

AN ONTOLOGICAL DISCOURSE ON STORYTELLING

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AN ONTOLOGICAL DISCOURSE ON STORYTELLING

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

An Ontological Discourse on Storytelling

The aim of this thesis is to propose a new way to accurately study the nature of stories. There are three main questions I set out to answer: (1) How can stories be repeatable? (2) How can we characterise stories? (3) How can we account for their creativity? As a solution, I propose approaching it through a dynamic arrangement -instead of focusing solely on stories- which I've termed 'storytelling'. According to this proposed arrangement, I first discern the different components of storytelling which are: story, narrative and telling. While investigating each of these elements separately, I accept a type/token relationship between them. However, instead of the traditional two-level theories, I refer to Nemesio Garcia-Carril Puy's Hypothesis of Nested Types (2019). In order to have a comprehensive study, I investigate two different approaches to the nature of stories: as universal types and as abstract artefacts. All the while supporting that creativity is still possible within such type/token relationship.

ÖZET

Hikaye Anlatımı Üzerine Ontolojik Bir Söylem

Bu tezin amacı, hikayelerin doğasını doğru bir şekilde incelemek için yeni bir yol önermektir. Bu yolda cevaplamak istediğim üç ana soru var: (1) Hikayeler nasıl tekrarlanabiliyor? (2) Hikayeleri nasıl karakterize edebiliriz? (3) Yaratıcılıklarını nasıl açıklayabiliriz? Çözüm olarak, hikayeleri bireysel bir varlık olarak kabul etmek yerine dinamik bir düzenleme olan ‘hikaye anlatımı’ adı altında incelemeyi öneriyorum. Bu düzenlemeye göre, hikaye anlatımı üç farklı bileşenden oluşuyor: hikaye (story), anlatı (narrative) ve anlatım (telling). Bu öğelerin her birini ayrı ayrı incelerken aralarında bir tür/belirteç ilişkisi olduğunu kabul ediyorum. Ancak geleneksel iki düzeyli kuram yerine Nemesio Garcia-Carril Puy'un İç İç Türler Hipotezine —*Hypothesis of Nested Types*— (2019) atıfta bulunuyorum. Bu tür bir tür/belirteç ilişkisi içinde yaratıcılığın hala mümkün olduğunu desteklerken, kapsamlı bir çalışma yapabilmek için, hikayelerin doğasına dair iki farklı yaklaşımı araştırıyorum: evrensel türler ve soyut eserler olarak.

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For Frodo...

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When you are winding down before going to sleep, when real life gets a bit too much to handle, or when you are trying to express your feelings without actually talking about them explicitly, stories are always there for us. One of the greatest superpowers of humankind is our ability to tell stories. Not only do they give us alternatives to reality, they also help find ourselves within the words of fiction. Something so integral to the essence of humankind, and yet its disposition is still thinly veiled behind a curtain of mystery. There have been studies concerning the impact of stories, how they are or should be told, the way they interact with other stories, their originality and many more such literary quests. In this thesis however, I will try to approach stories from a metaphysical point of view rather than literary. Due to stories being a creative form of art, it won't be possible nor wise to try to separate them from their literary roots. That is why, when asking questions and looking for solutions, I will also be referring to their creative nature.

What I am trying to achieve with this venture, which I have deemed metaphysical, is to expand our points of view when it comes to understanding the nature of stories. I will be asking some core questions regarding their nature and through the answers I gather, propose a dynamic arrangement called storytelling. The three main questions I will be employing are:

- How can stories be repeatable?
- How can we characterise stories?

- How can we account for their creativity?

Even though the principal term that is being studied is stories, I propose that we should be trying to understand it through a dynamic arrangement, composed of several different elements, which I call “storytelling”. The elements in question are: story, narrative and telling. This is because, I believe that if we were to only focus on story as a single being, we wouldn’t be able to account for the more artistic aspects of fiction such as creativity and retellings. As much as I want to understand their nature better, I also don’t want to take away the more enchanting aspects of stories and the role they play in our lives.

Throughout this thesis, I will be referring to the ways philosophers have approached other repeatable objects of art (such as musical works) and transcribe certain aspects of them to stories and storytelling. These approaches include type/token relationships, an understanding of properties, transitivity and the creatability problem. By taking this proposed arrangement as a skeleton, I will try to find answers to the main three questions I have introduced above within the bones of storytelling.

The type/token distinction is a very useful tool, not only in philosophy and when it comes to investigating the nature of things; but also in linguistics, science and everyday life. It essentially asserts a relation between a more general thing (types) and its more particular and concrete instances (tokens). I will focus on how to characterise types and pursue two different approaches: types as universals and created types. Accordingly, the nature of the relation with their particulars will be explained. Traditionally, this relation only includes a type and its tokens - making it a two-level conjecture. However, for storytelling, I will be applying this relation a little differently from the traditional way and propose that there can be different levels of types as well.

This I will attain by referring to Nemesio Garcia-Carril Puy's Hypothesis of Nested Types (2019), who had proposed a hierarchical understanding with multiple levels rather than a two-level approach. According to this application; stories are higher-order types, narratives are lower-order types and tellings are tokens of a lower order type. This will be answering the question about how to characterise stories. Furthermore, I will refer to universal properties though their difference to that of other universals, such as types. This will explain how types can have properties without being understood as universal properties themselves. I will also touch upon how, if we embrace the created types option, we would be regarding stories to be abstract artefacts.

A transitive relation (or transitivity) will be used to explain the relationship between said types and tokens. Transitivity is essentially a binary relation in which if A is related to B and B is related to C, then A is related to C. Through this, I will be able to account for how we can identify certain tellings (tokens) to be relating to certain narratives and stories (types). This will further the idea of retellings without compromising their creative nature. In order to do so, I will also identify the aspects that are being transmitted - which will be their essential properties. By discussing the essential properties of the types in question (stories and narratives) I will also be answering the inquiry about how stories can be repeatable through a type/token relationship.

In light of this improved understanding of type/token relationship, the next step will be to make it feel more in line with how we experience stories in our daily lives and answering the third question about how to account for their creativity. Because stories and storytelling is taken as an artistic endeavour, creativity plays an important role. That said, according to which approach we have adopted regarding stories' nature, the way

creativity interacts with them differs. If they are universal types, them being general entities that we can't have much causal interaction with would make us question how creativity can fit in this arrangement. This conundrum is what I will take as the creatability problem and as a solution, offer a distinction between creation and creativity in line with Julian Dodd and his arguments in the article "Musical Works as Eternal Types" (2000). On the other hand, if stories are abstract artefacts, then the creatability problem ends up being redundant. For artefacts are by definition created intentionally, which gives us the independence from the creation vs. creatibility dilemma.

Throughout this thesis, I will be building up from the core of the arrangement towards the more external parts. Beginning in the second chapter, I will establish a dynamic arrangement that is storytelling while also providing a main example to paint a clear picture. Then, I will move onto type/token theories which traditionally endorse a structural monism that would complicate things when working with different versions of the same work. Here, I will also talk about the standard view on versions which supports two transitive relations being operative, explaining how versions are possible. In the end, combining these two views will lead me to the Hypothesis of Nested Types and how it can be implemented into the storytelling arrangement.

In the third chapter, I will begin my deeper investigation into the distinct components by discussing stories and their particular nature. First, I will consider them to be universal types by referring to Linda Wetzel (2018) and discuss their differences to that of universal properties. Here, I will also discuss Richard Wollheim's views on types from his book "Art and its Objects" (2015). Then, as an alternative, I will consider stories to be abstract artefacts by referring to the creationism thesis. I won't be

embarking on an investigation of abstract artefacts in depth, but rather focus on how they can be a way to account for stories. Here, I will benefit from Amie Thomasson's and Lee

Walters' discussion on abstract artefacts in support of this claim. This will lead me to investigate what the essential properties of a story are. From there, I will first eliminate the strict approach which tries to give too narrow of a definition to stories and makes retellings almost impossible. Then, as an alternative, I will make use of the notions Seymour Chatman has introduced in his book "Story and Discourse" (1978). Trying to give a sufficient yet also comprehensive definition to stories will help me in the upcoming chapters when working with transitivity.

