

THEATER PLAY BEYOND TEXT AND
PERFORMANCE



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ABSTRACT

Theater Play Beyond Text and Performance

Theater plays are traditionally associated with their written texts or performances. In everyday language, we often say phrases like “I am reading a play” or “I am going to see a play.” However, defining theater plays with texts and performances poses some conceptual challenges. A text is an object, while a performance is an event. Since they belong to distinct ontological categories, substituting one for the other is conceptually flawed. A play encompasses both the written text and the performance; however, they cannot fully define it. In discussions about a play’s text, “text” and “play” can diverge, and similarly, “play” and “performance” differ in the context of a play’s performance. Therefore, while a play exists in text and performance, it is not identical. In this thesis, I address the ontological status of plays, distinguishing them from texts and performances, and defend that plays are abstract artifacts that can have multiple instances. Within this framework, I critique the limitations of Platonist and creationist frameworks, developed in the context of musical works and relying on the traditional type/token distinction. These theories provide a rigid model, and their limitations become clear when considering the complexities of theater plays, failing to address variations in textual editions or performance interpretations. However, I argue that there can be different versions of the same play, and to defend this, I propose an alternative approach by adapting Nemesio García-Carril Puy’s (2019) Hypothesis of Nested Types, a multi-layered type/token theory likewise formulated for musical works, to theater plays.

ÖZET

Metin ve Performansın Ötesinde Tiyatro Oyunu

Tiyatro oyunları, geleneksel olarak yazılı metinleri ya da performanslarıyla ilişkilendirilir. Günlük dilde sıkça “Bir oyun okuyorum” ya da “Bir oyuna gidiyorum” gibi ifadeler kullanırız. Ancak tiyatro oyunlarını metin ya da performansla tanımlamak bazı kavramsal sorunlara yol açar. Metin bir nesnedir; performans ise bir olaydır. Bu iki unsur farklı ontolojik kategorilere ait olduğundan, birinin diğerinin yerine geçmesi kavramsal açıdan sorunludur. Bir oyun hem yazılı metni hem de sahne performansını içerir; ancak bu iki unsurun hiçbiri onu tam olarak tanımlayamaz. Bir oyunun metni üzerine konuşurken “metin” ve “oyun” kavramları birbirinden ayrılabilir; benzer şekilde, bir oyunun sahnelenişi bağlamında da “oyun” ile “performans” arasında fark oluşur. Dolayısıyla bir oyun hem metin hem de performans aracılığıyla ortaya çıksa da bunların hiçbiriyle özdeş değildir. Bu tezde oyunların ontolojik statüsünü, onları metinlerden ve performanslardan ayırarak ele alıyorum ve oyunların, birden fazla örneği olabilen soyut eserler olduğunu savunuyorum. Bu çerçevede, müzik eserleri bağlamında geliştirilmiş ve geleneksel tür/belirteç ayırımına dayanan Platoncu ve yaratılışçı kuramların sınırlılıklarını eleştiriyorum. Bu kuramlar katı bir model sunar ve tiyatro oyunlarının karmaşık yapıları göz önüne alındığında, metinsel versiyonlar ya da performatif yorumlar arasındaki farklılıkları açıklamakta yetersiz kalırlar. Oysa ben, aynı oyunun farklı versiyonlarının olabileceğini savunuyorum. Bu görüşü savunmak adına, yine müzik eserleri için geliştirilmiş olan Nemesio García-Carril Puy’un (2019) çok katmanlı tür/belirteç kuramı olan İç İç Türler Hipotezi’ni tiyatro oyunlarına uyarlayarak alternatif bir yaklaşım öneriyorum.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2: A STRUCTURAL ANALOGY BETWEEN THEATER PLAYS AND COMPUTER PROGRAMS	5
2.1 Source code, execution, and copy of computer programs	5
2.2 The meaning of “text” and “performance” in theatre	9
2.3 Text, performance, and copy of plays	10
2.4 Conclusion	14
CHAPTER 3: THE NATURE OF THEATRE PLAYS	16
3.1 Theatre play as an abstract artifact	16
3.2 Indicated types	24
3.3 Conclusion	28
CHAPTER 4: THEATRE PLAY AS A STORY INTENDED FOR THE STAGE ..	30
4.1 What is a theater play?	30
4.2 Hypothesis of nested types	37
4.3 Challenges of the hypothesis of nested types	42
4.4 Conclusion	49
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION	50
REFERENCES	54

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In everyday language, the term “theater play” refers both to a written text and to a performance. In theatrical contexts, a text is generally defined as a written script that includes dialogues, stage directions, character names, and setting descriptions. In contrast, a performance is the live enactment of this text on stage by the actors and director. From this perspective, text and performance have fundamentally different natures. While text is an object, performance is an event. Despite belonging to different ontological categories, they are often mentioned together when discussing a theater play. For instance, when we say, “I am reading a play,” we usually refer to the written text. When we say, “I am going to a play,” we mean the actual stage performance. Actually, it is unsurprising that both the written text and the performance are referred to as a theater play. In the broadest sense, a theater play is defined as a theatrical text composed of dialogues and character descriptions, intended for staging rather than just reading. The performance of the same work is also called a theater play.

At first glance, viewing a theater play as both a text and a performance may seem inclusive. However, this perspective raises several issues. As I note, text and performance are fundamentally different things. A text is an object that can exist independently of time and space; it can be produced in multiple copies, whether printed on paper, digitized as a PDF, or memorized and recited repeatedly. In contrast, a performance is a unique event that occurs in a particular time and place and cannot be replicated because it depends on various factors, including the movements of actors, voice tones, audience reactions, lighting, stage design, and

even the actors' moods of the day. When a play is regarded as both a performance and a text simultaneously, it raises questions about its true nature. Is the play both repeatable and unrepeatable? Is it temporally bound, or is it atemporal? Since something cannot be both temporal and atemporal, or both repeatable and unrepeatable at the same time, it seems unlikely that a play can be both a performance and a text simultaneously.

Moreover, another problem with seeing the theater play as both a text intended for staging and as a performance arises when we encounter examples that are not directly connected to either of these two elements. For instance, Lord Byron wrote his plays not to be staged but to be imagined in the reader's mind, yet he refers to these works as theater plays (Burroughs, 2018, pp. 13-15). How should we categorize texts that were not intended for performance? Similarly, some performances are based on novels, not theater texts written for staging. Examples such as *Anna Karenina*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Frankenstein*, and *Crime and Punishment* are often adapted for the stage. Does this mean that performances based on works not written for the theater are different from performances based on theater texts?

On the other hand, theater texts are often changed when they are performed. Directors cut, rewrite, modernize, or combine texts. Sometimes scenes are omitted, characters are changed, and sometimes the play is adapted to a different context. Nevertheless, both actors, directors, and audiences see these performances as "performances of the same play". The acceptance of a play as performances of the same play despite its versions staged with different texts seems to be problematic for approaches that reduce the theater play to text, because if a theater play is a text, then stagings with different texts should be performances of different plays. However, in

theater practice, it is not unexpected that texts are frequently changed and thus staged in very different ways. But how can a play remain the same play despite different texts and performances? In other words, how can a play be repeated without losing its essence?

All these questions and contradictions arise from the multiple meanings attributed to the theater play and make it necessary to distinguish between play, text, and performance in order to avoid ambiguities. In this thesis, I argue that it is insufficient to conceive of plays as either texts or performances and propose to redefine them as stage-intended stories, that is, abstract artifacts specifically designed to be realized through performance. With this definition, I aim to explain how plays can be instantiated in both texts and performances without being reducible to either. Moreover, by drawing on Nemesio García-Carril Puy's Nested Types Hypothesis (2019), I both treat plays as repeatable works and provide a coherent ontological framework that clarifies the relationship between the play, its text, and its performances.

In the second chapter of my thesis, I argue that theater plays cannot be identified with either the text or the performance; rather, they are abstract entities that can be realized on both levels but are reducible to neither. Accordingly, plays are abstract art objects created by particular people with particular intentions. I draw an analogy between computer programs and theatre plays to make this ontological difference between text, performance, and play explicit. Drawing on Nurbay Irmak's (2012) article "Software is an Abstract Artifact", I argue that just as computer programs cannot be reduced to their source code or execution, theatre plays cannot be defined solely in terms of text or performance; instead, they must be understood at a more abstract level.

In the next chapter, I elaborate on what it means for plays to be abstract entities, arguing that plays are abstract artifacts created by humans and that plays are abstract only because they lack specific spatial locations. In doing so, I draw on the ontology of musical works, exploring whether we can consider plays through different ontological approaches, namely Platonism and creationism. Both approaches treat musical works and instances within the traditional type/token relation. This distinction distinguishes general concepts (types) and their specific, physical instances (tokens). While this distinction helps us understand the nature of objects, it does not adequately explain how multiple versions of a work of art can exist. For this reason, I argue that David Saltz's approach, which is based on the traditional type/token relationship, to theater play is inadequate because it fails to explain how plays can have multiple versions. Another reason I object to Saltz's theory is that it is performance-oriented and treats plays as a type of performance. In the fourth chapter, I address the question of what a play is if it is neither a text nor a performance, and I argue that plays are stories intended for the stage, capable of being repeated through different narratives by means of formal variation. To support this view, I address how theater plays can preserve their identity as repeatable stories meant for the stage through the lens of Nemesia Garcia-Carril Puy's Nested Types Hypothesis (2019). Although originally developed for musical works, this hypothesis offers a comprehensive framework to explain how plays can be repeatable, that is, how multiple instances of the same play can exist through a type/token relationship.

