is an aside, by the way [**laughs**] to the main text, but I just thought I'd put that. So if my accent varies, please don't give me grief for it. It's just the way I am. Some people might call it disingenuousness or hypocrisy, ehm, I call it, ehm, a chameleon-like empathy. O.K. —I continued to do versions of myself in *Coffee and Cigarettes*, *A Cock and Bull Story*, and *The Trip*. [...] Until now I have shared only versions of 'Steve Coogan'. The real me is slightly less desperate for fame than Alan Partridge, slightly less irascible than the Steve who eats his way around the Lake District and Italy in *The Trip*, and slightly less libidinous than the version of me in *A Cock and Bull Story*. [...] I don't like being defined by others, so for those are interested I will do it myself. [...] it is my work that I have offered up for judgement, not my personal life. [...] Judge me on the work, not on the cocaine and the strippers. You won't find any grief porn in this book. It isn't *Angela's Ashes*.⁷⁹³

Here, the concept of portraying a 'different version' of oneself is quite eloquently articulated. Coogan's reading is indeed not what he regarded as one which befits a RADA-trained actor. It is 'imperfect' with respect to his following the printed text, yet that is also, to a large extent, part of the audiobook's charm and appeal.⁷⁹⁴

⁷⁹³ See USB flash drive for Coogan's introduction to *Easily Distracted* (Penguin Random House, 2015).

⁷⁹⁴ Coogan adds his own comments now and again. When he notes, for instance, that he once 'had to cancel five dates in the middle of the run because I was partying too hard; the official line was that I had acute laryngitis. I had an acute something – but it wasn't that', the last sentence does not in fact appear in print. Ibid., track2, 05m50sec. Similarly, when Coogan is heard saying 'I'd find myself in Soho House, a private members' club, every night. *Until I was booted out at 03-AM*', the last sentence is also an addition that appears only in the audiobook. Ibid., track2, 06m25sec. Alternatively, Coogan might also choose to disregard certain sentences. Although the following example may be a result of a somewhat inadvertent and/or psychological omission, when Coogan is heard saying 'I had an affair when my girlfriend was pregnant with our daughter, and the story was splashed all over the papers. And then I had another affair. I know it was entirely my fault and I know I behaved selfishly', the information about the additional affair does not appear in the recording. Ibid., track2, 06m55sec.

Conclusion: Casting Aural Performances as a Praxis of Aesthetic Appreciation

My thesis demonstrates the somewhat untapped potential for comprehending a new kind of artistic medium by way of creating a previously undefined aesthetic category, namely the artistic institution of Audio Performance (AP). In identifying, developing and constructing a distinctive set of critical terms with which to describe what constitutes an aural performance—and, in turn, establishing both the context and criteria for defining audiobooks as artworks—this thesis identifies the importance of institutional aesthetic categories.

Since the New Institutional Theory of Art (NITA) exists both as a philosophical and cultural theory, it pertains to both art and art-making as cultural phenomena. It thus determines the circumstances under which a given cultural activity is identified as intrinsically artistic. Having established that certain kinds of performances can be regarded as works of art in their own right, I have demonstrated that just as NITA is able to distinguish between ‘art’ and ‘not-art’, the institution of AP—as an aesthetic category—is effectively able to do the same with aural performances.⁷⁹⁵ Ultimately, it is the artistic institution, drawing on its status in the Artworld, which establishes the appropriate context and circumstances for both classifying and evaluating art.