The next chapter will have the Hypothesis of Nested Types in effect and propose narratives as lower-order type abstract entities. It will focus on the transposability of stories through different narratives, which I take to be possible through a transmission of properties (transitivity). Here, the creatability problem will be introduced, which challenges the creative nature of stories in relation to them being abstract types. Citing Jerrold Levinson (1980) on this problem, it is essentially a question that arises from our common understanding of art objects and the value we place on creativity. Because of the two different possible understanding of stories I have proposed, I will investigate how this problem would interact with each approach separately. First, regarding the universals approach, I will use Julian Dodd's response to Levinson on refuting this dilemma. Afterwards, I will show how this won't technically be a problem with the artefact approach by referring to created types.

Lastly, I will close this arrangement with tellings as the expression; representations of narratives and therefore stories. Expanding further on their nature as

tokens of a lower-order type (concrete particulars ¹), I will be spotlighting their value as the most specific part of storytelling while also explaining how retellings of the same stories and narratives is possible. Here, I will revisit the creatability problem in light of tellings and refer to Jerrold J. Katz (2000) on the importance of creating tokens (tellings) when it comes to discovering types (stories), in order to add to the solution regarding universal types. In the end, there will be a storytelling structure that has components that work within themselves effortlessly, whether we accept stories to be universal types or abstract artefacts, while also supporting the creative importance of humans in the world of art objects.

A caveat before beginning: when I use the term ‘story’ it will be in reference to fiction and creative non-fiction. Even though the uses of story and narrative differs significantly within different areas of studies and even in daily usage, I will make sure to clearly emphasise in which way I am using them. This rich understanding of stories is actually my leading aspiration for this thesis: trying to understand the metaphysical nature of stories better while also accounting for their creative quality.

¹ Concrete in the sense that they have a spatio-temporal presence

CHAPTER 2

STORYTELLING AS AN ARRANGEMENT

One of the oldest known traditions amongst human kind is storytelling. Even before any type of writing was invented, there had been stories; told around the world, passed from generation to generation. Something so integral to human nature and yet the nature of itself is still causing confusion. I believe that this might be because we are not taking the biggest lesson storytelling teaches us to heart when we investigate: to get creative with it.

In trying to understand the nature of a story, if we only focus on ‘story’ and not consider how it interacts with other components of fiction, the storyteller or the audience, we can only arrive at dead-end results that are also usually counterintuitive. On the grounds that fiction (and here, story) is not a solitary entity, it should be understood in relation to other things. This will have several effects: both on how a story is born and also how it lives on. That is why I propose taking storytelling as our subject of study and inspect it as an arrangement of different components. Even as a universal activity that connects humans from all around the globe and across time, stories can also be quite subjective. Instead of discussing the attributes of these subjective experiences however, I will first focus on the proposed elements of storytelling and then explain how these different experiences are possible through creatability and retellings.

2.1 Main example

In order to better define my stance and have a particular illustration when I move on to explain the three main components along with their relationship, I will start with an example that I will also be referring to throughout this thesis.

Let me tell you a story: a king is murdered, leaving a young prince behind who ends up getting sent into exile and blaming himself for the death of his father. When actually, it is the uncle who had killed the king in order to accede to the throne. The prince eventually figures this out and confronts his uncle. We are all familiar with this tale: *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* by William Shakespeare (c. 1600). Or is it *The Lion King* by Disney (1994)? Both answers are correct as they both tell the same story, yet we know them as two different pieces of art.

Things don't get any simpler if we only focus on one either. Let's consider the story of *Hamlet* first: there is the original play as a script (written work), the original performances of the play in the 1600s at the Globe Theatre, contemporary performances in what we now call Shakespearean English or modern day reimaginings that take place in different time periods and places. Intuitively, we know that they are all telling the story of *Hamlet*, yet we also know that they are different in ways that make them distinct. But how do we know that they are all the same story? There could be several ways to approach understanding this intuitive settlement. I will be making use of certain properties that are essential to stories (so that, in virtue of these properties, we can claim that it is the same story that is being told albeit in different ways) and will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this proposal in the upcoming chapters.

But before that, here is how this example is reflected within the storytelling arrangement that I have proposed:

- Story → Adventures of a troubled prince after the death of his father
- Narrative → Hamlet, The Lion King
- Telling → Shakespearean English Hamlet & the modernised Hamlet movie (2000), the animated movie of The Lion King (1994) & the staged musical The Lion King (1997)

The story here is the most general component. It is vague, yet encompasses every essential property; it is the content (what is being told). Things to consider when defining this component: how do we decide what exactly is the core story and what determines this particular character of the story? Even if it is decided, what is the nature of this component? Narrative is still a version of this content, yet it is more precise and can have either all of the properties of the story or just some. But these properties, whichever they are, must be essential properties. What are these essential properties that need to be preserved and are they the same in every case? For example, an essential property of the story in our example is the murder of a parental figure. That said, how specific or how general these properties should be is a conundrum in of itself. And finally, the one that we experience first-hand, the most concrete part of this arrangement is the telling; the expression/performance of the version of the content. Although explaining the different forms (such as a novel, a musical or a poem) a story is presented in through tellings won't be a problem; different performances of the same play (or any other form it was presented in) might call for an additional hierarchical step here. This further distinction will however steer us further away from the core of storytelling, the story, and therefore the main objective of this thesis. Therefore, I won't

be going into that aspect and rather accept telling as one main component. The other questions will be answered as best as I can in the forthcoming chapters.

The way these components all work together within storytelling is going to be explained through an improved type/token relation with the Hypothesis of Nested Types. In order to do so, I will first talk about how I characterise types and then move onto Garcia-Carril Puy's motivation behind coming up with this hypothesis, and finally follow it up with implementing it into storytelling.

2.2 Type / token theories

The existence of types is in and of itself a subject for debate, that makes way for even more questions if we agree that they do exist, especially about their nature as abstract objects. Here however, I won't be arguing about their existence, but rather their way of existing and relationship with other objects (particularly, with their tokens and other types). In other words, *The Master and Margarita* (by Mikhail Bulgakov) and *Wicked* (the musical) are types; while my copy of *The Master and Margarita* and tonight's performance of *Wicked* are tokens of those types.² And when it comes to the nature of types, I will be regarding them as either abstract artefacts or as a species of universals (in which case, I will also differentiate types from universal properties).

For now, we can say that a type is an abstract and generic entity that becomes instantiated when a token holds a certain set of properties; and tokens are regarded as concrete particulars (Garcia-Carril Puy, 2019, p. 241). This does not mean that they are copies that resemble a type though, rather an instance where the type occurs. This goes

² The types I have used here as examples are referring to narratives within the storytelling arrangement. More about narratives as types in Chapter 4.

hand in hand with the structural monism view that traditional type/token relations presuppose (which will be explained below), but fails to give an account for retellings or how a versioned work is repeated in its versions performances.

2.2.1 Traditional understanding (in the case of art objects)

When studying the nature of art objects, the most common understanding can be explained through structural monism and what Garcia-Carril Puy dubs the standard view. Structural monism is the idea that a work can only be individuated by one structure. Going forward with Garcia-Carril Puy's musical work examples, this structure can either be a "one-to-one relation" where each musical work and sound structure can only be associated with each other and nothing else; or a "many-to-one" relation where more than one musical work can be individuated by the same sound structure. This monistic approach is what the traditional two-level type/token theories provide. However, this rejects the possibility of a third kind of relation, which is a one-to-many relation.

With the standard view on the other hand, we can account for different versions of the same art object through a transitive relationship that supports one-to-many relations. This helps us understand repeatability concerning works of art, but also introduces another distinction between versions and inspired works. The main difference between them being the sort of transitive relation that holds between the products. Having versions is having different interpretations of the same work, a different way of presenting³. While inspired works are derivative and make use of

³ "Despite preliminary attempts by Stephen Davies (2007) and Guy Rohrbaugh (2003), no clear definition of what a version is can be found within the philosophical literature" (Garcia-Carril Puy, p. 242).

certain ideas from the original story as they retell them through a different lens/perspective.