CHAPTER 2

A STRUCTURAL ANALOGY BETWEEN THEATER PLAYS AND COMPUTER PROGRAMS

A play, its copies, texts, and performances should each be recognized as distinct entities, each with its own role and ontological significance. An effective way of showing this distinction is to draw an analogy with the components of computer programs, source code, execution, and copies of programs, each interconnected within a larger framework but ontologically distinct from the other. So, in this chapter, I first clarify these components of computer programs and then demonstrate that none of these components can be identified as the program itself. Afterward, I demonstrate that a similar situation arises when considering theater plays. Just as the components of a computer program cannot be equated with the program itself, I argue that the individual elements of a theater play cannot be regarded as the play itself. Finally, I assess potential counterarguments to this position.

2.1 Source code, execution, and copy of computer programs

Computer programs are generally defined as machine instructions that enable electronic devices to communicate and operate seamlessly for specific tasks.

However, a computer program can be viewed in three ways: its source code or text, the execution of that code, and its copies (Irmak, 2012, p. 4).¹

The execution of a computer program refers to running the program, making it a physical process and a type of event. It represents the physical manifestation of

¹ There is also an algorithm for computer programs, but in this chapter, I leave this entity aside for the purposes of our discussion.

certain computational tendencies within a computer, bringing the program's instructions into action (Irmak, 2012, p. 5).

On the other hand, the computer program's source code or text consists of a set of instructions designed to make the computer perform specific tasks, and it is an abstract entity. Abstract entities are often understood as objects that do not occupy space or time. They cannot have any physical effects and do not engage in causal relationships. Examples of abstract entities include numbers, universals, and sets (Swoyer, 2007, pp. 11-15).² The source codes of computer programs are abstract entities primarily because they are non-spatial objects written in a specific programming language.

Abstract entities are often contrasted with concrete entities. Unlike abstract entities, concrete objects occupy space and time and can have causal relationships. Examples of concrete entities include physical objects such as stones, trees, planets, and people (Swoyer, 2007, pp. 11-15).

The distinction between abstract and concrete entities becomes crucial when considering the type/token distinction. This is an ontological distinction between a general kind of thing and its specific instances. A type refers to a general kind of thing. It is abstract and singular. For example, the word "rose" in the phrase "rose is a rose is a rose is a rose" is a type of word. In contrast, tokens are concrete and particular items; each instance of the word "rose" in that phrase is a token, totaling four in all. So, a type is an abstract concept or general category, while a token is a concrete example of that concept or category (Wetzel, 2006). This distinction can help us understand the relationship between source code and a specific instance. As I

² However, some may argue that even though, for example, works of fiction are abstract entities, they still have the power to affect us (Falguera, Martínez-Vidal, & Rosen, 2022). Therefore, I do not delve into the issue of the causal relationships of abstract entities.

said before, the text of a computer program consists of a series of instructions. These instructions can be stored in a physical medium, and this medium may be a physical entity, such as a set of circuits inside a computer. While the text itself is an abstract object because it is non-spatial, the fact that these instructions are located in a physical medium means that this physical medium, the copy of the program, can be regarded as an instance of the text. Therefore, it is a concrete entity. So, the difference between the text of a computer program and a physical copy of that program illustrates the distinction between a type and its tokens (Irmak, 2012, p. 5).

Now, let me explain why a computer program cannot be its text, copy, or execution. It cannot be defined as text because the same program can have different texts. The computer program's code is written in a specific programming language, and different operating systems may require different languages to interact with system resources. As a result, a program that performs the same function might have versions written in different programming languages of the same language tailored for various operating systems. For example, different texts may be required to run Firefox 3 on Windows and Mac; however, the program remains the same in both cases because the identity of computer programs is based on their fundamental functions and purposes. Although the text written for Windows and Mac OS is different, both texts represent Firefox 3 software that performs the same basic function and is designed for the same purpose. These different code versions are simply expressions or implementations of the same software across various platforms. Therefore, we cannot reduce a program to just its code (Irmak, 2012, pp. 5-6).

Moreover, a copy of a computer program should not be considered the same as the computer program itself. Even if a copy of the program is destroyed, the

program can still exist. For example, if you destroy the DVD-ROM of Windows 7, you are only destroying that particular copy, not Windows 7 itself. When we examine the type/token distinction, it becomes clearer that a copy and the program are separate entities. Although closely related, a text type and a text token are not the same; they are distinct entities. Therefore, if you destroy a specific text token, such as a Windows DVD-ROM, you do not destroy the corresponding text type of Windows 7.

Lastly, a program is not the same as its execution; for example, shutting down Windows 7 does not destroy the program because a computer program and its execution have different persistence conditions (Irmak, 2012, p. 5).

So, programs are different from their execution, copy, and source code. They are, much like musical works, abstract artifacts created by humans. Musical works are often seen as historical abstract entities (Levinson, 1980, pp. 10-11; Howell, 2002, pp. 105-106; Trivedi, 2002, pp. 81-82), embodying related yet distinct concepts such as sound structures, notations, and performances, and these concepts manifest in computer programs as text and execution (Irmak, 2012, p. 11). In the next chapter, I explain in more detail what an abstract artifact is in relation to musical works.

Having established that computer programs are distinct from their source code, copy, and execution, I now aim to examine the parallel idea that a play is neither its copy (its physical manifestation), its text, nor its performance. However, before proceeding, I need to clarify what the terms “text” and “performance” mean in the context of a play.

2.2 The meaning of “text” and “performance” in theatre

In theatre studies, play text refers to the playwright’s written work, including dialogue, stage directions, and other elements. They can be works of dramatic literature, or they can also be scripts, like plans, for theatrical performances. So, the term “play text” refers both to a play’s written script and dramatic literature. It serves as the literary and structural foundation for performance, typically including dialogue, stage directions, and other elements that guide its execution, such as character names, descriptions of settings, and actions (Issacharoff & Jones, 1988, p. 1). On the other hand, for some, play text is a blueprint for directors, actors, designers, and everyone involved in bringing the work to the stage (Balme, 2008, p. 123). There are many debates about the role of play-text.³ However, I intend not to discuss the text’s role in theatre works in this chapter. Instead, I want to show what kind of object play text is, and I argue that play text is an abstract object. As I said before, abstract objects, such as numbers and propositions, are defined as non-spatiotemporal, meaning they do not exist in space or time (Swoyer, 2007, pp. 11-15). Similarly, a play text like *Hamlet*’s cannot be reduced to a single physical form, such as a printed book or a performance script. These physical instances (or copies) are merely tokens of the text, which itself is an abstract type (Wollheim, 1980, pp. 50-51).

On the other hand, play performance refers to the live enactment of a text of play by actors in front of an audience. This performance is brought to life through various theatrical elements, including acting, direction, staging, design, and audience interaction. Patrice Pavis (1998) defines performance as the concrete and physical realization of the text by actors and their interactions with the audience in a specific

³ See, for example, Carroll (1997) and Carlson (2003).

time and space. Some argue that the text is unrelated to the performance, suggesting that the two are entirely separate.⁴ Instead of questioning how we should address this relationship, I accept the existing definitions and focus on exploring the nature of performance. So, play performances are physical events occurring in space and time. In other words, they are events that occur at a particular time and place. So, texts are abstract objects, while performances are physical events. In this respect, they have different forms of existence; events occur while objects exist (Casati & Varzi, 2023).

2.3 Text, performance, and copy of plays

In terms of the forms of existence of these entities, while the source code or text of a computer program is similar to the text of a play, the program's execution is parallel to the performance of a play. Furthermore, the way a copy of the program exists is similar to how a copy of the play exists.

Let us begin with the idea that a play is not identical to its copy. Just as a copy of a computer program is not the same as the program itself, a copy of a play is not the play itself because destroying a copy does not entail destroying the play itself. Suppose a written copy of *Hamlet* or a recorded performance is destroyed. In such a case, what is lost is merely a copy, not *Hamlet* itself. The play continues to exist regardless of its copy.

Furthermore, the distinction between a program and its execution is akin to understanding why a performance cannot be regarded as a play. Once more, let us consider Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*. It continues to exist even if all records of its performances are destroyed and never performed again because the play can be performed again. When a performance of *Hamlet* ends, only the performance ceases

⁴ See, for example, Saltz (2001) and Hamilton (2009).

to exist. Nobody would claim that the play itself disappears with the end of a performance. Thus, the persistence conditions of a performance and a play are different.

Besides, while a computer program can exist in various versions, each with distinct source codes, a play can also have multiple texts. It remains unclear which of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* texts should be considered the original, as there are three surviving versions: The First Quarto (Q1) from 1603, the Second Quarto (Q2) from 1604 or 1605, and the First Folio (F1) from 1623. A current reader familiar with today's *Hamlet* might find the First Quarto particularly unusual, as it is significantly shorter than the other versions and features notable differences in form, events, and even character names, for instance, Polonius is named Corambis. The Second Quarto, by contrast, is the longest but lacks indicators specifying who is speaking. The First Folio, meanwhile, omits 222 lines from Q2 but introduces five new passages totaling 83 lines (Hattaway, 1987, pp. 13-14).

Every text has its own unique lines and passages, making it challenging to identify a single "original" text of *Hamlet* because the most widely used *Hamlet* text today is usually a combination of the Second Quarto (Q2) and the First Folio (F1) (Tronch Pérez, 2008, p. 150). Recently, textual scholars have abandoned the attempt to go behind these two texts and create an ideal, eclectic text because they consider these texts to be records of the play's different states of being (Hattaway, 1987, p. 15). We can then say that a play can have different texts. All three of these texts could be the text of the play *Hamlet* (Woodruff, 2008, p. 57). It is even possible to make different combinations of these texts. Therefore, a play and its text are different entities.