In utilizing a comparatively new vocabulary—communicating the pivotal significance of the notion of internal logic and its association with the concept of informed intuition—my study implicitly warrants virtually any aesthetic discourse to adhere to (and, to some extent, depend upon) these two terms. In what prevails as a

⁷⁹⁵ As has been established, AP essentially distinguishes between (a) the recorded ‘reading aloud’ that constitutes an ostensibly simple aural rendition of a given written text—and therefore cannot be considered art, and (b) the recorded reading aloud that complies with the institutional definition of what an aural performance should be—and can thereby be regarded as an AP artwork.

conceivably successful undertaking, I have made an explicit effort to articulate the notion of internal logic in particular, by way of carefully analysing its function in my selected case studies. To paraphrase an explanatory, almost parenthetical, remark made by Graves in his review of Umberto Eco's *On Beauty: A History of a Western Idea* (2004)—an observation I have intentionally reserved for this concluding chapter—the internal logic is, ultimately, a function pertaining to the overall rules that bind together a coincidental assemblage of elements into a perceivable coherent artwork.⁷⁹⁶ In similarly utilizing the selected case studies to scrutinise what I consider as informed intuition, I found it to be inherent to the craft of casting aural performances: explicitly, to the manner in which the craft of casting fundamentally embodies the praxis of aesthetically appreciating artworks. In brief, to have the sense that if a particular performer were to tackle a specific text, that it should result in an aesthetically rewarding (or, alternatively, un-rewarding) performances is dependent upon one's informed intuition. As one cannot aesthetically evaluate an artwork without employing informed intuition, the sense that a particular casting decision should conclude in an aesthetically good (or, indeed, bad) out-turn, is thus in itself informed by aesthetic appreciation. Fundamentally, even if one is not necessarily aware that this process is taking place, one simply cannot make a casting decision without employing some kind of aesthetic appreciation. Casting, in other words, constitutes an aesthetic process, and thereby demonstrates how informed intuition works in action.

⁷⁹⁶ David Graves, "Reshimat Ha'Makoet" ["The groceries list"], *Odyssey—A Journey Through Ideas*, issue #11 (May 2011) 25.

While a casting director would surely be able to account for his/her decision, there appears to be no definite technique or set of guidelines.⁷⁹⁷ Yet, as NITA demonstrates, there very well should be. Implicitly, once one consciously identifies that which appears to prevail as an ostensibly unconscious process, one could utilize the act of aesthetically appreciating an audiobook as an artwork for the purpose of both re-directing and fine-tuning a particular casting choice. This, I would like to believe, potentially constitutes one of the most significant contributions which my thesis offers to this field.⁷⁹⁸ To be sure, the idea that informed intuition in itself informs the manner in which one evaluates an artwork, coupled with a comprehensive understanding of what the notion of internal logic entails, can conceivably serve both scholars and practitioners alike. I thus find that my thesis potentially contributes to identifying both of these inherently philosophical notions as practical key terms in prospective academic discourse.⁷⁹⁹

⁷⁹⁷ Evidently, there is no agreed definition of the actual internal process that a casting director undertakes when s/he is trying to ascertain whether or not a particular performer is right for a role. Indeed, despite the substantial quantity and comprehensive scope of available literature pertaining to the theories, the well-documented history, and various performing arts practices (e.g., acting, directing, dramaturgy, scenography, lighting, camera operating, film editing, and so forth), it is surprising that casting remains virtually unexplored. Although one is sure to come across a number of books pertaining to casting sessions, none of them—not even those written by casting directors—addresses the very nature of the craft itself. (Predominantly, these either allude to the preferred preparation procedure for auditions, or discuss the particular kind of rapport that one should establish when conducting a casting session).

⁷⁹⁸ Drawing on NITA, one can conflate the role of a casting director with the institutional role of an artist. The craft of casting, therefore, can be likened to any other artistic undertaking. In these respects, I am hopeful that my institutional analysis and appreciation of audiobooks as artworks will potentially evoke future applications of NITA. Indeed, this kind of institutional analysis—particularly as an ostensible apparatus for aesthetic evaluation—could be applied to different kinds of performance-oriented media. It, in effect, demonstrates the manner in which aesthetic appreciation functions in action, as an apparently necessary conclusion to informed intuition.

⁷⁹⁹ Fundamentally, any internal logic is grasped and/or sensed intuitively—through first-hand experience. Thus, the fact that my study endeavours to articulate it at all, conveying its meaning to the reader in the form of an academic explanation, should not be regarded as a conventional argumentative excursus, which ultimately identifies the internal logic as a complex, esoteric and virtually inexplicable philosophical novelty. Rather, I would argue that my study employs both an analytic and an intuitive approach to this term, which I have taken in an effort to demonstrate its practical functionality in aesthetic appreciation—and, consequently, its role in the craft of casting.