When it comes to different versions of a work, one seeks a relevant degree of similarity between them. For example, it is said that Tchaikovsky had composed his *Symphony No. 2* in 1872 and 1879, respectively. Even though the symphony's overall essence was preserved, there are slightly different sound structures within both cases. Which is to say that, while they are both *Symphony No. 2*, they are also different versions of the same musical work. Or, in our case, think about the different versions of the same book that gets published slightly differently in accordance with the country it is being released in. For example, Douglas Adams had to make changes in word usage in his book series *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* before it was released in America because his publishers found the book to be too British in certain places.⁴ This is to show that, while these versions do involve differences, they are mild in nature and are necessitated to be faithful to the original in their purpose, style and/or presentation. A degree of similarity should be satisfied —although to what degree can be up to debate as well—. In this regard, I will discuss stories' properties and which of these can be taken as essential in Chapter 3.

Applying this to our main example:

- There is a particular performance (*The Lion King* Musical or *The Lion King* Movie)
- The version that the performance is of (The Lion King narrative)
- The work that the version is of (story of the tormented prince)

⁴ Acquired from a fax from Douglas Adams to US editor Byron Preiss - sourced from the Douglas Adams archives

According to this understanding of versions, that Garcia-Carril Puy called the standard view, he concludes that “the performances of different versions of the same ... work are regarded as occurrences of the work that these versions are of” which makes them “three different objects of aesthetic appreciation” (p. 245).

As mentioned above, having retellings or being repeatable through different versions is different from having works inspired by other works. In the case of works inspired by other works, there is no suggestion or intuition that through the inspired work we are experiencing the source material as well. For example, *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a 1966 novel by Jean Rhys that serves as a prequel to Charlotte Bronte's novel *Jane Eyre* (1847), describing the background to Mr. Rochester's marriage from the point-of-view of his wife Antoinette Cosway, the madwoman in the attic. Now, even though this is a story inspired by another story, intuitively we decide that the source work is not repeated within it. That is because it presents us with different essential properties than that of the *Jane Eyre* narrative. The story it is focused on has a completely different structure and properties, intersecting with the inspired work only through some characters. There can be more complicated examples of inspired works, such as within one story but through different inspired-by-the-story works. Take the Hamlet narrative of the “adventures of a troubled prince” story; if this tale is told from the perspective of Hamlet, it is a tragedy that is enriched with self-discovery, mystery and murder. However, telling the same tale from the perspective of Ophelia would give us a tragedy of neglect, romance and doubt that ends with suicide. One can argue that these two are referring to different stories, which would mean that every single character within a narrative has their own story that are different from each other. I will not elaborate

further on inspired works, and instead use versions as different tellings of the same narrative within my proposed storytelling arrangement.

The structural monism that comes hand in hand with the traditional two-level type/token theories falls short when repeatability is involved. On the other hand, the standard view can account for repeatability through a one-to-many relation –such in the case of a work’s versions exhibiting different sound structures–. However, this standard view does not offer the conveniences that structural monism provides. Therefore, Garcia-Carril Puy proposes his Hypothesis of Nested Types, which can be seen as a hybrid of structural monism and the standard view.

2.3 Hypothesis of nested types

This new way of looking at the ontological nature of works of art is a hypothesis which shows that “the thesis of structural monism (entailed by the nature of type) and the association of different sound structures with a same musical work (entailed by the standard view on versions) are compatible” (p. 247). Interpreting this to fit storytelling, I will be using his proposed solution in order to explain how different tellings of the same story is possible within a type/token relationship. Through the Nested Types Hypothesis, I will be able to hold both stories and narratives as types and explain how through transitivity different tellings as tokens is possible.

As a multiple-level type/token theory, nested types assume more than two levels of objects and link them hierarchically by instantiation relations. By means of the hypothesis of nested types, the relation between the parts of storytelling would be as follows:

- i. The story (what is told, content) identified with a higher-order type

- ii. Narrative (a version of the story) identified with a lower-order type in which the higher-order type is instantiated
- iii. Tellings (expression of the narrative), identified with tokens of a lower-order type in which a version is instantiated

This relation relies primarily on a transitive relation between these components. The transitivity relation of predicates can be explained as:

“If a predicate “is F” is true of a token in virtue of the token’s being a token of a type K, then “is F” is also true of K” (Dodd, 2007, p. 17).

In this case, in experiencing a performance of the narrative (telling) we experience the narrative, and in experiencing the narrative we experience the story. Consequently, we can say that by experiencing a telling we experience the story and that the story occurs (is repeated) in the telling. To use an example: by watching a West End production of *Hamlet* in London, we are watching the Hamlet narrative; which in turn is the story of a troubled prince blaming himself after the death of his father, set in Denmark in the late middle ages. Likewise, by watching the movie *The Lion King*, we are watching The Lion King narrative; which is also the story of a troubled prince blaming himself after the death of his father, but this time set in Africa and in the animal kingdom. Therefore, by watching the production or the movie, we are watching the story. In other words, in experiencing either telling, we are experiencing different narratives (*Hamlet* and *The Lion King*) but the same story (adventures of a troubled prince). And even if we accept this theory, intuitively, we do not act as if these two tellings are referring to the same story in practice. Instead we take them to be creative works of art in themselves. The importance of creativity and storytellers is something I do not want to dismiss and yet have found there could be several viable explanations about the creative aspect of

stories. This understanding of a hierarchical type/token relationship will help us to answer how we can characterise stories, while also talking about the properties of these types and which ones are essentials for their repeatability. I will be getting more in depth about this and touching upon creativity henceforth.

2.4 Conclusion

When trying to understand the nature of fictional stories, approaching them as a part of a multi-level type/token relationship seems to offer a plausible explanation, without outright contradicting our practical understanding of different versions within creative endeavours. What I have offered is an arrangement of three parts: story, narrative and telling. Seeing that this arrangement has more than two parts, I needed to modify the classical two-level type/token theories. In order to do so, I first introduced the traditional understanding regarding objects of art which is a combination of structural monism (that explains the type/token relation aspect) and the standard view (that provides an explanation for repeatability through versions and inspired works). Keeping the advantages of both attitudes, I turned to Garcia-Carril Puy's solution: the Hypothesis of Nested Types. By doing so, I was able to give an account for how multiple elements could have a hierarchical relation while still committing to a type/token relationship and also explain repeatability of the same story through different tellings.

Some key takeaways from this chapter are as follows:

- i. While traditional type/token theories are successful in explaining the relations between different instantiations of a general work and the work itself, because they are based upon a monistic understanding, they can't account for the

existence of several different versions of a work. We need to have an explanation for versions, otherwise our main example –saying that both *The Lion King* musical and the *Hamlet* movies are tokens of different narratives, which in turn are lower-order types of the same story type– wouldn't be possible.

- ii. A type/token relationship does not have to be based on monism, it can have multiple levels and still maintain an instantiation relationship through transitivity.
- iii. This is all possible through nested types and even though Garcia-Carril Puy uses this hypothesis for musical works, it can also be implemented to storytelling. Admitting, because of the differences between musical works and stories, certain problems also arise; most notably about the individuation of a story and its essential properties.
- iv. In the case of storytelling, stories are the higher-order types, narratives are lower-order types and tellings are tokens of a lower-order type. This explains how different versions of the same story are possible (narratives), while also further explaining the repeatability of them as different performances (tellings). Noting that the repeatability I take into account concerns versions and retellings, not inspired works.

CHAPTER 3

THE STORY

There are a series of aspects to discuss when it comes to the most essential part of storytelling; the story. To start with, the nature of the objects of repeatable arts (like literature and music with abstract objects that can be experienced multiple times) has always been more ambiguous as there is no exact physical “thing” that can be taken as the artwork itself. This might have led people to believe that such artworks were purely mental (in the minds of the artist), but that would have taken away the objective accessibility and shareability of the artwork. Hence, an approach that would accept the non-physicality of such works without undermining their objectivity was needed.

In this chapter, I will focus on one of the main questions of this study; which is the question of how to characterise stories. In doing so, I will discuss two possible explanations for the abstract nature of stories and their existence: the first one will not only accept stories as types but also take them to be abstract universals, whereas the second will make use of abstract creationism and take stories to be abstract artefacts. First off, I will begin by investigating the development and results of taking stories as an abstract universal type. In taking them as universals, certain questions regarding properties will arise. This I will resolve by differentiating between types as universals and universal properties. After concluding that story types are not the same as universal properties, I will focus on the properties they do have that make it possible for them to be instantiated in lower-order types as well as tokens. As a consequence, the instantiation relation here is often taken to be a relation of tokening. Through deciphering the essential properties of story types as best as I can, I will reject the strict

approach regarding retellings, and instead, embrace Seymour Chatman's proposed terms which will help me determine whether or not two particulars are tokens of the same type.