Moreover, *Hamlet* is not usually performed with three basic texts. When these texts are presented on stage, directors or actors make various changes. We can call these changes performative interpretation⁵, the way actors and directors stage a play (Saltz, 2001, p. 300). This involves a particular understanding and presentation of the work. Directors, actors, and designers inevitably introduce numerous additions to the play (Saltz, 2001, p. 301). For instance, David Garrick's performance of *Hamlet* in the eighteenth century made notable alterations to the text. He removed the scene in which Hamlet departs for England and excluded Laertes from plotting with Claudius against Hamlet. Additionally, the characters Fortinbras, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern were omitted from the final scene (Internet Shakespeare Editions, n.d.).

In another example, Hansgünther Heyme's 1979 production of *Hamlet* in Cologne featured innovative techniques. The actors filmed each other with handheld cameras and then recreated their movements through a wall of television monitors. Furthermore, Hamlet is portrayed by two actors: one delivers Hamlet's lines from the hall. At the same time, the other serves as Hamlet's alter ego, representing the character's struggle with his crude sexual fantasies (Royal Shakespeare Company, n.d.).

However, some can argue that assuming the original text was published in 1603, any changes made to that text, and hence the new texts that emerge from the interpretations of these two performances, can be considered a new play. I think the problem with this objection is that it does not match our common intuitions. When we consider performance interpretations, it is easy to see that plays are often performed with a different text. Yet we have an intuition that we are watching a performance of the same play. This insight stems from our real-life experiences with

⁵ This concept originates from Richard Wollheim (1980), but David Saltz's explanation informs my interpretation of this idea.

the play. Often, directors or actors describe their performances as interpretations of the same play despite having made significant changes to the play text. For example, consider how David Tennant, who played the role of Hamlet in the production of *Hamlet* directed by Gregory Doran, talked about *Hamlet* in an interview. In the interview, Tennant mentioned that the text underwent modifications in this production; certain sections were altered, and contemporary clothing choices were preferred (Rokison, 2009, pp. 292, 295, 303). Moreover, Tennant stated that the purpose of changing the lines in the text was to prevent the audience from getting stuck in the text and to allow them to focus on the story (Rokison, 2009, p. 303). Throughout this interview, both the interviewer, Abigail Rokison, and the actor David Tennant referred to this play as *Hamlet*, not as a different play because of the changes that were made.

Beyond that, there is another noteworthy part of the interview:

AR: Finally, in terms of the run as a whole, did the play change a lot?

DT: I'm sure that it did, but it is quite hard to be objective about it. Some things changed nightly, whilst others remained amazingly consistent. It would be amazing to watch a video of the first night and the last night. How you felt about different characters changed—you'd fall in and out of love with Ophelia, you'd care for Gertrude more or less, be more of a friend to Horatio, and at other times, more self-centered. That is what happens when you do anything for any length of time. (Rokison, 2009, p. 305)

Tennant observes that while some elements on stage change each night, others remain consistent in the play (Rokison, 2009, p. 305). This leads to an important consideration: The play may undergo minor or major changes throughout the process. In other words, textual changes will continue to be seen each time a play is performed. On the other hand, performance choices will also contain changes throughout the process. Despite these variations in performance and text, we do not treat this play as "separate plays." Each performance may differ from the others, and the text may evolve with each iteration, yet throughout the interview, *Hamlet*, as

directed by Gregory Doran and originally created by Shakespeare, remains a consistent point of reference. This suggests that neither individual performances nor the texts that emerge from them define the play itself. Consequently, the identity of a play can be maintained independently of both its text and its individual performances.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I demonstrate that theater plays are distinct from their copies, performances, and texts, drawing an analogy with computer programs. Just as a computer program is not defined by its copy, execution, or source code, a theater play is not the same as its texts, its performances, or its copies.

A theater play can continue to exist even if all copies and performance records are destroyed and are never staged again. In other words, the persistence conditions of a theater play are different from those of its copy or performance. Additionally, the text of a play is not identical to the play itself because the text can be altered, and despite these changes, the play can still be regarded as the “same play.” A prominent example is William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. This play exists in three different texts that vary significantly from one another; nevertheless, each version is recognized as representing the same play, *Hamlet*.

I consider a counterargument that some might claim that each change in the text creates a different play. This idea contradicts our common sense, shaped by our experiences with plays. While there are many performances of *Hamlet*, they all refer to the same play rather than different ones. As I discuss in Gregory Doran’s production, the actor and interviewer engage with Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, focusing on interpretation rather than asserting that it is a different play. Additionally, textual

differences might arise over time, even within the same production, but we still recognize these as performances of the same play. So, play texts are often revised, and performances are frequently redesigned for several reasons, including catering to contemporary audiences, correcting inconsistencies in the text, or introducing new interpretations and staging techniques. Despite these changes, we still have an intuition that it is the same play. To explain why we maintain this intuition, I focus on the nature of plays in the next chapter and provide a more detailed perspective in the following sections.



CHAPTER 3

THE NATURE OF THEATRE PLAYS

In the previous chapter, I argued that computer programs are abstract artifacts, like musical works. In this chapter, I argue that, like computer programs, plays are abstract artifacts created by particular people with particular intentions. First, I focus on what artifacts are. Then, I explain what I mean by “abstract.” For this purpose, I appeal to the ontology of musical works and argue that theater plays, being abstract, do not mean that they are Platonic entities but rather that they are creatable works.

Afterward, I discuss David Z. Saltz’s theory that theater plays are creatable works and some of the problems with this theory. One of these problems is that, in his view, the theater play is treated as a performance, and the other is that his view overlooks the fact that there can be more than one version of a single play.

3.1 Theatre play as an abstract artifact

Artifacts are generally defined as entities like chairs, tables, and artworks that depend on people’s creative actions (Hilpinen, 1992, p. 58; Thomasson, 1999, p. 129).

Unlike rocks and trees, artifacts are mind-dependent. This means they cannot exist without the beliefs, practices, and intentions of those who create and use them (Thomasson, 2009, p. 193). The mind-dependence of artifacts can be considered at two levels: causal and existential dependence. First, from the perspective of causal mind-dependence, artifacts are products of human intention, both mental and physical activities. Objects such as tables, chairs, ships, or sirens are the result of human intentional activities. However, many natural entities, such as agricultural plants or domestic animals, also result from human intentional activities

(Thomasson, 2009, p. 194). Therefore, causal dependence alone cannot distinguish artifacts from other sorts of objects, especially members of natural kinds. Existential dependence, on the other hand, suggests that for an object to be considered an artifact, it is not enough for it to have been the result of an intention, but also, this intentional human activity should be conceptually part of the definition. In other words, the existence of artifacts such as a table or a painting requires that they result from intentional human activities not only causally but also as a necessary condition for their existence (Thomasson, 2009, p. 195).

On the other hand, the continued existence of an artifact, as that artifact, rather than as a mere physical object, depends on the presence of intelligent beings with relevant conceptual, linguistic, or cultural competence. Otherwise, they can be destroyed (Thomasson, 1999, p. 36). For example, literary works are not merely sequences of words or physical traces on a page; instead, they are expressed through the possibilities of a public language and are open to intersubjectivity. Individuals with linguistic competence and the necessary background knowledge must analyze and understand a literary work to truly exist. If all language speakers were to disappear and that language were never deciphered again, the literary works created in that language would also vanish. Moreover, in the case of oral traditions, a work can be preserved in memory even if there is no written text, but this again depends on the memory of individuals who comprehend it (Thomasson, 1999, p. 11). Similarly, other artifacts like tables acquire meaning within social practices. For such objects to exist as artifacts, individuals must recognize them. Otherwise, they can be destroyed. Therefore, the continuity of an artifact is possible only with the existence of individuals who can understand it.

When it comes to theatre plays, they are best understood as artifacts. A play exists when an author or group of authors, with a specific intention, creates a structure that includes, for example, a plot, characters, and a sequence of stage events. This act of creation is achieved by writing down the text of the play, which provides its stageable structure and results in an original copy. However, the existence of a play cannot be reduced to this physical copy. Even if the original text is destroyed, the play is not lost, as the author can produce another version of it.

The existence of a play relies on its creators, the copies of its text, its performances, and the memories that recall them. If any of these elements exist at a certain time, then the play exists at that time as well. Like other artifacts, plays are human creations; their existence depends on human action. If copies of a play exist at a specific time, the play exists at that time, even if its creators are no longer alive, if it will not be performed again, or if no one remembers it. Likewise, if a play is performed at a certain time, it exists, even if the copies have been lost or if no one remembers them.

Additionally, if someone remembers the text or plot of a play, that act of remembering is sufficient for the play to exist at that moment. Plays continue to exist over time as long as there is a copy, an author⁶, a performance, or a memory associated with them. However, this does not imply that they are eternal. Although plays are abstract entities without a specific spatial location, they come into existence over time and can only disappear when their authors no longer exist, when all copies have been destroyed, when they are never staged again, and finally, when there is no memory of them left.

⁶ A situation is conceivable in which there exists neither a copy nor a performance of the play, while the author still exists but retains no memory of the play. Given the possibility of such a scenario, the continued existence of a play requires not merely the existence of an author, but the existence of an author with an appropriate memory.