As unique aural artefacts—predominantly revealing that the manner in which something is said (or rather performed) is no less important than that which is being said (or, rather, written on the page)—audiobooks constitute a concrete example of informed intuition in action. Ultimately, any AP artwork can demonstrate the extent to which the craft of casting an aural performance utilises (a) the comprehensive understanding of the internal logic of a particular text, (b) the cognizance of a particular performer's talent and abilities, and (c) an extensive understanding of what performing for the aural medium entails.⁸⁰⁰ Indeed, the manner in which one consequently deduces which particular performer constitutes the best choice for a specific role is customarily considered the result of a gut feeling at best. Nonetheless, while indeed rooted in a so-called intuitive hunch, the key challenge in this craft appears to focus on creating a proper aesthetic match between a performer and a role (or, in this case, a particular written text) that is in fact well informed and rooted in different sources of knowledge.

All the first-person narrators in my selected case studies consist of characters whose narrative contrives to make sense of the world they inhabit. In the audiobook versions, through the spoken word, a listener experiences this as the character's

⁸⁰⁰ In considering, for instance, the aforementioned Audible's 'a-list' collection, if one is acquainted with a particular printed work to the same extent that one is presumably acquainted with the performer, then—much like a good casting director—even merely imagining someone like Colin Firth performing Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair* (1951), Dustin Hoffman performing Jerzy Kosinski's *Being There* (1970) or Kate Winslet performing Emile Zola's *Thérèse Raquin* (1867), should lead one to (a) ponder, in essence, 'what could go wrong?', and (b) to conclude, in effect, that these recordings would surely constitute a rewarding experience. Furthermore, see the following URL link to a short clip of Dustin Hoffman speaking about his recording of Kosinski's novel: accessed February 2, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsK1O7QsFFM>. One of the most fascinating segments in this clip, I would argue, appears forty seconds into the video, where Hoffman is seen literally 'conducting' himself, as he is reading. It is almost as if he regards the written text as some kind of ostensible 'vocal partitur'. Then, again, two minutes into the recording, the camera focuses on his hands. He is clearly attempting to find the proper rhythm of the written text, as transforms the print into an aural performance. It is, I find, absolutely fascinating to watch. In my own terms, I would argue that this can be identified as his attempt to evaluate in real-time whether or not he has succeeded in properly manifesting what should be part of the novel's internal logic.

attempt to valorise their own consciousness. Although this arguably resonates most strongly with Beckett's prose fiction, as uniquely exemplified by Barry McGovern's performance in the audiobook version thereof, Barry Humphries's audiobooks constitute the most complex case study. Once one is acquainted with the characters he created, one cannot separate 'their' written words and so-called individual literary voices—through which they ostensibly depict themselves in their pseudo-autobiographies—from the very literal voices and distinct kinds of auralities with which Humphries endows them. Ultimately, as aurally-recorded solo-performances, the first-person narratives that inhabit all three of my major case studies effectively demonstrate the need for creating an explicit aesthetic category for classifying and appreciating them as artworks to begin with.

To attain an understanding of the craft of casting an AP artwork can in turn contribute to the deeper understanding of the manner in which one aesthetically appreciates *any* work of art. (Arguably, this would be most evident when engaging with aesthetically good artworks, which properly manifest the internal logic of their own world). In the realm of audiobooks, casting directors need to possess (or, at least, to develop) an ability to hear in their heads how a particular text would sound as an aural performance, once the words in print are transformed into spoken words.⁸⁰¹ It is not entirely clear whether a casting director relies on intuition alone, or whether his/her attempt to 'foresee' the possible (or, at least plausible) outcome of his/her choice is