Afterwards, I will introduce the concept of abstract artefacts, which I will deem stories to be. Additionally, in order for this approach to work within my proposed storytelling arrangement, I will talk about how abstract artefacts can be understood as created types as well. This approach will fill out the gaps that were left by the first approach and also offer explanations in places where the universal interpretation has fallen short. Furthermore, I will make use of the Aarne–Thompson–Uther Index (ATU Index), which is a catalogue of folktale types used in folklore studies that provide interesting insight into the world of story types — not only supporting the role of stories in my proposed arrangement but also offering a catalogue for them.

3.1 Story as abstract universal type

I have proposed taking stories as types in the previous chapters, in order to account for their instantiation relationship with the other parts of storytelling, and yet I did not explain the nature of these types. First, I will be regarding types to be abstract universals. They are abstract in the sense that they are objects that are non-spatial and non-temporal, not existing in the physical realm, but still able to have concrete tokens.

⁵ And types belong to the general category of universals, as universals are mainly understood through their difference to that of particulars. “Having instances is ... the hallmark of a universal, and since types are the sort of thing that have instances, they

⁵ The existence of abstract objects may commence another discussion, but that won't be my focus with this thesis.

are universals. That is, the tokening relationship is a sort of instantiation relationship” (Wetzel, 2009, p. xii). According to realists, universals are shared entities that can be simultaneously exemplified by several different objects; and they encompass the properties things possess (Michael J. Loux, 2006, p.17).⁶ For example, a green apple and a green coat share the universal property of “greenness”; in fact, what makes all green particulars green is the universal of greenness they share in common. But this “greenness” is a property, which brings up the difference between universal types and universal properties.

To begin with, types are objects, whereas properties are features of objects. Richard Wollheim examines these differences even further in his work “Art and its Objects” (2015) and asserts that the relationships between general entities and their particulars can be arranged on a scale of intimacy or intrinsicity. While in the cases of both universals⁷ and types there are shared properties and many of the shared properties will be transmitted; according to this scale, the relationship between a type and its tokens is more intimate than that between a universal property and its instances. “... for not merely is the type present in all its tokens like the universal [property] in all its instances, but for much of the time we think and talk of the type as though it were itself a kind of token, though a peculiarly important or pre-eminent one” (Wollheim,

⁶ “Nominalists deny that there are universals; and the central motivation for their view is the belief that our metaphysics should exhibit simplicity of theory. (...) they believe that it is possible to provide fully satisfactory accounts of attribute agreement, subject-predicate discourse, and abstract reference that posit only particulars or individuals” (Michael J. Loux, 2006, p.46).

⁷ In his book, Wollheim actually uses the term ‘universals’ when referring to what I -in this thesis- have termed ‘universal properties’. That is because he doesn’t take types to be universals. That said, by putting his observations in use here, I do believe that through him showcasing the differences between types and universals, we are also successfully showing the differences between types and universal properties. That is why, in my references to Wollheim, I will be interpreting his usage of ‘universals’ as ‘universal properties’.

2015, p. 50). For example, if we consider a white flag, there will be two ways to approach it: as a random flag that happens to be white or as a white flag in a situation where it is used as a symbol of surrender, truce, or desire to parley. In the first case, a flag has the universal property of whiteness; whereas in the second case, the white flag has become a universal type itself even when we understand it through what seems to be a token at first.

Having examined different types of universals, we can summarise the definitions of the terms that are being used as:

- Property: Properties are the features of the objects. They are also ways things are, entities that things exemplify or instantiate (Orilia, 2022)
- Predicate: Predicate is a bit of language used to express a property. It is a linguistic tool
- Instantiation: Unlike predicate, instantiation is a worldly phenomenon. It is how a property can exist by being had by some object or substance - the instance being a specific object rather than the idea of it

In other words; objects bear properties and predicates name those properties.

3.2 Story as abstract artefact

Accepting that they are abstract, there is another explanation that can be given for the nature of stories: that they are abstract artefacts. By being both abstract entities and created artefacts, this understanding of stories does sound more unlikely and hard to grasp theoretically. Yet, as Amie Thomasson states in her book *Fiction and Metaphysics*: “Properly accounting for fictional objects and other abstract artefacts demands breaking out of traditional category schemes that rest on bifurcations between

the real and the ideal or the material and the mental” (Thomasson, 1999, p. xii). That is what I will try to do, by arguing that not only abstract artefacts are possible, but also that they can be understood as types.

A standard philosophical definition of “artefact”—often assumed even when not explicitly stated—is that artefacts are objects made intentionally, in order to accomplish some purpose, involving modification of materials (Preston, 2020).⁸ This might prompt us to inquire about the purpose or intention of stories. Although it would take another separate study to even get remotely close to answering the question “What is the purpose of art?”, in relation to my study, I can offer that the specific purpose of a story can be taken as a property. More about properties of stories and how we can decide which ones are essential in the upcoming part.

In order to still be able to refer to the Hypothesis of Nested Types when explaining how retellings are possible even with an interpretation of stories as abstract artefacts, one would have to also assume that artefacts can be types. When trying to understand what types are, one comes across multiple positions. Types can be understood as universals –which I have argued for above– but they can also be understood as a set, a kind, or even a law. Can “as an artefact” be one of the positions? If a storyteller ‘makes up’ a story about a poor person becoming rich at the end of their adventure, thus creating a rags-to-riches story that will later be re-told through different narratives, couldn’t that be considered an abstract artefact having different tokens? Which, in turn, would make the story a type? Lee Walters also argues for this stance, saying: The claim that repeatable artworks are types which are created constitutes the

⁸ As this is not primarily a study on the nature of artefacts, I will not be going further into the subject and solely use the provided definition.

bare-bones of a type-creationist treatment of repeatable artworks (Walters, 2013, p. 3). I will delve more into how this approach supports a more creative impression by referring to creationism in the upcoming chapters. But before that, I will discuss the properties a story bears, regardless of its nature as either a universal type or abstract artefact.

3.3 Properties of stories

As stories are one of the oldest and the biggest part of human culture, their meaning and importance is bound to be extensive. That is why I find giving a common definition to what a story is quite complex, if not troublesome. But even when the exact definition and nature of stories is not final or precise, we can still talk about a story's properties. And when trying to give a satisfying description of a concept, referring to the properties they essentially have is a way to do so. This does present an elusive and indefinite nature for stories, in which case I deal with it by acknowledging this and narrowing our scope down by specifying the subject of this thesis to that of our epistemological knowledge of stories instead. Also, through this suggested type/token relation, we come across the need for a theory of essential attributes of the type that will be tokened. Otherwise, how can we say that they are referring to the same stories?

This main issue about how to describe a story is illustrated by French structuralist Claude Bremond as follows:

[The story] is independent of the techniques that bear it along. It may be transposed from one to another medium without losing its essential properties; the subject of a story may serve as argument for a ballet; that of a novel can be transposed to stage or screen; one can recount in words a film to someone who has not seen it. These are words we read, images we see, gestures we decipher,

but through them, it is the story that we follow; and this can be the same story.

That which is narrated has its own proper significant elements, its story elements: these are neither words, nor images, nor gestures but the events, situations, and behaviours signified by the words, images, and gestures.