Let us assume that no version of *Hamlet* has ever survived. Shakespeare wrote it, but it was never performed; no copies of the text remain, all witnesses from his time have passed away, and no traces are left. In this case, we must conclude that *Hamlet* no longer exists. The existence of plays like *Hamlet* depends on the authors who created them, the existing copies of the text, the performances staged, and the memories of those performances. Therefore, theater plays, like chairs and tables, are artifacts. Just as a chair is an artifact that requires a maker, a play requires an author. The difference is that while the chair exists as a physical object, a play exists through instantiation, whether in a text or a performance. In this sense, they are more like computer programs and musical works.

Computer programs and musical works are both considered abstract artifacts. They do not correspond to any single physical object or event, possess distinct identities and conditions of existence, are created by humans, and lack unique spatial locations. However, they are abstract only because they are non-spatial. They are not Platonic, eternal entities. One can create the same algorithm or sound structure years later, in a different context, and for different purposes. However, this does not mean the new creation is identical to the original software or musical work. While they may share a common structural foundation, the new work emerges within a different historical and intentional context. (Irmak, 2012, p. 11).

Similarly, plays are abstract entities only because they lack unique spatial locations. One can rewrite the same plot or theme years later in a different context, with different intentions. However, this does not mean it is the same play as the original. Sharing the same structural framework creates a new play set in a different historical and intentional context. Therefore, plays are not eternal beings in the Platonic sense.

Platonism, particularly regarding the nature of musical works, posits that these works are abstract objects; specifically, they are understood as sound structures or types (Kivy, 1983, p. 109; Dodd, 2000, p. 425). For example, Julian Dodd sees musical works as structural types, abstract entities defined by their sound structures. This perspective describes the relationship between a musical work and its performance as one of type and token: the performance is a manifestation of the work, which itself exists as a type. The idea here is that the single, physical event, such as a specific performance, cannot define a musical work. The work exists independently of any one instance, allowing for multiple performances to be considered its instantiations (Dodd, 2000, p. 425).

From the Platonist perspective, the identity of a type is determined by the property that a token must meet to be considered an instance of that type. This property is fundamental and determines what characteristics must be present in the tokens associated with that type. This property is not an arbitrary property but a defining property that is identical to the type. For example, a musical performance of the type “C minor scale” must contain certain notes of this scale in a certain sequence. This property, “being a C minor scale,” partly determines the type in question. A performance with this property is an example of that type; if it does not, it is not considered one. For example, if a performance is to be an instance of Marsalis’ *In This House, On This Morning*, it must instantiate a specific sound structure. This condition, which we might call being an instance of *In This House, On This Morning*, determines the identity of the type (Dodd, 2000, p. 430). So, the type exists insofar as this property exists, and to understand the conditions for the existence of types, we must also understand the conditions for the existence of properties. According to this view, a property exists if it is instantiated now, has been

instantiated in the past, or will be instantiated in the future. However, this does not mean that the existence of properties is completely independent of whether they are instantiated or not. In other words, properties are not transcendental entities that are not associated with any particular object because such a conception would make it difficult to explain how properties come to be held by individual objects. On the other hand, properties do not only exist when instantiated; if they did, they would cease to exist when not instantiated. So, properties are neither completely transcendent nor are their existences reduced to being instantiated in the present. It is sufficient for a property to exist that its instantiation has somehow occurred or will occur in time. For example, a property that has been instantiated once in the past exists now because it can be instantiated again. Or if it is instantiated in the future, the property exists eternally because it has now been proven that it can be instantiated. Therefore, it has gained the status of eternal existence, regardless of time. Since the identity of types is determined by properties, types are eternal entities (Dodd, 2000, p. 436). However, Dodd also notes that this view may be counterintuitive because if all types have always existed, no one can create a new type or work. Accordingly, Frank Whittle did not invent the jet engine but produced an example of a type already existing. However, such a position contradicts our tendency to view types as created by human actions. While Dodd acknowledges this tension, he argues that types are inherently discoverable rather than creditable (Dodd, 2000, p. 437). Therefore, musical works are eternal entities, even if they cannot be instantiated at any given moment. If a type exists, it always exists (Dodd, 2000, p. 437). This means that a musical work has always existed as a type that is discovered rather than created by the composer. The composer's role is to creatively uncover a

specific sound structure from the infinite possibilities that exist and to convey it through notation or other means (Dodd, 2000, p. 428).

If types are not created and exist eternally, we must ask: where are they, and how do they exist eternally? For instance, where are the musical works that have yet to be discovered? It is challenging to conceive of human inventions as inherently eternal (Trivedi, 2002, p. 74). Furthermore, some properties are temporally dependent and therefore they cannot be eternal. For example, the property of “being the son of Abraham Lincoln” could not have existed before Lincoln himself existed because this property inherently requires the existence of Lincoln. Although this is a general relation of “being the son of someone,” its specific instantiation in the name “Abraham Lincoln” only occurs with Lincoln’s existence. Similarly, the property of the *Fifth Symphony*, “being composed by Beethoven between 1804 and 1808,” could not be eternal without Beethoven and his actions. Both Lincoln and Beethoven are temporally indicated beings, meaning they came into existence at specific times. Their existence is not eternal, and therefore, it does not make sense for a property fundamentally connected to them to exist prior to their existence (Howell, 2002, pp. 112-113).

If I consider theater plays from a Platonic perspective, I would have to claim that theater plays are eternal entities. However, as I argued above, theater plays can be created and destroyed. The most important condition for their existence is intentional human activity. *Hamlet* has the distinctive historical and individual characteristic of having been “created by Shakespeare in the 1600s.” Just as the characteristic of being “the son of Abraham Lincoln” could not have existed before Lincoln himself, it is wrong to assert that *Hamlet* existed before Shakespeare created it. This act of creation means that the play has a beginning in time. However,

Platonic beings are atemporal. Moreover, as I said above, they are not just creatable but also destroyable. A play can endure as long as there are individuals with the language skills and knowledge to understand it. If the text of the play, all records of its performances, its creator, and the memories of those who have experienced it vanish, the play is eventually destroyed. Therefore, theatre plays are not eternal entities because of their creatable and destroyable nature.

In addition to this viewpoint, there is another approach known as creationism, which is against the Platonic perspective. Levinson, a key proponent of this approach, asserts that a musical work is not merely a sound structure (Levinson, 1980, p. 6). Instead, its identity is shaped by multiple factors, including the creative act of the composer, the socio-cultural context in which the work was created, and the methods of performance (Levinson, 1980, p. 19). If musical works were solely sound structures, we would not acknowledge composers as true creators of their works. We could say that sound structures have always existed as abstract concepts and could have been realized as actual sound events at any time. For instance, a sound event that fits the structure of Beethoven's *Op. 16 for Piano* could have occurred before Beethoven was born. If sound structures can exist prior to composition, it implies that composers do not create their works but merely discover or select them, which contradicts our fundamental belief in the inventive nature of art. For Levinson, a composer's musical work is a new entity that comes into being as a result of the composer's creative activity. If musical works had pre-existing sound structures, then if different composers determined the same sound structure, they would have composed the same work. However, he argues that even if different composers determined the same sound structure, they would inevitably produce different musical works because the aesthetic and artistic properties of musical works

depend on the musical-historical context in which the composer is located. Since this context is different for each composer, even works with the same sound structure will have different aesthetic and artistic qualities (Levinson, 1980, pp. 7-8).

So, Levinson posits that composers are indeed the creators of their works, which means that musical pieces must be the result of the composer's creative process and did not exist before that activity. He refers to this principle as "creatability" (Levinson, 1980, p. 9). This approach also views musical works through a type/token relationship. This type is not an eternal sound structure that exists independently of human activity, as Platonism suggests. In contrast, a musical work is an abstract sound structure made up of specific sounds and particular means of performance. However, this sound structure only comes into existence because a specific composer creates it at a specific moment in history (Levinson, 1980, pp. 20-21). Therefore, the type is not eternal but rather an indicated type. Each performance not only represents a sound structure but also serves as a concrete example of a historical creation. So, this theory may serve as an adaptable theory for understanding theatrical plays, as they are abstract artifacts intentionally created by humans.

3.2 Indicated types

David Z. Saltz argues that theater plays cannot be understood with the two-text model. In other words, he rejects understanding theater plays as a text-performance relationship. According to the two-text model, the difference between a play and its performance is the difference between the languages in which the two texts are written. While a play is considered a text of linguistic signs, a performance is seen as a text of theatrical signs. In other words, a play is perceived as a "dramatic text" and

a performance as a “performance text.” Performance tries to say with the language of the stage what the text expresses in words. However, according to Saltz, we do not go to the theater to see “performance texts”; we go to see plays. The expression “to see a play” actually means to see a play performance (Saltz, 1999, pp. 266-267).

The two-text model has difficulty explaining this identity between play and performance, that is, the fact that watching a play is watching a performance. Saltz points out that when we say, “I have seen *Hamlet*,” we do not mean to have glanced at the Arden or Folger Library edition but to have seen a performance of *Hamlet*. Moreover, he emphasizes that many noteworthy performances have been developed without relying on a previously written text. This shows that theater is not based solely on it. The text can be used as a tool for imagining, planning, and rehearsing performances. Or we can read it as a literary work in its own right, an example of a particular genre of literature called drama. But we only really encounter an instance of the play in performance (Saltz, 1999, p. 267).

Saltz applies the theory of type and token to theater, arguing that different play performances are instances of the same work. He references Richard Wollheim (2015) in his discussion (Saltz, 1999, p. 268). Tokens refer to specific things, actions, or events, while types are categories used to describe these things, actions, or events (Saltz, 1999, p. 269). In this view, just as different performances of *Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony* are different tokens of the same symphony, different stagings of *Hamlet* are different tokens of the same play, *Hamlet*. So, the play itself is considered a type, while each performance is an instance, or token, of that type.