⁸⁰¹ Summarily, casting directors begin by reading the book they are required to cast. They then attempt to get a sense of what it is 'all about'. Subsequently, they begin to imagine who among the several hundred actors that they work with regularly might best be suited for the job. They predominantly combine their understanding of the text with their experience in working with particular performers. Effectively, they are able to ascertain which performer is of the right age and/or possesses the appropriate vocal personality to match as many requirements of a particular text as possible.

nothing more than guesswork.⁸⁰² As has been established, although each work essentially abides by an internal logic of its own, some works that are created by a single artist can be linked together by a more comprehensive internal logic, certain aspects of which can be identified in all of an artist's works.⁸⁰³ When one engages with a new work by an author who, conceivably, already has a particular style or well-established internal logic associated with his/her work, one is required to investigate whether or not it indeed complies with the putative internal logic that is customarily identified with that author.⁸⁰⁴ If a new work appears to assume, or at least allude to, a new kind of internal logic, unique to that particular work, one is effectively invited to decipher and evaluate what the internal logic is and/or supposed be.⁸⁰⁵ This, I would argue, is consequently resolved by understanding the particular role of informed intuition in respect of appreciating artworks. Ultimately, as my study sets out to explain, in order to determine whether or not an AP artwork is aesthetically good, one is required to consider the two sets of internal logic, namely that of the original written text on the one hand, and that

⁸⁰² Howard expresses her tendency to scribble notes to herself as she reads, and she usually comes up with four or five names of potential readers who she believes could be good performers for the specific book she is reading. Eventually, she manages to work it down to one particular name, and she does so without having needed to *actually* call them up and request them to audition for her. She seems to just *know*, intuitively, that for the particular book in question, the person she has in mind will be able to perform it appropriately. In essence, she knows that person's skills so well, based on her previous casting of that person for other books, and she has developed the ability, as part of her job, to be able to recognize what a particular book 'needs', and who she may know that possesses and/or is able to supply it. She believes it is very much 'an instinctive thing that develops over time and experience'.

⁸⁰³ In the same vein, Thompson points out that when she is able to choose the audiobook she reviews, she usually makes her choice 'based on length, subject, narrator, and author'. If the book happens to be part of a series, she examines whether or not the particular narrator has also recorded the previous title in the series. She claims that it makes a difference because if the first narrator was fantastic, listeners will want to know if the replacement is worth the effort.

⁸⁰⁴ Consider, for example, authors such as Margaret Atwood, Michael Chabon, Stephen King, John le Carré or J.K. Rowling, to name but a few.

⁸⁰⁵ Rowling's Harry Potter books, for instance, are associated with and inhabit a completely different kind of internal logic from that which can be identified with her novel *The Casual Vacancy* (2012) or the Cormoran Strike crime novels, written under the pseudonym Robert Galbraith. Ultimately, new books are 'an empty slate', as Howard puts it. Each individual internal logic would effectively inform a potential casting of an aural performance in its own right.

of its performed iteration on the other. Drawing on the workings of NITA, it is the structure of AP, as an artistic institution in its own right, that facilitates (perhaps even necessitates) the act of aesthetic appreciation.

As a further inference, I would argue that the process of casting an aural performance in itself entails something of a preliminary aesthetic evaluation. In other words, the casting director of an AP artwork—or anyone else who is responsible for this particular aspect in creating the recording—would effectively be required to aesthetically appreciate a putative aural performance. Effectively, s/he would need to judge the potential aesthetic nature of a recording that does not yet exist in actuality, based on his/her informed intuition. As a craft, one is able to develop and fine-tune his/her ability to make better casting choices. As alluded to earlier, once one becomes aware of the ostensibly unconscious process of aesthetic evaluation that takes place, a process that is inherently linked to what drives a particular casting choice, one can begin to consciously identify and intentionally (re-)direct his/her particular choices.⁸⁰⁶

I believe that the world of cuisine can present a good illustrative analogy. Consider, for instance, the well-established coupling between apples and cinnamon.⁸⁰⁷ Arguably, the first person in history to conjure up this particular match would have had to have been well acquainted with the individual internal logic of the two ingredients.⁸⁰⁸

⁸⁰⁶ Even if the particular text in question happens to be the local Yellow Pages, one needs to bear in mind that it too, like any other text, either has or is supposed to have some kind of internal logic. Subsequently, one would need to identify (a) the manner in which this particular text should be performed, and (b) the manner in which it should be performed specifically within the confines of the aural medium. Thus, one would need to ascertain how this text is supposed to work as an AP artwork.