(Chatman, 1978, p. 20)

So we can say that, at first glance, a story can be defined as a connected series of events told through a demonstrative medium (such as words, imagery, music, performance, etc.). What creates such diversity within stories is how the more particular properties differentiate from and work with each other. In the most general sense, the properties of the content (story) can be taken as the combination of events (the actions and happenings) and existents (the setting and the characters).⁹

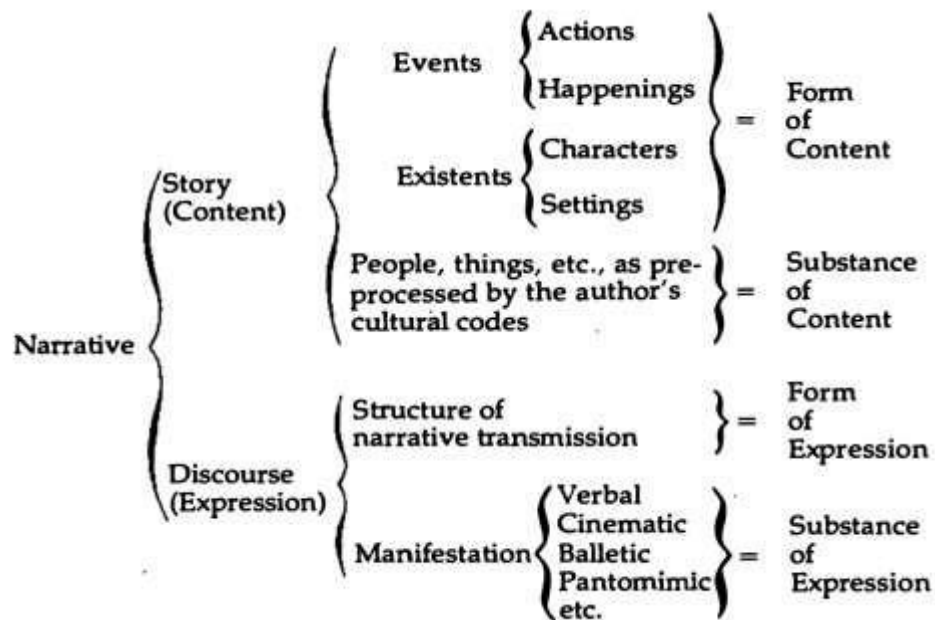


Fig. 1 Seymour Chatman's narrative diagram

⁹ These terms I have borrowed from Seymour Chatman's book *Story and Discourse*, even though the way he defines and uses the term "narrative" is different from mine

After introducing these terms, Seymour Chatman (1978) argues that the principal features for telling a story are order and selection - which I partly agree with. I agree that the most essential part of telling a story is choosing the properties and in what order they happen or appear. What makes me second-guess this approach is how it would translate for retellings. For as I've acknowledged before, I support a type/token relationship in which it is important to determine which properties are being instantiated. I won't argue that the order in which things happen is a fundamental choice, as there are a lot of retellings that do not abide by the original time-line of the story type. That is why, I will be encouraging choosing the essentials from properties independent from the order in which they appear.

Choosing and keeping certain properties is not enough by itself though. If that was the case, this many different tellings wouldn't be possible. What we can call the "strict theory" maintains exactly this: that the story can be defined by said events and existents alone. However, by advocating this theory and referring to Leibniz's law (which states that two things with different properties cannot be identical), we arrive at a situation where retelling of a story is very difficult - if not executed to perfection each time that is. This of course does not comply with our common understanding; for when we go to see a production of *Hamlet* at the community theatre and then come home and read the play, we can clearly tell that they are the same story. Or, more commonly, using actors and actresses with different physical features than the way their characters were described in the book does not result in a different story (in most cases). For example; different people play the role of the prince of Denmark in RSC productions of *Hamlet* in every new production season, and each actor brings their own touch to the character. In other cases, there might not even be enough description to use when

adapting a story and/or things might have to be added: such as when radio plays are made into books or movies and some physical attributes have to be made-up. For example, the height of a character is important when working with J.R.R. Tolkien's works, as Hobbits are short in nature and would have to be portrayed as such in all tellings. On the other hand, the colour of Ford Prefect's eyes and hair can be different in different adaptations of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* but we will still accept him to be the same character.

This strict approach is not compatible with the origins of storytelling either. As storytelling is believed to have begun with visual stories (such as cave drawings) and then shifted to oral tradition (in which stories were experienced exclusively by word of mouth and through voice and gestures), it must have been impossible to have the exact same story told over and over. And yet, there are still stories told from decades ago, some we might even call myths and folklore. Even with changes made to them, we are still able to identify them as certain story types. Here, the ATU Index offers us a great example and catalogue of most, if not all, of the story types that were used in folktales. With this index, certain definitions are presented for the elements that are observed to be recurrent through many folktales.

- Motifs: persistent, indivisible and defining narrative elements or story details
- Tale types: recurring, self-sufficient plots or motif groupings
- Prop functions: common, ordered, principal kernels of story-plot
- Mythemes: minimal contextual analogies that expose subjective culture-specific meanings.

Even so, there are thousands of "different" folktales and other stories using these elements. That's because this does not take away from the magic and creativity of

stories; on the contrary, it adds a uniqueness to the whole experience in line with storytelling being a communication in essence. The creativity is in the selection, mixing and usage of these properties, along with how the communication is experienced by the storyteller and the receiver; not in the properties themselves.

3.3.1 Essential properties

Seeing that we can give examples of adaptations/tellings where certain minor events were either taken out or changed without compromising the integrity of the main story, a need to understand the role of the main components of a story presents itself. And as I have rejected the strict theory in place of deciding which properties are essential, I will once again turn to Chatman. For events, he actually proposes a distinction between ‘satellite’ and ‘kernel’ events where satellite events are minor and can be omitted without damaging the overall story logic, while kernel events are major and necessary to the whole process.¹⁰ According to this logic, in order for us to declare that two narratives or tellings belong to the same story, all it needs is to include the same kernel events. For example, with our main case, the kernel event is the person-in-power being murdered and the offspring blaming themselves. The way the person-in-power is murdered might vary, but the fact that they are dead must remain.

However, taking the other components (the existents) into consideration, we see that having the same kernel events in place is not enough for something to count as a telling of a story. Maybe not as apparent as the events, existents can also be essential to

¹⁰ To better understand how these events are categorised as kernel or satellite and whether it is an action independent of discourse, refer to Chapter 2 of Chatman’s book *Story and Discourse*.

a story's true nature. While it is possible to tell the story of Hamlet in a modern New York setting (such as the 2000 movie *Hamlet*), some stories are bound to their settings such as Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* being set in a jungle, or the *12 Years a Slave* being set in the 1800s. The same goes for the attributes of the characters: you can tell the story of the *Ghostbusters* with a group of people with different race or gender, but you can't tell the story of Anne Shirley from *Anne of Green Gables* without her having ginger hair.

Taking out the events and existents as potential requirements for a story type, we are left with the plot structure. The way a story is told might even define a genre; such as what Aaron Smuts points out in his article *Story Identity and Story Type*:

Consider this high-level description of the plot of *Night of the Demon* (Jacques Tourneur, 1957): A monster exercises its powers. The principal character discovers the existence of the monster. The principle character confirms the discovery of the monster and convinces others of its existence. Together they confront the monster. At this level of abstraction, we have described one of the most popular horror fiction plot structures: onset, discovery, confirmation, and confrontation. (Smuts, 2009, p. 11)

He later goes on to use this example to say that we wouldn't call all horror movies with this premise telling the same story. But I would - in fact, that is exactly what I am saying with my proposed storytelling structure. Just because they are telling the same story does not mean that they cannot also be unique in their narratives and tellings. Their uniqueness comes from how this one story type is being instantiated through different narratives to even further tellings. Be that as it may, I am aware that Smuts uses this example to indicate a variation between story identity and story type, and actually concludes that "to count as the same story, a narrative must have all the essential properties; however, to merely count as the same type of story a narrative must merely have some but not all of the common properties" (p. 11). On account of me

taking stories as a type from the beginning, I take this last remark to not be a criticism but actually an endorsement, and agree that having some but not all of the common properties is enough.

As types, stories have properties that can be transmitted to its tokens, but this does not indicate that each and every property should be transmitted. A token will have some of its properties necessarily, but it need not have all of them necessarily (Wollheim, p.54). That is why I would like to refrain from giving too strict of a definition or declare what properties a story type must transmit. Nevertheless, I actually do find Chatman's narrative diagram quite compact and sufficient and think that a kernel event with kernel existents could be enough of an essential property when it comes to tokening. The hardest part is to pinpoint these essential properties; and for that I fall back upon the creative nature of storytelling and suggest that each story type can bear different essential properties. For example, if we take stories to be abstract artefacts, then their purpose can be taken as an essential property. This purpose doesn't have to always be didactic either; sometimes, the purpose of a story is to tell a story and that is valid as well. Furthermore, if we accept Chatman's kernel events and existents, we can look for them in the tokens of story types. Here, the ATU Index might even offer us assistance.

3.4 Conclusion

Story is the core of the storytelling arrangement: it is the main part whose properties get transmitted through to lower order types and tokens. They are abstract in virtue of

lacking a spatio-temporal existence, but whether they are abstract universal types or abstract artefact types remains undecided.