He describes a performance as an event occurring in a particular space and time. At the same time, the play itself is considered a type of event that is abstracted away from multiple performances and enables such events to take place. (Saltz,

1999, p. 269). This means that the same play can be staged at different times and locations, each with unique interpretations. For instance, a performance of *Hamlet* in Istanbul in 2020 and another in London in 1985 may differ significantly, yet both are considered performances of the play *Hamlet*. Through this lens, Saltz defines plays as generic entities that exist independently of their performances but are brought to life through them. Therefore, to understand a theater play, one must view it as an event that can be repeated and interpreted in various ways rather than merely as a text (Saltz, 1999, p. 270). However, plays are not Platonic entities; rather, they are what Jerrold Levinson refers to as “indicated types,” which come into existence only through intentional human actions. From this viewpoint, plays are performance types created by individuals, existing only when someone has brought them to life through performance (Saltz, 1999, p. 271).

Levinson’s concept of “indicated type” suggests that a musical work is not simply a sound structure, as I said above, but rather a type intentionally created by a specific individual within a particular historical and cultural context. In this framework, a musical work can be defined by the formula “sound structure-as-indicated-by-x-at-t,” which means that while a musical work has a sound structure, it only becomes an artistic type when that structure is created by a person (x) at a specific time (t) (Levinson, 1980, p. 20).

Saltz also describes theater plays as indicated types in a similar manner. He argues that plays are types of performances, with each staging serving as a token of that type. However, this type does not emerge on its own; it requires the creative act of an author to come into existence. Thus, plays are not merely performances; they are intentional, historically rooted works, indicated types, performed at a specific time and by a particular individual (Saltz, 1999, p. 271).

While we can preserve the creatable and destructible nature of plays through indicated type theory, this theory faces several challenges. The first challenge for this perspective arises with plays that have never been performed. Consider a play that has been created but remains unperformed, perhaps due to being considered unappealing, unworthy of staging, or simply lost to time. In such cases, can we still regard the play as a performance type? If so, how do we define its identity without any tokens? For example, an unpublished and unperformed play discovered posthumously, akin to a hypothetical lost work of Anton Chekhov, raises questions about the notion that performance is essential for the play's existence as a type.

Another challenge for this view is that we cannot fully explain how different performances can still represent the same play. Saltz argues that performance should be seen as an event. In contrast, the play itself is a type of event that can be abstracted from multiple performances, allowing for various interpretations of the same play (Saltz, 1999, pp. 269-270). However, Saltz's approach is based on Wollheim's type/token theory, which is a two-level type/token theory similar to those proposed by Levinson and Dodd. These theories are grounded in structural monism, which posits that a single structure defines a work. According to this perspective, two types are considered identical if and only if their tokens instantiate the same properties. So, in this case, it can be said that structural monism proposes two types of relationships: one-to-one and many-to-one. In a one-to-one relationship, a work can only be represented by a single structure. If this structure changes, a new work is created. As can be seen, this perspective aligns with Julian Dodd's theory. In contrast, a many-to-one relationship, which aligns with Levinson's theory, allows the same structure to be produced by different individuals, resulting in different works (Garcia-Carril Puy, 2019, p. 246).

However, structural monism rejects the idea that there can be multiple instances of a performance type. This means that it rejects a one-to-many relationship. This relationship allows a work to manifest itself in more than one structure, but according to structural monism, tokens with different properties cannot belong to the same type. Types are defined by a set of conditions that determine which instances possess certain properties. Therefore, any change in performance creates a new set of conditions. Since different performances will yield distinct properties, they will fall under different sets of conditions (Garcia-Carril Puy, p. 246). When we consider structural monism, it seems unlikely that there can be multiple performances of the same play when considering the indicated type theory. Different performances often lead to distinct event types due to variations, for example, in staging, acting styles, directorial choices, and cultural contexts. A minimalist *Hamlet* production as an example of experimental theater can differ significantly from a Shakespearean performance as an example of traditional theater.

This situation raises important questions about how closely a performance must align with its original type to be considered a valid instance (Davies, p. 55, 2024).

3.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I argue that the most coherent way to understand theater plays is to view them as artifacts. The existence of a theater play relies on the intentional act of a creative individual. If Shakespeare had not created "*Hamlet*," it would not be possible to discuss it in this thesis today. In this regard, plays are not discovered but created.

Nonetheless, this act of creation does not mean that plays occupy physical space like objects. Rather, they are abstract artifacts, non-spatial entities that only come into existence through human activity. This abstract nature does not render them independent of time and human influence, as Platonism suggests. Rejecting the Platonic view that defines entities as “eternal and independent of human activity,” I adopt a creationist approach, which posits that entities can be created and destroyed.

In this context, David Z. Saltz’s creationist approach to theater plays provides a valuable perspective. Saltz highlights that plays can be both created and re-performed. However, this approach falls short in explaining the repeatability of plays, as it is based on the traditional two-level type/token theory. This theory relies on structural monism, which assumes that every type has a single structure, thus failing to account for the fact that plays can be staged with various interpretations.

Consequently, I show that both the Platonic and creationist models do not fully capture the essence of theatrical plays. Both approaches share the fundamental assumption of the two-level type/token distinction. To better understand the repeatability of plays, we either need to abandon this theoretical framework or reconstruct it based on a one-to-many relationship where a type can have multiple instances. Nemesio García-Carril Puy’s (2019) “Hypothesis of Nested Types” successfully applies this latter approach to the context of musical works. Therefore, in the next section, I assess the applicability of this hypothesis to theater plays.

CHAPTER 4

THEATRE PLAY AS A STORY INTENDED FOR THE STAGE

In previous discussions, I argued that theater plays are repeatable abstract artifacts, distinct from the written text and the performance. However, I have yet to thoroughly explore the essence of what constitutes this abstract artifact, a theater play. I delve into this inquiry in this chapter, arguing that theater plays are stories designed specifically for the stage.

Subsequently, I address how theater plays can maintain their identity as repeatable stories intended for the stage through the lens of Nemesia Garcia-Carril Puy's Nested Types Hypothesis (2019). This hypothesis provides a framework for understanding how plays can be interpreted and enacted in varied contexts while retaining their identity. Finally, I examine the challenges of applying this hypothesis to theatre plays. Despite these challenges, I argue that the Nested Types Hypothesis is the most suitable theoretical approach to illustrating the concept of repeatability in theater plays.

4.1 What is a theater play?

I want to revisit the idea that the play is not a text, and to understand this idea better, it is necessary to understand the role of the play's text. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is not limited to its text because we can recognize and understand *Hamlet* through alternative forms, for example, through someone else's telling of *Hamlet*. So, the fact that we know *Hamlet* through a typically written text does not mean that this is necessary. It can take various forms even in the absence of a written text. This means that the written text is a means of conveying *Hamlet*, but it is not the play itself.

Then, what is *Hamlet*, and what do different texts imply about it? When Shakespeare wrote the text of *Hamlet* in 1603, he was essentially writing the text of a story: The events of *Hamlet*, Prince of Denmark, after his father's death. Stories are sets of events, situations, and behaviors that can be told through various media and remain the same regardless of the specific medium used to convey them (Chatman, 1978, p. 20). The ability of stories to be told across different media while maintaining their essence is rooted in the distinction between story and discourse in Seymour Chatman's (1978) narrative theory. The narrative is an abstract structure that can manifest in different environments and consists of two basic levels: the story (the content: events, situations, and behaviors), defined as "what is told," and discourse (the form of transmission), described as "how it is told." The story is what is conveyed within the narrative. Questions about the sequence of events, the characters involved, the settings, and the outcomes of character actions relate to the story level. On the other hand, discourse is how the story is told within the narrative. Questions related to how these stories are presented within the structure. This means that discourse encompasses all the structural and aesthetic choices made in the narrative, such as the order in which events are presented, the point of view from which they are told, the identity of the narrator and their narrative voice, the text's structure, language, and various other elements that operate at the discourse level (Chatman, 1978, pp. 24-25).

Story and discourse come together to create a narrative (Chatman, 1978, p. 26). Different narratives can emerge from the same story due to variations in discourse. This ability for differing narratives to develop from a single story is rooted in the dual-level nature of narrative structure. On the one hand, there is the story, which serves as fixed content; on the other, there is the discourse, which is variable

and shapes that content. As I said above, these variations arise from discursive choices, such as the sequence in which events are presented, which events are emphasized or downplayed, the perspective from which the story is told, and the presence or absence of a narrator. Additionally, the duration of the narration can be manipulated; for example, some narratives present events in real-time scenes while others utilize flashbacks, or in some narratives, the narrator may be a character who provides emotional commentary on the events, whereas in others, the narrator may be completely absent (Chatman, 1978, pp. 63-65). Thus, the ability to reshape a story through discourse allows it to take on multiple forms as different narratives, but the story remains the same (Chatman, 1978, p. 20).

To explain how different narratives can occur while the story remains the same, Chatman divides events into kernel and satellite events. According to this distinction, satellite events are small events that do not disrupt the general story logic and can be deduced. On the other hand, kernel events are fundamental and necessary for the story logic. According to this understanding, it is sufficient for them to contain the same core events to say that two narratives belong to the same story. For example, the core event in the story of *Hamlet* could be the murder of Hamlet's father and what he experiences afterward. How his father is killed may change, but the fact that he is dead must remain (Ay, 2022, p. 27). However, it is not sufficient to rely solely on the same kernel events for a narrative to be considered the same story; other elements, such as characters, settings, and symbols, may also be crucial. For instance, while *Hamlet* can be adapted to a modern setting, *The Jungle Book* cannot be separated from its forest backdrop, nor can *12 Years a Slave* be separated from its historical context (Ay, 2022, p. 28).