⁸⁰⁷ As celebrity-chefs Clarissa Dickson Wright and Jennifer Paterson once remarked on their *Two Fat Ladies* cooking show, it is, to be sure, 'a match made in heaven'.

⁸⁰⁸ In other words, in order to predict whether or not this casting *should* yield a good result (i.e. before actually tasting the two together) s/he would have had to have possessed a rather comprehensive understanding of how apples 'work', and, similarly, s/he would have had to have acquired an exhaustive cognizance of the so-called 'workings' of cinnamon.

In subsequently employing what I regard as informed intuition, s/he would be able to determine what the matching of these two items should result in. This, I would argue, prevails as a good example what would constitute a case of good *casting*—and, as such, can be compared with what a casting director should undertake.

Furthermore, I also find it interesting to examine the kinds of so-called culinary castings that one would customarily characterise as requiring an acquired taste. Arguably, the mere thought of such castings as chocolate & chili, pear & blue cheese salad, sea-salt-embedded caramel-fudge, chocolate-covered pretzels, or peanut butter and bacon, to name but a few, can raise at least one brow. While all these cases may indeed require an acquired taste, they all nonetheless constitute the result of an informed intuition working in action. They all have a prospective consumer. Now, while the aforementioned reference to Gilbert Gottfried's rendition of *Fifty Shades of Grey* is arguably an extreme example—as it has obviously been created for the purpose of eliciting laughter—I would argue one is sure to come across certain ostensibly counter-intuitive matches in the performing arts, which would effectively appear as poor casting decisions. The challenge I find with so-called oppositional casting is particularly fascinating with aural performances. Indeed, the kind of first-person narratives that inhabit audiobooks is unique, and, again, merits the construction of an aesthetic category of its own.

Finally, casting aural performances as a form of aesthetic 'match-making' is both guided by one's informed intuition, and rooted in the identification of different kinds of internal logic. The process of deciphering which particular performer is best suited to deliver a certain text—even if this decision follows an interpretation that abides by a new internal logic—and, indeed, the ability to quite literally predict whether or not a

performance should be evaluated as aesthetically good, can potentially be applied to different performance-based artistic fields.⁸⁰⁹

⁸⁰⁹ Consider, for instance, the manner in which an informed intuition can assist one in concluding which singer, musician or conductor would best be suited for performing a cover version of a particular song, or a piece of music. Just as the casting of a particular performer with a certain text—and, for that matter, just like the casting of apples and cinnamon—one would be required to acquaint oneself both with the particular song or piece of music, and with the talent and qualifications of the singer, musician or conductor. What if one were to determine, for instance, which of the numerous so-called cover versions to, say, Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, the Beatles' "With a Little Help from My Friends" or Stephen Sondheim's "Send in the Clowns", might be distinguished as aesthetically better than all the others? In such a case, one would need to attain an understanding of the internal logic of each individual work (i.e. as ostensible original text), as well as that of each individual performing artist. Only then would one be able to utilise one's informed intuition, and begin to get a sense of a possible aesthetic hierarchy. With Sondheim, one might establish that Judi Dench's performance, for instance, exceeds that of Bernadette Peters. With the Beatles, one could determine that Joe Cocker's cover version cannot be compared with other cover versions as he employs a somewhat different kind of internal logic to the song—effectively endowing it with a different kind of meaning. Arguably, the Emerson, Lake & Palmer progressive rock interpretation of Mussorgsky, should not, and, perhaps, for a similar reason cannot, be compared with Leonard Bernstein's conducting of the New York Philharmonic.