If we take them to be universals, in virtue of being able to occur repeatedly and being able to be instantiated by more than one entity, we should also bear in mind that types as universals are not the same as universal properties. While universal types are abstract objects that have properties, universal properties can only be features of objects. Also, a type and its tokens have a more intimate relationship than that of a universal property and its instances.

If however we take them to be abstract artefacts, it would satisfy the urge to have a creative explanation for stories. We could defend this approach by showing that stories, as abstract artefacts, are temporal yet non-spatial, exist in virtue of certain purposeful actions by the storyteller and are repeatable. Additionally, we would have to argue that creative types are possible and that abstract artefacts can be accepted as types, so that they can still work within the Hypothesis of Nested Types.

As for a definition, a story can be taken as the compilation of certain elements such as the events (further broken down into actions and happenings) and existents (characters and settings). Yet, the most important aspects are selection and order. Even though this selection and order will be the thing that defines a specific story type, they do not need to be the exact same for each story. Furthermore, among each story type with different narratives and tellings, there can be variations on some elements along the way. Different tellings of the same story can uphold different time-lines, but in order for us to consider them tokens of a specific type, they need to justify certain selections of properties. Which of the defining elements are the kernel ones can differ in each case, yet there will always be certain essential properties that connect the tokens to the types.

In any case, I do agree with Chatman's assessment that storytelling is a communication which innately presupposes two parties: a sender and a receiver (p. 28). And the role of both these parties is crucial; for their subjectivity gives way to differences in interpretation and creativity. That is why I will now move on to showcase the two possible explanations for creativity within this arrangement, whether we take stories to be universal types or created types, in the upcoming chapter concerning narratives.

CHAPTER 4

THE NARRATIVE

The notion of story that has been discussed in the previous chapter may seem too broad - that is because it is. If we were to take stories as an abstract type —whether it be universal or artefact— with a general outline of the properties it possesses, the jump from there to a specific work of art (say, a novel or a movie) would be too big of a leap. That is why I propose an additional layer between the traditional type and its token: narratives. Narratives, as a lower-order type, are still abstract types and yet they are a bit more specific and lower in the scope of their capacity to possess general properties to be tokened in reference to the higher-order type that is the story.

4.1 Transitivity

Transitivity plays an important role within the arrangement of storytelling. Not only is there a transference between types and tokens, but also between different order types - conforming to the Hypothesis of Nested Types. As I proposed narrative to be a lower order type, I will be investigating the transmission of predicates between types in this chapter. (The distinction between property, predicate and instantiate that was made clear in the beginning comes into play here again.)

What I propose is that, property is of the story as the abstract universal or artefact and can be instantiated through the other level types and tokens. The properties in question are not only the essential ones, but also the ones the storyteller has chosen to keep. And these properties are the means for us to be able to experience the main type through the lower-order types and tokens. As Garcia-Carril Puy puts it himself:

The transmission of predicates also holds between higher-order types and their instances (lower-order types) and between higher-order types and the tokens of lower-order types (2019, p. 248). One of the advantages of taking stories as universals disappears when the artefact approach is embraced however. In Hypothesis of Nested Types, the whole hierarchy relies on the relation between the various elements and these relationships are not limited to ones between types and tokens only. An instantiation relation should also be possible through different level types. This wouldn't be a problem with the universals approach as "while both particulars and universals can instantiate entities, only universals can be instantiated" (Rodriguez-Pereyra, 2019) which means stories as an abstract universal type can be instantiated by narratives, which are also abstract universal types. Would this be possible if the type in question is regarded to be an abstract artefact? Even if we accept that creatable types are possible, we would also need to investigate how they act in accordance with instantiation. In my opinion, there is no reason why artefacts can't be instantiated as well as instantiate entities. However, the easier way out here would be to attribute the "being able to both instantiate and be instantiated" feature to the abstract nature of types rather than them being universals. In that case, we can still have an operative arrangement that uses the Hypothesis of Nested Types with both approaches.

Applied to our main example, the story of the tormented prince after the loss of their father is identified with the higher-order type T , which is instantiated in several types of lower-order such as: T_1 (identified with the Hamlet narrative) and T_2 (identified with The Lion King narrative). Each one of these lower-order types (T_1 and T_2) is instantiated in their tellings. The tokens of T_1 are the tellings of Hamlet in original Shakespearean English (v_1^1) and Hamlet in modern NYC (v_1^2). While the tokens of T_2

are the tellings of The Lion King as the animated movie (v_2^1) and The Lion King musical on stage (v_2^2). Here we can still observe the hierarchy of levels that is typically suggested by the idea of instantiation, while also maintaining that both the story and its narratives are types that can be further tokened. In this case, types can not only bear properties that can be instantiated but also, according to Wollheim, there are no properties or sets of properties that cannot pass from token to type (p. 54). Accordingly, there is nothing that can be predicated of a telling of a story that could not also be predicated of that story itself. For example, the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) performance of Hamlet (telling as a token) being thought provoking is therefore true of the narrative of Hamlet (as the type) as well.

It is important here to note that, when I use the term narrative, I am using it in the more general way (as it is a type) and yet not as general as story (higher order type). The story that is being told is the broad content, while the narrative is the more explicit (lower order type). In line with the description we have accepted in the previous chapter, with narratives, it would be okay to add different properties and themes without diverging from the essence of the story type. Concerning our main example, the story type had the essential properties of: (1) the person-in-power being murdered, (2) the offspring blaming themselves but also running away from their problems, (3) figuring out who actually committed the murder, (4) the confrontation. However, when it comes to the different narratives, certain variations are made. For example, with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, almost all the characters die after the confrontation. Whereas with Disney's *The Lion King*, it is only Scar (the uncle who had committed the crime) who dies and the rest of the characters live happily ever after. Another difference concerning the characters is the love interest for the protagonist: in both narratives it is the daughter of

a couple close to the royal family, but while Ophelia in the play has a more complex storyline and ends up dying under ambiguous circumstances, Nala in the animated movie merely acts as a messenger who later marries the protagonist.¹¹

Even when sharing certain essential properties of the story, narrative is still a type and is not the most divergent part of the storytelling arrangement. That would be the telling; the different expressions and performances of the narrative and hence (through transitivity) the story. The telling as the token still carries those essential properties from the story, plus the added properties of the narrative, but has a lot more space to play around and present itself as different entities. This is actually where the importance of creativity also comes into play.

4.2 Creatability problem

When you are talking about works of art, it is impossible to avoid the subject of creativity and its role. That is because our beliefs concerning art in general rests upon the idea of creativity and producing new and meaningful objects (the form of which is not this thesis' concern). Accordingly, I will be talking about creativity, along with the actual act of creating, by referring to the creatability problem.

The whole tradition of art assumes art is creative in the strict sense, that it is a godlike activity in which the artist brings into being what did not exist beforehand - much as a demiurge forms a world out of inchoate matter. The notion that artists truly add to the world, in company with cake-bakers, house-builders, law-makers, and theory-constructors, is surely a deep-rooted idea that merits preservation if at all possible. (Levinson, 1980, p. 8)

¹¹ And of course, in one of them they are humans and in the other they are animals. But that seemed too obvious a difference to mention.

One can either agree or disagree with Levinson's claim, in line with how they define stories. Here, I will use the acceptance of stories as abstract universal types to disagree with Levinson on the grounds that we do not need to create something new in order for the product to be creative. Afterwards, I will use the acceptance of stories as abstract artefact types and show how this creatability problem ceases to be a problem through created types.

4.2.1 Solution through universal types

According to Julian Dodd (2000), we do not need to preserve this idea of creatability. He criticises this problem by defending that if we consider the act of creating and creativity the same thing, then we cannot account for abstract art objects such as musical works or stories.¹² He proclaims that what is essential to composition (in our case, storytelling) is creativity and not the creation of an entity. Which means, when people dismiss the notion of abstract universals when it comes to works of art in reference to creativity, what they are actually doing is confusing creativity and creation. Dodd, engaged with musical works, focuses on the selection of sound structures while composing. In the case with stories, I interpret this as storytellers working with the essential attributes of stories (discussed before: events, existents, order, selection) and creatively mixing them all together in order to come up with something of their own.