Returning to *Hamlet*, the three texts (First Quarto, Second Quarto, and First Folio) are the same story narrated in different ways. The fact that the First Quarto is considerably shorter than the other versions, that there are no indicators in the Second Quarto demonstrating who is speaking, and that the First Folio contains new passages, unlike the other versions, does not mean that they are different plays. This means there is a change in discourse, that is, of form. However, they tell the same story: The events of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, after his father's death. The formal changes in these texts lead to the formation of different narratives. Moreover, instances of narratives are not limited to copies of written texts. The story can also appear in different media, such as oral narratives and stage performances. For example, David Garrick's performance of *Hamlet* in the eighteenth century instantiated his narrative of *Hamlet*. Similarly, Hansgünther Heyme's experimental staging of *Hamlet* in 1979 is another example of a narrative that represents the character's internal conflict and repressed sexual fantasies. In other words, they are instances of versions (narrative) of *Hamlet* (story). Each version is a new narrative of the play because, as the discourse changes, the same story is structured and presented differently. However, all these narratives are based on the same fundamental story. The versions are, therefore, different ways of telling the fixed story.

The claim that theater plays are stories, as it stands, is problematic because it blurs the distinction between a play and a story. If theater plays are identified solely as stories, then every novel, fairy tale, and even news article could also be regarded as a theater play because they also tell a story. This leads to the blurring of boundaries between types, and we cannot explain why we do not call the story of a novel, a fairy tale, or a news article a play. Therefore, we need a clear criterion to differentiate between a story and a theater play: the intention to perform. A story can

only be considered a play if there is an intention to stage it, as plays are meant to be experienced live through actors. While a novel exists primarily as a written text to be read, theatre is a performative and temporary art form that occurs collectively. It features live human actions that are engaging to watch at a specific time and place (Woodruff, 2008, pp. 18-19). So, a story that is created with the intention of being performed is known as a play. However, a novel can also be adapted into a play. For example, the story of *Anna Karenina* can be staged in a theater. This year, theater director Phillip Breen adapted the novel, and critics describe it as “a witty and sensual version of Tolstoy’s masterpiece” (Chichester Festival Theatre, 2025). He brought the adaptation to life by blending period costumes with a contemporary tone. In this case, the play is a new narrative of the novel because while the story remains the same, the presentation and form are different. Furthermore, narratives must be created with the intention of being performed, as a story designed for performance can also be conveyed through other art forms. Thus, for a narrative to qualify as a version of a play, it must be intended for staging. Then, in this framework, while plays are stage-intended stories, versions of plays are stage-intended narratives.

However, the question of authorship arises when a play is adapted from a novel or another work of art. In this context, I refer to authorship as the individual(s) responsible for the existence and various properties of their creations (Irmak, 2024, p. 2). A novel can be performed on stage without any alterations. For instance, *Anna Karenina* can be presented as a play without any changes; then, should the credit for authorship go to Tolstoy, or to the person or group of people who adapted it? Conversely, if modifications are made to *Anna Karenina* and it is reinterpreted for the stage, who should be considered the author? Is it Tolstoy or the individual(s) who remodified the novel for the play?

To classify an artifact as belonging to a specific type, the creator must have a specific intention to create it as such. The creator expresses this intention by endowing the artifact with the properties typical of that type. For instance, for an object to be classified as a chair, its author must have had a specific intention to create it as that type of object and must endow it with the properties associated with the type of chair. In that case, the author is a person who is responsible for assigning these properties to the object. So, authorship involves making various decisions about the object and its properties.⁷ In other words, the author has a certain level of control over the artifact's properties and the category to which it belongs (Irmak, 2024, p. 5).

This control can manifest in different ways. For some artifacts, physical modifications are necessary, while in other cases, no changes are required. For instance, when making a practical item like a chair, the creator needs to select materials, shape them into a specific form, and make the necessary modifications to ensure functionality. However, there are situations where the created object consists of an existing item that is simply presented to categorize it as a certain type of artifact without any alterations. Ready-made art pieces, such as Duchamp's *Fountain*, achieve their status as works of art solely through their selection and exhibition. Thus, sometimes the mere intention to select and present an object can be sufficient for authorship (Irmak, 2024, p. 6).

In the case of *Anna Karenina*, if the novel is staged without any changes, this situation can be analogized to Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain*. Just as Duchamp did not create the urinal but chose and presented it as a work of art, individuals can stage Tolstoy's novel without making any textual alterations. In this case, a new

⁷ This condition is necessary but not sufficient; other conditions may also be required for the creation of an artifact (Irmak, 2024, p. 4).

presentation form is created: the novel is no longer for reading; it is now for watching. Therefore, even if the person intending to stage it has not written anything new, they assume a significant creative role in terms of generic identity. Just as Duchamp is considered the author of *Fountain*, this person(s) is the one who transforms the work into a play; therefore, the author(s).

Conversely, if *Anna Karenina* is modified and adapted into lines suitable for staging, where some events are removed or actions are rewritten for the stage, again, the individual(s) become the author of it. While the story still belongs to Tolstoy, the resulting work is no longer a direct representation of Tolstoy's novel but an entirely different object in terms of type: a theater play.

Although the novel's story and the play share common elements, they belong to distinct types; the play is intended to be performed rather than read. Consequently, the authors must also be recognized as different. In other words, while Tolstoy is the original story's author, once that story is intended to be staged, its form of telling, that is, discourse, changes. Thus, a new narrative emerges. When this narrative incorporates elements specific to theater, namely, the intention to be staged, it no longer fits within the novel type but rather within that of a play type. Therefore, the author of a play is the individual or individuals who have this intention.

So far, I have argued that a play is a story created for performance and can exist in multiple versions. So, I am establishing a type/token relationship. However, we need to recall the framework when considering works in terms of the type/token relationship. As I discuss in Chapter 3, both Platonism and Levinson's indicated type theory are based on a structural monism, that for one piece of musical work to be the same as another, it must have the same sound structure. Similarly, defining a play as a stage-intended story creates problems in explaining how different stage-intended

narratives, that is, versions, are possible because, according to these theories, for something to be considered an instance of a type, it must have the set of conditions that define that type, and hence certain properties. Each narrative exhibits different properties because it presents the story differently. For example, when the sequence of events, the emphasis on characters, or the narrator's perspective changes, the properties of the narrative also change. So, each alteration made to the story changes the set of conditions on which the narrative is based. In this case, each narrative has a different set of conditions and can no longer be considered an instance of the same story. Therefore, within this theoretical framework, it is impossible to consider different narratives as versions of the same story. However, Nemesio García-Carril Puy's (2019) Hypothesis of Nested Types allows for multiple versions of a musical piece. Thus, it is possible to maintain that a play can have multiple versions, which can be considered instances of the same play with this hypothesis.

4.2 Hypothesis of nested types

Nemesio García-Carril Puy argues that traditional type/token theories complicate the recognition of different versions of the same musical work due to their differing sound structures. These theories posit that every musical performance is a token, representing a specific realization of a type, such as Beethoven's *5th Symphony*. However, different interpretations of a work, like a jazz rendition or an electronic arrangement, incorporate unique sound structures, leading conventional understanding to classify these versions as entirely new works instead of variations of the original. This perspective contradicts our everyday musical experience, where we still recognize these interpretations as different forms of the original composition (García-Carril Puy, 2019, p.242). Since these theories assume that musical works are

individualized by one and only one sound structure, as I discuss in chapter 3, they also fail to address repeatability in musical performances, leaving questions about how remastered versions relate to the original inadequately explained (García-Carril Puy, 2019, p. 246). For instance, there are two different versions of Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 2*, dated 1872 and 1879 (García-Carril Puy, 2019, p. 242). These versions feature structural changes, including variations in themes, instrumentation, and harmonic colors. However, both versions maintain the main objective of the work: to recreate the Ukrainian atmosphere in the form of a romantic symphony (García-Carril Puy, 2019, p. 243). However, it is impossible to explain how these two versions belong to Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 2* with traditional type/token theories because they have different sound structures. Furthermore, traditional type/token theories do not effectively distinguish between a direct version of a work and a completely new composition that is simply inspired by or derived from it. In musical practice, however, these two situations are clearly differentiated. For instance, a modern arrangement of a Mozart piece is still regarded as a work by Mozart, whereas a new composition inspired by Mozart is considered a distinct work (García-Carril Puy, 2019, pp. 242-243). In order to solve these problems, the nested types hypothesis offers a multi-level type/token theory that incorporates more than two levels of objects, embracing a hierarchy that includes the original work, its versions, performance interpretations, and actual performances. This hypothesis illustrates how structural monism can coexist with associating multiple sound structures to the same musical work (García-Carril Puy, 2019, p. 247).

According to this hypothesis, a musical work is not a single sound structure directly instantiated by performances but a higher-order abstract type. This higher-order type is embodied through lower-order types, which can be defined as different

“versions” of the work. Each version is a specific expression or presentation of this abstract work. For example, Tchaikovsky’s *Symphony No. 2* can be represented through both the 1872 and the 1879 versions. These versions are exemplified in their performances. Thus, a musical work is not directly linked to performances but indirectly to versions and then to performances of these versions. On the ontological level, these versions are seen as different realizations of the same work; each one offers an example of the work, but all of them remain linked to the same higher-order type. In this way, the work becomes relatable to multiple variations yet can still be defined as a single work (García-Carril Puy, 2019, p. 247).