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'Audiography': Content of the Running-Order on USB flash drive

Arranged by [Chapter] [footnote] (filename)

- [3.6] [n288] Pinter - Writing for the Theatre [see 01m14sec-02m02sec].m4a
- [5.1] [n436] Alan Bennett - Talking Heads - A Chip in the Sugar (disc1, track1) .mp3
- [5.1] [n436] Alan Bennett - Talking Heads - A Chip in the Sugar (disc1, track2).mp3
- [5.1] [n436] Alan Bennett - Talking Heads - A Chip in the Sugar (disc1, track3).mp3
- [5.1] [n436] Alan Bennett - Talking Heads - A Chip in the Sugar (s1ep1).avi
- [5.1] [n436] Alan Bennett - Talking Heads - Her Big Chance (disc3, track1).mp3
- [5.1] [n436] Alan Bennett - Talking Heads - Her Big Chance (disc3, track2).mp3
- [5.1] [n436] Alan Bennett - Talking Heads - Her Big Chance (disc3, track3).mp3
- [5.1] [n436] Alan Bennett - Talking Heads - Her Big Chance (s01ep05).avi
- [5.2] [n443] (a) Tom Parker - Huck Finn - Chapter 01.Ink
- [5.2] [n443] (b) Grover Gardner [online sample].Ink
- [5.2] [n447] (a) Norman Dietz - Chapter 01.Ink
- [5.2] [n447] (b) James Damron [online sample].Ink
- [5.2] [n448] James Damron - Chapter 31 [online sample].Ink
- [5.2] [n450] Norman Dietz - Chapter 31 [see 07m45sec-11m20sec].Ink
- [5.2] [n451] Tom Parker - Chapter 31 [see 05m51sec-08m30sec].Ink
- [5.2] [n452] Michael Prichard - Chaptet 3.Ink
- [5.2] [n453] Don Hagen [online sample].Ink
- [5.2] [n454] (a) Norman Dietz - Chapter 5.Ink
- [5.2] [n454] (b) Michael Prichard - Chaptet 5.Ink
- [5.2] [n455] (a) Dick Hill - Explanatory & Notice [online sample].Ink
- [5.2] [n455] (b) Dick Hill - Chapter 01.Ink
- [5.2] [n456] Michael Prichard - Chaptet 9.Ink