To think creatively is to grasp propositions that few others can grasp, and to be able to see connections between propositions that others cannot see. (...) A composer is creative, not through bringing works into existence, but by having to exercise imagination in composing the works she does. A creative thinker is someone who has the imagination to have thoughts beyond the reach of most people. A creative composer is someone who has the imagination to compose

¹² Even though Dodd's paper is focused on musical works, I do believe most -if not all- of his concerns apply to stories as well.

works of music that others do not have the capacity to compose. Composition is, indeed, a form of discovery; but discoveries can be creative. (Dodd, 2000, p. 428)

The same stance can be taken when it comes to stories as well. There are certain story types that have been in the human lexicon for ages; from myths to plays and fairy-tales to classics we can actually recognize certain ‘patterns’ throughout (see ATU Index). This does not take away from the ground-breaking nature of what Mary Shelley did when she wrote *Frankenstein* and started the science-fiction movement. Or the impact of the movie series *The Godfather*, even when we can identify them as a mafia story type. When you think about the stories that had an immense impact on you whether when you were a child, or at any age, you might see that the story at the centre is a familiar one - one that had been done hundreds of times before. And yet, that specific piece is important to you and is unique in its entirety. Not because it created something out of nothing or because it was a brand new idea, but rather because it created a unique experience in the process of being told. As Dodd puts it; adding something to our culture is not a matter of creating something that did not exist before; it is placing something within our culture that was not there before (p. 430).

4.2.2 Solution through artefact types

On the other hand, if we were to accept stories as abstract artefacts, we would be saying that types can be creatable as well; therefore, making the problem disappear. Creating something new can be explained through creationism, which is the thesis that there are abstract artefacts, that is, objects that have no spatial location and that are deliberately brought into existence as a result of creative acts (Korman, 2013). What this maintains

is that, in this situation, stories are created by storytellers (let it be a writer, poet, painter) and what they achieve is both creation and a creative act at the same time.

When it comes to how abstract artefacts can have the type/token relationship, Lee Walters says: “For the creationist, a type and the associated property of being a token of that type are dependent abstracta, which are tethered to the concrete world in various ways (...) including, but are not limited to, having tokens or being instantiated” (Walters, 2013, p.29).

To illustrate how these views would play out in practice, we can take a look at other creative acts concerning repeatable objects. When eating at a famous restaurant a meal from the most successful chef, we can either a) maintain that the dish wasn't created from nothing by the chef but was rather a selection and mixture process with what they had in the kitchen, or b) say that by selecting and mixing different components, the chef has created a new artefact for us to consume. If we accept a, then we can argue that it was a case of creatively discovering, preserving the creative side. And if we accept b, we can say that the procedure was a creative one whilst also being a creation in itself.

Presently, I will refrain from taking a side in this case as I think both approaches could be accepted, as long as they can account for creativity and work within a type/token relationship.

4.3 Conclusion

Narratives are the second phase in the storytelling arrangement and they are also abstract types, which we can dub lower-order types. They are structured after the

general story type, and yet can differ from the story and the other narratives of said story in terms of how the properties are used or interpreted.

The fact that both stories and narratives are types might propose confusion though. If stories are taken as abstract universal types, then this instantiation relation between two types is easier to explain as universals can both instantiate and be instantiated. Accepting stories as abstract artefact types however, one would have to explain how artefact types can also be both instantiated and instantiate other entities. Not delving into this problem further, suggesting that both approaches have the potential to work within the proposed transitivity relations, I moved on to the creative nature of stories instead.

After introducing the creatability problem by referring to Levinson, I showed that it was only a problem if the universals approach was accepted. In order to solve it, I asserted that if we can distinguish between the act of creating and creativity, we can actually account for how works of art can still be the outcome of a creative process without having to be created. On the other hand, by accepting the artefact approach, we can avoid this problem and claim that they can be both created and creative processes at the same time.

Regardless of which approach is adopted, there is still one more element in the storytelling arrangement. Accepting that there are copious stories and narratives that we experience as different art objects in different forms, such as a *Hamlet* movie or *The Lion King* musical, I need to explain how they are possible. That is why I introduce 'tellings' as the next phase in storytelling.

CHAPTER 5

THE TELLING

Up until now, I have been talking about types and how they operate within the storytelling arrangement in line with the Hypothesis of Nested Types. However, there is also the token part of this relation. Whether story and narrative types are universals or artefacts, they can be tokened to have concrete particulars. In our case, the concrete tokens will be called tellings. As a matter of fact, I have talked about tellings throughout the previous chapters, especially in relation to transitivity. Now, I will go over their role within storytelling and the creatability problem by going deeper into their nature as tokens of a lower-order type.

5.1 Tokens of a lower-order type

As discussed before, in the storytelling arrangement, there are different levels of types which are stories and their narratives. Tellings on the other hand, are the tokens of narratives - which is a lower-order type. They all relate to each other through the transitivity relation of predicates, which was explained earlier. What is important in our case is that transitivity holds between higher-order types and their instances (lower-order types) and between higher-order types and the tokens of lower-order types (Garcia-Carril Puy, p. 248). An example would be as follows:

- i. Story — The main work — Higher-order type — Star crossed lovers whose relationship is doomed to end in tragedy

- ii. Narrative — A version of the story — Lower-order type (in which the higher-order type is instantiated) — Romeo and Juliet from *Romeo & Juliet* by William Shakespeare, Orpheus and Eurydice from Greek Mythology, Heathcliff and Catherine from *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë, Mateo and Rufus from *They Both Die at the End* by Adam Silvera
- iii. Telling — a specific work/portrayal — tokens of a lower-order type (in which a narration is instantiated) — *Romeo & Juliet* in Shakespearean English performed at West End, *Romeo + Juliet* 1996 movie where it takes place in contemporary United States and has warring mafia empires instead

By transitivity, we can say that in watching the 1996 movie *Romeo + Juliet*, we are experiencing the star crossed lovers story, which occurs in the Romeo and Juliet narrative.

This understanding of tellings as tokens of a lower-order-type, paired with the standard view discussed in Chapter 2, makes repeatability possible through different versions, retellings and inspired works. Once again, in this thesis I have only focused on versions and retellings as inspired works suggest a special case of their own. Coming back to tellings, they are how we can account for art objects being creative, especially if the universals account is embraced and the creativity problem is present. That is because according to this arrangement, we can talk about the universal story type while also acknowledging different types of tellings are possible. And what makes all these different tellings unique and special is the way they are performed, the adding and mixing of properties - even when they are instantiations of certain narratives. In fact, it is through these concrete tellings that we get to experience the essential properties of the story and narrative; while also enjoying the differences the various tellings offer us.

5.2 Creatability problem concerning tellings

A different way to view the creatability problem when accepting stories to be universal types is to approach it not as a problem but as a means to understand the type-token relationship better. If we were to perceive discovery of types by way of creation of their tokens, then we might justify the creatively-discovering vs creating-from-scratch distinction even easier. We can say that these types (stories and narratives) can be discovered and introduced by creating their concrete tokens (tellings). Jerrold J. Katz (2000) encapsulate this approach thoroughly in his book with this passage:

The speaker wants to say something about the writer's or composer's originality in connection with the type, but is vague about the distinction between type and token. Once we are clear about the distinction, we have a perfectly good way of expressing what the speaker wants to say about the writer's or composer's originality in connection with a type. Originality here is first-tokening of the type. (...) The artistic work in the intended sense is a creation as well as a discovery. Since the artist's creative achievement, special relation to the work, and originality lie in his or her first-tokening, the debt we owe to the artist is for making it possible for us to appreciate the abstract type as well as exceptional tokens of the type. (Katz, 2000, p.p. 168-169)

This also establishes a vital relationship between stories and all their consecutive forms within the storytelling arrangement - a relationship that relies on the tokens for their types to be accessible to us. Even when we accept that because of their abstract universal nature stories cannot be created, we can still argue that through the property transmission relation between the elements of storytelling they can be creatively constructed via creating its token. This would solve the creatability problem. We have already established that the relation between types and their tokens is an instantiation relation. Referring to this transitivity, we can also support the aforementioned creatively-discovering-the-type-through-it's-token approach: because the properties are

predicated in the lower-order type and tokens of said lower-order-type, when experiencing the telling we are also experiencing the narrative and story.