If a musical expression maintains the essential structural and thematic elements of a higher-order type, it can be considered a version of that work. However, if the new musical structure is simply inspired by the original but does not retain its defining characteristics, then it is not a copy or version of the original work; rather, it is an independent, new composition derived from it.⁸ For instance, Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique* draws its melody from the Gregorian hymn *Dies Irae*. However, since Berlioz’s composition serves an entirely different purpose and has a distinct structure, specifically, it narrates the programmatic story of the life of a Romantic artist, *Symphonie Fantastique* is not a version of *Dies Irae*. Instead, it is a separate work inspired by that hymn (García-Carril Puy, 2019, p. 245).

On García-Carril Puy’s view, the relationship between a musical work, its variations, and their specific instances is described as follows:

- i. The musical work, identified as a higher-order type. (T)
- ii. A version of the musical work, identified as a lower-order type in which the higher-order type (T) is instantiated. (T_n)

⁸ I acknowledge that identifying the defining characteristics of artworks is complex and requires further exploration.

- iii. Expressions/performances of the versions, identified as tokens of a lower-order type (T_n) in which a version is instantiated. (p_nv)

Here, a musical work is identified as a higher-order type (T), such as Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*. We cannot experience the type directly; we can only access it through its versions and performances (García-Carril Puy, 2019, p. 247). In this respect, Beethoven's *9th Symphony* is a higher-order type that can be performed in various ways, such as both in the German music tradition and the universal classical repertoire. So, this higher-order type has been presented in different versions over time. The original whole orchestra arrangement is one version, while Franz Liszt's piano transcription is another. All these versions differ in their sound structures, but they are ontologically considered to be different ways of expressing the same work, despite all these differences.⁹

According to the hypothesis, these versions are lower-order types of work (T_n); each is an instantiation of the higher-order type, and they may reveal different aspects of the work. After all, these versions come to life through performances (García-Carril Puy, 2019, p. 248). For example, the orchestra interpretation performed by the Berlin Philharmonic in 2020 or a pianist's performance of the Liszt transcription in the same year can be examples of the relevant versions (p_nv).

I believe the issue with two-level type/token theories also applies to plays. As I argue in chapter 3, we cannot explain the repeatability of plays with two-level type/token theories because they rely on structural monism. Therefore, I will use this hypothesis to explain how different versions of the same play can exist within a type/token relationship. I explain the relationship between play, its versions, and instances of these versions with this hypothesis as follows:

⁹ I recognize that an artwork might have only one version.

- i. The play (a stage-intended story), identified with a higher-order type. (T)
- ii. A version of that play (a stage-intended narrative), identified with a lower-order type in which the higher-order type (T) is instantiated. (T_n)
- iii. Expressions/performances of versions (p_nv), identified with tokens of a lower-order type (T_n) in which a version is instantiated.

Applied to our example, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is identified with the higher-order type T (the story of the Danish prince). This higher-order type is instantiated in multiple versions, each represented as lower-order types T_1 , T_2 , and T_3 . For example, T_1 corresponds to the First Quarto, T_2 corresponds to the Second Quarto, and T_3 corresponds to the First Folio. Each of these versions (T_1 , T_2 , and T_3) is instantiated in specific performances or tellings, which are the tokens (p_{1v} , p_{2v} , and p_{3v}). The tokens of T_1 are properly formed performances or the copy of the written text of the First Quarto.¹⁰ For example, a performance using the First Quarto as its narrative would be an occurrence of T_1 , enabling audiences to encounter this version of *Hamlet*. Similarly, the tokens of T_2 are the performances based on the Second Quarto, such as a performance that faithfully adheres to its narrative. In the same way, p_{3v} represents the performances or the copies of the written text of the First Folio narrative (T_3).

Since all these versions (T_1 , T_2 , and T_3) instantiate the higher-order type T, experiencing any properly formed performance (p_{1v} , p_{2v} , or p_{3v}) allows one to encounter the same play, *Hamlet*, albeit through different versions. For instance, a performance of p_{2v} and a performance of p_{3v} represent different versions of *Hamlet* but are ultimately tokens of the same higher-order type, T. David Garrick's 18th-

¹⁰ Artworks can also possess improper instantiations; while some versions accurately capture the defining properties of the artwork, others may fail to grasp its purpose and defining characteristics (García-Carril Puy, 2019, p. 248). In section 4.3, I delve into this issue in more detail.

century performance is an instance (p_{4v}) of his *Hamlet* narrative (T_4), which interprets the higher-order type T . Thus, in experiencing p_{1v} , p_{2v} , or p_{4v} , we are encountering different versions of *Hamlet* (T_1 , T_2 , T_4), but the same play, T .

4.3 Challenges of the hypothesis of nested types

The higher-order type (T) is more generic than its lower-order types (T_n), serving as a framework for variable representation in different versions and performances (García-Carril Puy, 2019, p. 250). This approach assumes that some aspects of a play are fixed and others are variable. The constant structural elements, such as character relationships, central themes, or dramatic conflict, form the play's identity. In contrast, elements such as historical context, acting style, aesthetic approach, or staging style may be presented differently in different contexts. For example, in *Hamlet*, the fixed structure can be the tragedy of a prince seeking revenge; however, this structure may be represented sometimes by a minimalist staging based on psychological analysis and sometimes by a historical interpretation emphasizing Elizabethan politics. One may stage *Hamlet* in classical costumes, while another may portray him as an alienated figure in today's digital world. Despite the formal and aesthetic differences, if these interpretations adequately realize the play's overall structure, both can be considered valid versions of *Hamlet*.

In order to determine whether a version adequately represents the higher-level structure, it is necessary to decide on which properties are the essential qualities that make a play "the same play." However, this is not an easy matter. Because each play may have been shaped within its own historical and aesthetic context, it may not be possible to determine a single set of essential properties that will apply to all plays. Such a search for a universal essence may be futile if each story is thought to have its

own unique essence (Ay, 2022, p. 28). For example, while the setting of *Hamlet* changes and the events occur in the present day, the play may remain the same. However, if we were to remove the idea of waiting for an unknown and seemingly non-existent figure from Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, we may risk undermining the essence of the play.

However, I recognize that stating that each play is shaped by its own context risks promoting excessive relativity and uncertainty. The essential properties identified in a work may not be universally accepted. For some, Hamlet's quest for revenge may be seen as the play's essential property, while others may find this unimportant. Additionally, the criteria for defining these properties can differ across cultures and historical periods. A property deemed necessary at one time may change later. For example, a property may later be considered non-essential to the play, while another property that was previously considered non-essential may be regarded as essential to the play. As a result, it faces challenges in providing clear standards for evaluating derivation, authenticity, or misrepresentation in adaptations or variations of plays. Therefore, I believe it is important to acknowledge that, for now, there is no definitive answer to this question, and it requires further philosophical discussions.

On the other hand, while the Nested Types Hypothesis offers substantial flexibility in explaining works with multiple versions, this flexibility may risk diluting the essence of the work. When artwork is interpreted, it acquires additional features alongside its essential characteristics. Although this may not seem problematic on its own, it can lead to an unending series of versions of these artworks. Each subsequent version retains the attributes of the previous one while also gaining new elements. After all these additions, the original features of the

works may become unclear, raising the question of whether the work can still be considered the same (Davies, 2021, p. 253; Alward, 2023, p. 397). This challenge is particularly evident in plays, each time plays are interpreted in different aesthetic, political, and cultural contexts. The setting, time period, and character relationships can often be rearranged. Some radical interpretations may even involve techniques that directly alter the text and completely recreate the plot of the play. Thus, it may seem intuitively difficult to claim that “the same play” is still on stage across so many versions when more and more properties are added to the plays each time. Conversely, due to this difficulty, when we abstract away from certain details of a story’s structure, we may lose our understanding of what the play is. For instance, if we consider *Hamlet* without recognizing that he is a prince, we might simply reduce the story to revenge. However, in doing so, we fail to identify what makes *Hamlet* unique and cannot distinguish it from other revenge stories.

In order to respond to this challenge, we must first consider what authenticity, inauthenticity, propriety, and impropriety in artworks mean. Authenticity is the capacity of a version to convey the point of the work, that is, its content, meaning, and value, accurately and profoundly.¹¹ Authenticity is a normative value: it asks, “Does this version convey the work better?” Every version of a work serves as an example of that work; however, not all examples powerfully represent the work itself. For example, a version may be technically based on the structural elements of the work. Still, if it does not convey the content or purpose of the work powerfully, then that version may be a version of the work, but it is not authentic. An authentic example is one that is powerfully faithful to the work in terms of meaning. This means that the example is authentic if it fulfills not only the determinative features of

¹¹ I use the term authenticity interchangeably with García-Carril Puy’s use of the term interpretative authenticity.

the work but also addresses the content, expressive purpose, emotional tone, dramatic structure, and thematic depth of the work. In other words, the example should clarify not just what the work says but also why it says it and how it says it. On the other hand, for a version to be considered proper, it is sufficient that it has the individualizing features of the work; in other words, it preserves the general meaning of the work, that is, what it says, by keeping its determinative properties. An example may be proper but still not authentic; it may remain faithful to the determinative features of the work but fail to convey its meaning or emotional core “well” enough. However, if the essential properties are preserved, it is sufficient to be proper. Moreover, sometimes an example can be poorly performed, poorly structured, and emotionally superficial, losing its meaning, but it is still a version of the work. It is simply improperly formed because it violates almost all defining properties of the work (García-Carril Puy, 2019, p. 248; 2022, pp. 144-145; 2023, p. 402).