[5.2] [n458] Elijah Wood.Ink

[5.2] [n459] Eric G. Dove [online sample].Ink

[5.2] [n460] Johnny Heller [online sample].Ink

[5.2] [n461] Will Wheaton [online sample].Ink

[5.2] [n462] (a) Patrick Fraley Chapter 14.Ink

[5.2] [n462] (b) William Dufriis - Chapter 14.Ink

[5.2] [n464] Jack Lemmon [online sample].Ink

[5.2] [n477] - Norman Dietz - Chapter 11.Ink

[5.2] [n478] Thomas Becker - Chapter 11.Ink

[5.2] [n479] Tom Parker - Chapter 11.Ink

[5.2] [n480] Garrison Keillor - Chapter 11 - see 45m10sec.Ink

[5.2] [n482] Robin Field [online sample].Ink

[5.2] [n483] Dufriis - Chapter 11.Ink

[5.2] [n484] Stephen L. Vernon [online sample].Ink

[5.2] [n485] Dick Hill - Chapter 11.Ink

[5.2] [n487] Patrick Fraley - Chapter 11.Ink

[5.2] [n488] Michael Prichard - Chaptet 11.Ink

[5.3] [n489] Garrick Hagon - Chapter 31 [see 00m00sec-06m00sec].Ink

[5.3] [n490] Garrick Hagon - Chapter 11.Ink

[5.3] [n491] Elijah Wood - see 01hr58m51sec.Ink

[6.1] [n508] War of the Worlds - Chapter 1 - 'read' by TTS program.mp3

[6.1] [n529] Gilbert Gottfried Reads 50 Shades of Grey [video; CollegeHumor].Ink

[6.2] [549] (a) SULM (sample1).mp3

[6.2] [549] (b) SULM (sample2).mp3

[6.2] [549] (c) SULM (sample3).mp3

[6.2] [549] (d) SULM (sample4).mp3

[6.2] [549] (e) SULM (sample5).mp3

[6.2] [549] (f) SULM (sample6).mp3

[6.2] [n553] (a) Seinfeld & The Buddy Rich Tapes.Ink

[6.2] [n553] (b) Obscure Audio 1 Buddy Rich Cursing His Band.Ink

[6.2] [n554] Orson Welles Frozen Pea.Ink

[6.3] [n570] (a) Mcluhan - The Medium Is The Massage - Side1.mp3

[6.3] [n570] (b) Mcluhan - The Medium Is The Massage - Side2.mp3

[6.3] [n573] Cheese Emporium [from Matching Tie and Handkerchief].mp3

[6.4] [n578] (a) David Cross - I Drink For a Reason - disc1, track1.Ink

[6.4] [n578] (b) David Cross - I Drink For a Reason - disc1, track2.Ink

[6.4] [n578] (c) David Cross - I Drink For a Reason - disc1, track3.Ink

[6.4] [n578] (d) David Cross - I Drink For a Reason - disc1, track4.Ink

[6.4] [n579] Cleese - So, Anyway... [see 00m00sec-03m11sec].Ink

[6.4] [n580] David Cross - I Drink For a Reason - disc1, track6 [04m22sec].Ink

[6.4] [n581] David Cross - I Drink For a Reason - disc2, track1 [01m55sec].Ink

[6.4] [n582] (a) Shalom Auslander - Foreskin's Lament- A Memoir.Ink

[6.4] [n582] (b) Alda, Alan - Things I Overheard While Talking To Myself.Ink

[6.4] [n582] (c) Ephron, Nora - I Remember Nothing.Ink

[6.4] [n582] (d) Fran Lebowitz - The Fran Lebowitz Reader.Ink

[6.5] [n586] King Kong (1933) - CC Laserdisc Commentary.ac3

[6.5] [n587] Who's That Knocking At My Door (1967) - Scorsese [Scene-Selected].ac3

[6.5] [n589] Fellini Satyricon (1969) - CC DVD Commentary.ac3

[6.5] [n593] This Is Spinal Tap (1984) - MGM SE In-Character Commentary.ac3

[6.5] [n595] Blood Simple (1984) - Universal Commentary.ac3

[7.1] [n599] Jack McGowran - Interviewed by Liam Nolan [see 03m50sec].Ink

[7.1] [n600] Jack McGowran - Interviewed by Liam Nolan [see 03m57sec].Ink

[7.2] [n612] Jack McGowran - Interviewed by Liam Nolan [see 00m15sec-00m31sec].Ink

[7.4] [n676] Barry McGovern - Molloy ['I am in my mother's room...'].Ink

[7.4] [n678] Molloy - Barry McGovern [see 00m32sec].Ink

[7.4] [n679] Molloy - Crowley (Naxos) [see 00m45sec].Ink

[7.4] [n680] Moran - Barrett (Naxos) ['It is midnight...'].Ink

[7.4] [n681] Moran - Barry McGovern ['It is midnight...'].Ink

[7.4] [n684] (a) McGovern (Part I - disc2, track11) ['So I put my clothes on...'].Ink

[7.4] [n684] (b) McGovern (Part I - disc3, track02) ['My bicycle had disappeared again...'].Ink

[7.4] [n684] (c) McGovern (Part I - disc4, track09) [final passages of Part 1].Ink

[7.4] [n684] (d) McGovern (Part II - disc5, track12) ['Molloy, or Mollose, was no stranger...'].Ink

[7.4] [n684] (e) McGovern (Part II - disc6, track 11) ['I have no intention of relating...'].Ink

[7.4] [n684] (f) McGovern (Part II - disc8, track 10) ['Now I may make an end...'].Ink

[7.4] [n685] (a) McGovern (disc1, track14) ['And suddenly I remembered...'].Ink

[7.4] [n685] (b) McGovern (disc3, track08) ['And while saying to myself that...'].Ink