This won't be a problem if the abstract artefact types approach is accepted, for in that case, the creation would already be justified. When it comes to creativity, we can still maintain that what storytellers are doing with the story and narrative types when they are working with their tokens, the tellings, is engaging in a creative act. A great example for different tellings of the same story through various forms is *Good Omens*. *Good Omens* is a comedy & fantasy book written by Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman which was published in 1990. Ever since it became a cult classic in fantasy-story circles, there had been many attempts at adaptations. It all came to fruition in 2019 however, when a tv-show of the story was developed. The story is one we are all too familiar with: good vs evil. The narrative focuses on an angel and a demon working together in the face of the upcoming End Times when the son of Satan is born. The tellings are numerous in this case: the book (written in 1990), the full cast radio-drama (aired in 2015), the tv-show (aired in 2019) and even the script book that was sold afterwards. They are all different tellings of the same narrative. However, currently a second season is in the making and it won't be an adaptation (as the whole book was used up for the first season). In this case, the second season of *Good Omens* will be a new narrative (if they keep the central theme of good vs evil) or a new story (if they only use the same characters but decide to focus on a new theme).

This proposed relationship might also be type/token sensitive. For example, I have multiple copies of the *Good Omens* book in my personal library. If we understand them as different concrete instances of the "Good Omens book", we might have to introduce yet another level in the hierarchy here. That said, as I've made clear in the

beginning, I won't be going further into this with my study. My aim is to discuss a different take on how we understand stories, and I do this by introducing storytelling as a dynamic arrangement. The finer details are not the top priority as of yet.

5.3 Conclusion

Tellings are the concrete and most accessible part of the storytelling construction. They are what we actually refer to when speaking of a work of art that tells a story - may it be a book, movie, musical, podcast show, etc. They are also the way to still understand works of art as a creative object even if we accept that stories are abstract universals. If stories are abstract universals, what the storyteller does is to create the telling; and in doing so, with that telling, discover and convey the story. This creatively discovering argument brings forth its own set of questions, such as: are there infinitely many stories waiting to be discovered or maybe there are only a couple of stories and the reason we have so many narratives is through our infinite creativity.

It does not matter that there are certain story types which have been told in various different narratives and tellings throughout the centuries - it is most natural. Humans are storytellers at the core and referring to the same universal does not take away the creativity from what is being conveyed. Or if they are artefacts, more than one storyteller can refer to the same artefact when creating a narrative. For example, the rags-to-riches story has been told many-a-times; from Ancient Greek story of Rhodopis to the Grimm's fairy tale *Cinderella* and from Disney's *Cinderella* (1950) to the movie *Maid in Manhattan* (2002). And yet, we perceive all these said tales as different objects within themselves.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Stories are an essential part of humanity; whether they be folk-tales or stories our grandparents told us, they have always been a part of our lives. Because the world of stories is vast and maybe even ceaseless, I have only concentrated on fiction stories in this thesis in order to focus our attention to one place. As it is a repeatable and abstract object of art, pinpointing the exact nature and role of stories from an ontological point of view was a complex undertaking. In order to do so, instead of only fixating on stories as a singular element, I have proposed an arrangement where stories could exist within a space where they could interact with other elements such as narratives and tellings. This I have called “storytelling”.

Storytelling consists of three elements: story, narrative and telling. These elements are all interconnected through a type/token relationship, although it doesn't abide by the traditional two-level type/token theories. (That is because the two-level understanding wasn't capable of explaining repeatability of a story in its versions as tellings or how a one-to-many relation between type and its instances is possible.) Instead, they have a hierarchical relationship which I have explained by referring to Nemesio Garcia-Carril Puy's Hypothesis of Nested Types. According to this hypothesis, a type/token relation can have more than one level - in our case two different level types and tokens of the lower-order type. With the help of this hypothesis, within storytelling, I was able to regard tellings as instances of a story qua narrative type - and hence support a one-to-many relation between type and its instances.

At the core of storytelling is the story. Here one of the main questions of this thesis was presented: how to actually characterise stories. Beginning with the nature of stories, I took them to be types. Through this, I was able to propose an improved type/token relation that supported a hierarchical understanding which also became the basis of my explanation for stories' repeatability. Nonetheless, it wasn't enough to call them types, I needed to explain further.

Here, I proposed two different approaches: to either take them as abstract universal types or as abstract artefact types. In both instances, I wanted to be able to account for different versions of the same story by referring to their repeatability through their particulars. This was compatible with the universal approach, as universals and particulars come hand in hand and explaining transitivity by way of universals was more natural. However, with the artefacts approach, I needed to show that transitivity still holds between stories and their particulars. Therefore, I proposed attributing the transitivity feature to the type nature of stories and support a creationism thesis within this proposal. Additionally, with the universals approach, I had to make a distinction between universal types and universal properties - as I defend that while stories can have a universal nature, they are objects that possess properties, not properties themselves. As universal types, they have a more intimate relation with their particulars (tokens), especially regarding transitivity.

After introducing these two approaches to stories' nature, but not specifically favouring one over the other, I needed to discuss and define their essential properties in order to explain how they were instantiated. This was the trickiest undertaking because it meant having a definition for what a story was. In the end though, I concluded that an absolute definition was not possible with the ever changing disposition of stories; but

that we could have certain essential property components such as events, existents, order and selection. Each story type has the possibility of having its own essential properties which makes every storytelling arrangement without equal. However, they are consistent within their structure when it comes to which properties are essential and must be transmitted. In accordance with the terms and structure Chatman had proposed, I acknowledged the idea of kernel events (which are major and necessary to the whole process) but did not specify how they were chosen. That is because, I think they are all individually specific cases with each story type. How they are chosen and used actually makes up the creative portion of this storytelling arrangement, preparing the scene for the final major question of my thesis which is to account for their creativity.

Particularly because stories are objects of art and creativity plays an important role for their identity. At first glance, considering a type/token relation and advocating types as universals make it look like there is no room for a human intervention - which would go against the creativity approach. However, agreeing with Julian Dodd, I have shown that by adopting a distinction between creation and creativity we can satisfy our established understanding of art objects while also accepting their universal nature. On the other hand, we can take stories to be artefact types and eliminate the need to account for how they are created in the most basic sense.¹³

The aim of this thesis was to introduce a fresh way of approaching stories by introducing a storytelling arrangement and analysing its components. So, to finalise, the components and their descriptions is as follows:

¹³ Of course, this can lead to its own set of investigations, concerning their abstract nature and even how artefacts are defined, which were not discussed here.

- Story
 - Content
 - The core component
 - Higher-order type
 - Either abstract universal or abstract artefact
 - If it is an universal, cannot be created but only creatively discovered
 - If it is an artefact, can be created with intention

- Narrative
 - A version of the content
 - Lower-order type
 - Either abstract universal or abstract artefact
 - More specific than the story it refers to, and yet still carries the essential properties

- Telling
 - The expression, performance
 - Tokens of a lower-order type
 - Through deferred ostension, can be used to access a type

When we encounter a piece of storytelling -whether as a written work, audiobook, movie or play- what we are experiencing directly is the concrete token that is the telling of a lower-order-type that is instantiated from the general story type which was either creatively discovered by the artist or intentionally made. According to my proposed storytelling arrangement, the more important and creative aspects all occur within narratives or tellings —leaving the story to be as broad as it needs. For example, with

the previous *Good Omens* example, I have described the story as “good vs. evil”. This story is one of the oldest and most popular ones, and yet through the narrative it managed to turn itself into a brand new idea (while still keeping the good vs. evil theme). Maybe there aren’t even that many different stories, but countless narratives and tellings instead. For all we can say, there could only be one story (which is either a universal that was discovered or was created by someone long ago) and we have been creatively retelling that story by creating different narratives of it and presenting them as even more diverse tellings. Because, as Stephen Fry says, “Novelty and originality do not come from the invention of new milieus, new genres or new modalities. They come from the how and the who, not from the what” (2018, p. 239).

...I sat in a room with several other writers, discussing how we made books, all the different stories we admired and the ones we disliked and the ones we wanted to write. One writer there was quite famous and very unpleasant, and he gave us all a disgusted look as we talked about all the different stories. There were, he said contemptuously (...) only two stories, really:

A stranger comes to town.

And

Someone goes on a journey

The writer I liked best in the room (...) murmured a secret to me: “Those are the same story.” I asked her what she meant (...) and wrote it down: When a stranger comes to town, they have arrived from someplace else, so someone has gone on a journey. (Snicket, 2021, p.21)

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