[7.4] [n685] (c) McGovern (disc7, track08) ['It was evening. I had lit my fire...'].Ink

[7.4] [n685] (d) McGovern (disc8, track06) ['Certain questions of a theological nature...'].Ink

[7.5] [n689] Cyril Cusack - Molloy.Ink

[7.5] [n695] Jack McGowran - Interviewed by Liam Nolan [see 01m02sec-03m13sec].Ink

[7.5] [n696] Jack McGowran - Beginning To End [video; RTE].Ink

[7.5] [n697] Jack McGowran - Interviewed by Liam Nolan [see 02m59sec-03m01sec].Ink

[7.5] [n702] '[...] The Whole Thing's Coming Out of the Dark'.Ink

[8.2] [n714] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life - Track1.Ink

[8.2] [n716] Sir Less Patterson - Introduction.Ink

[8.2] [n736] Handling Edna [see, e.g., 00m00sec-01m30sec].Ink

[8.2] [n748] I Partridge [see 00m00sec-01m11sec].Ink

[8.2] [n754] Bob Dylan - Chronicles, Vol. 1 - disc1, track1.Ink

[8.2] [n755] Bruce Springsteen - Born to Run - track1.Ink

[8.2] [n758] (a) And Furthermore - Judy Dench - preface to And Furthermore.Ink

[8.2] [n758] (b) And Furthermore - Samanth Bond reading from Chapter 1.Ink

[8.2] [n759] (a) Alec Guinness - Blessings in Disguise [sample].Ink

[8.2] [n759] (b) Alec Guinness - A Positively Final Appearance [sample].Ink

[8.2] [n759] (c) Brian Blessed - Absolute Pandemonium.Ink

[8.2] [n760] Jacobi reads Gielgud's Letters (radio version, episode 2).Ink

[8.2] [n761] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 00m59sec].Ink

[8.2] [n762] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 05m15sec].Ink

[8.2] [n763] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 07m17sec].Ink

[8.2] [n764] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 08m35sec].Ink

[8.2] [n765] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 11m35sec].Ink

[8.2] [n766] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 13m00sec].Ink

[8.2] [n767] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 20m55sec].Ink

[8.2] [n768] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 27m43sec].Ink

[8.2] [n769] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 01h21m26sec].Ink

[8.2] [n770] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 01h24m41sec].Ink

[8.2] [n771] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 01h35m49sec].Ink

[8.2] [n772] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 01h40m39sec].Ink

[8.2] [n773] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 01h41m37sec].Ink

[8.2] [n774] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 54m23sec].Ink

[8.2] [n775] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 02hr10m42sec].Ink

[8.2] [n776] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 12m10sec].Ink

[8.2] [n777] (a) Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 01h37m07sec].Ink

[8.2] [n777] (b) Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 01h39m03sec].Ink

[8.2] [n778] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 36m22sec].Ink

[8.2] [n780] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 07m40sec].Ink

[8.2] [n781] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 07m51sec].Ink

[8.2] [n782] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 13m42sec].Ink

[8.2] [n783] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 26m02sec].Ink

[8.2] [n784] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 42m26sec].Ink

[8.2] [n785] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 53m15sec].Ink

[8.2] [n787] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 01h45m25sec].Ink

[8.2] [n788] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 01h53m57sec].Ink

[8.2] [n789] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 01h54m52sec].Ink

[8.2] [n790] Dame Edna - My Gorgeous Life [see 02h20m20sec].Ink

[8.2] [n792] Humphries - Handling Edna [see 02m05sec].Ink

[8.2] [n793] Steve Coogan - Easily Distracted - Inroduction.Ink

[8.2] [n794] (a) Steve Coogan - Easily Distracted, track2 [see 05m50sec].Ink

[8.2] [n794] (b) Steve Coogan - Easily Distracted, track2 [see 06m25sec].Ink

[8.2] [n794] (c) Steve Coogan - Easily Distracted, track2 [see 06m55sec].Ink

[Conclusions] Behind the Scenes with Dustin Hoffman.Ink