In this sense, authenticity does not mean fidelity to the author’s notes, stage directions, or period context. Here, fidelity to the work’s structure should be seen as a tool to convey the meaning of the work. If structural fidelity hinders the meaning of the work, sometimes deviating from it will yield a better result, that is, an authentic result. For example, if a version of *Hamlet*, by skipping some lines and simplifying the scene, conveys *Hamlet*’s tragic dilemma more clearly to a modern audience, this version may be better and thus authentic, even if it is not faithful to the structure.

On the other hand, if a director presents their play with artificial effects and weak acting but preserves the determinative properties of the play, it is still *Hamlet*, but it is probably not an authentic version of *Hamlet*; rather, it is properly formed because a play is a proper example of that play as long as it has its defining characteristics, but if this example does not reflect the meaning, that is, the content,

expressive purpose, emotional and dramatic structure, and thematic depth of the work accurately and powerfully, it is not authentic.

Returning to the challenge, there is a concern that the work will gain too many properties and become obscure, or that the properties will be removed, and the work will lose its identity as the same work. If the properties added to the work continue to convey the meaning and purpose of the work, then this version should still be considered a proper version of the same work. It may be conveyed well or poorly, but the fact that it conveys the essential properties of the work is a sufficient criterion for it to be accepted as a proper version of the work. For example, in one version, short monologues that do not appear in the play are added to reflect Hamlet's mental breakdown, and the stage design is rearranged to reflect Hamlet's psychological state. However, the play maintains *Hamlet's* themes of moral collapse and revenge. In such a case, the play should be considered a proper version of *Hamlet* because the meaning of the play is preserved.

On the other hand, if the added elements cause the work to lose its meaning and purpose completely, it should be considered an improper version of the work. For instance, imagine a scenario where *Hamlet* is set in a science fiction universe, with characters reimagined as digital avatars. In this version, Hamlet's father's ghost is replaced by an artificial intelligence program, the Kingdom of Denmark becomes a space base, and Ophelia is depicted as a hologram. All the moral conflicts, political tensions, and internal monologues are replaced by an entirely different story. In such a case, we can speak of neither a proper nor an authentic version of *Hamlet* because all the determinative properties of the play are destroyed.

Similarly, if the properties removed from the work allow us to refer to the same work and do not affect the meaning and purpose of the work, then this is the

version of the work. This version may be an authentic version or an inauthentic one, but it is considered a proper example because it preserves what the play says.

However, if the removed feature causes the work to lose its meaning, it becomes an improper version of the work. For example, the monologues that form the intellectual depth of *Hamlet* are removed, the moral tension of the play is thus eliminated, and the characters are guided only by superficial conflicts; as a result, this play becomes only a simple revenge story. In this situation, this work is improperly formed. The existence of poorly executed, obscure examples of plays does not imply that the work itself is ambiguous; instead, it means that it is improperly exemplified.

Therefore, if too many properties are added to a play, making it dilute, or if properties are removed to the extent that the play loses its meaning, then the play is considered improperly instantiated.

The question of whether a version is a proper or an improper, and authentic or inauthentic version of a work requires questioning the criteria and properties needed to convey a work's content, meaning, structure, and value accurately and profoundly. According to David Davies, we can decide whether the work is properly or improperly exemplified through the performative norms in the case of theatre works. Performative norms are the rules that dictate how a theater piece should be staged. These norms encompass collective habits regarding aspects such as acting styles, gesture interpretation, music, and the place arrangement typical of the period. When viewed through this perspective, these norms acquire significance within the theater practices of the era when the playwright created the work. The adherence or deviation from these norms enables us to distinguish between proper and improper performances (Davies, 2024, pp. 65-67). When Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth*, he considered elements like the Elizabethan theater stage, acting styles, the norms of

gesture and voice, and audience expectations. A performance must align with these Elizabethan theater norms to be deemed an accurate representation of *Macbeth*. To qualify as a good, that is, authentic interpretation of *Hamlet*, these rules must be faithfully applied without deviation.

However, complying with the norms may not always convey the meaning of the work properly. For example, staging *Othello* using stage arrangement, gestures, and accents appropriate to Shakespeare's period may technically be loyal to the norms of the era. However, this may be ineffective in terms of conveying the themes of racism, jealousy, and power to a contemporary audience, but a modernization deviating from the norms can powerfully convey these themes. In this way, a much more authentic version can be created. However, according to Davies, such an example would be considered improper because it does not comply with performative norms. On the other hand, a play can be staged faithfully to performative norms, but it can completely change the play's meaning. When the racism and power themes of *Othello* are removed, what remains is a straightforward story of jealousy. In this case, I believe this is an improper example of the work because it causes the work to lose all meaning. As can be seen, answering the question of what the criteria of properness and improperness are is not an easy matter. We need to determine essential properties required to convey a work's content, meaning, structure, and value. Furthermore, we must also discuss what it means to treat these properties accurately and powerfully to determine the authentic instantiation criteria. These questions present significant theoretical challenges because each work has a distinct meaning that can vary based on context, interpretation, and performance. This variability makes it challenging to identify the

essential properties of each work. Consequently, I leave these questions open for further research.

4.4 Conclusion

In this section, I claim that theater plays can neither be reduced to text nor performance, but they are stories intended for the stage. Based on Chatman's story-discourse distinction, I argue that different narratives can carry the same story. Accordingly, a narrative is formed by the combination of the fixed content, story, and the variable form, discourse. Different discursive choices lead to different narratives from the same story. Therefore, while a story may remain fixed, the narratives that tell it may change in form. Moreover, to avoid simplifying theater plays to merely being stories, I emphasize that stories should be considered with the intention of being staged, taking advantage of the performative nature of plays. By applying the hypothesis of nested types, I show how we can understand plays within a type/token relationship and defend the idea that versions can be considered valid examples of a play type. In this framework, not every version is deemed a proper instantiation; only those that reflect the meaning of the play are considered proper. However, determining the proper way to instantiate a play is challenging and requires careful consideration. Thus, further discussion is necessary to fully understand the essence of the play, but even so, I think we ultimately show how the play can be a type as an abstract artifact and how versions can be proper instances of the play.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I defend that plays are abstract artifacts, distinct from their texts, copies, and performances, and should be understood as stage-intended stories. A play can exist even if all its texts, performance recordings, and copies disappear. This implies that the conditions of the play's existence are independent of the copy, the text, or the performance. Moreover, although the text of a play changes, these changes do not make it a different play. *Hamlet* has three texts (Q1, Q2, F1), and although there are significant differences between them, they are all considered versions of the same play. This shows us that plays can have versions, they can be instantiated in different ways of presentation.

Plays should not be understood merely as texts, performances, or any physical manifestations (copies) of themselves. Instead, the most coherent way to understand plays is as artifacts because a play's existence relies on people's intentional creative acts; thus, plays are created, not discovered. However, this act of creation does not mean that plays are physical objects occupying space. Rather, they are abstract entities that exist solely through human activity. Despite their abstract nature, plays are not atemporal or independent of people's creative actions. In this context, I oppose the Platonic view that considers works of art as eternal and independent of human actions; instead, I adopt a creationist perspective. This view posits that artworks can be created and destroyed. Nevertheless, I argue that neither the Platonic nor the creationist models can fully capture the true nature of plays. While these theories offer fundamentally different perspectives on musical works, they share a common foundation: the traditional type/token distinction. This

distinction rests on structural monism; for one piece of music to be considered the same as another, it must possess the same sound structure. In other words, for something to qualify as an instance of a type, it must meet the set of conditions defining it and possess certain properties. When applying this distinction to plays, we encounter difficulties in explaining how multiple texts and different performances can all be versions of the same play. The existence of various versions implies the result of different sets of conditions, which contradicts structural monism and thus traditional type/token theory. For this reason, David Saltz's performance-oriented approach to play within the traditional type/token distinction is also inadequate. Moreover, this approach is problematic because it treats plays as performances. However, there are plays that are not performed at all.

I argue that to better understand how plays can be repeated, we need to rethink the traditional type/token theory. This theory should be adjusted to allow for a type to have multiple instances. To support this idea, I draw on Nemesio García-Carril Puy's (2019) Hypothesis of Nested Types on musical works and apply it to theater plays. This approach helps us comprehend plays in a type/token relationship and defend the idea that different interpretations can be considered valid instances of a play type.

Before demonstrating how various versions of plays are possible, I delve deeper into what constitutes plays and their versions. Plays are stories that are sets of events, situations, and behaviors that can be told through various media and remain the same regardless of the specific medium used to convey them. On the other hand, plays' versions are narratives of stories. A narrative consists of an abstract structure that can appear in different media and is composed of two levels: the story, which relates to the events and situations being told, and the discourse, which determines

how that story is conveyed. Here, the story corresponds to the content, while the discourse pertains to the mode of presentation. Together, story and discourse construct a narrative. Due to differences in discourse, different narratives can be produced from the same story. If the basic skeleton of the story is the same, the story remains the same despite different narratives. That is, when constructing narratives, the story must be formatted without losing its core meaning to be recognized as the same story.

A distinguishing characteristic that defines stories as theater plays, rather than just works of art, is the intention to be staged. This intention differentiates a play from a work meant solely for reading, such as a novel, transforming it into a distinct art form specifically for the stage, namely a theater play. Similarly, a narrative must be created with the intention of being staged to be considered a version of a play. Through this framework, I also address the questions posed in the introduction. A work cannot be classified as a play if it is not intended for performance. Conversely, a novel can qualify as a play if it is meant to bring its story to the stage. However, works like those of Lord Byron, which are written exclusively for reading, should not be classified as plays because they contradict the performative nature of theater. However, if these works are intended for staging, they can be categorized as plays.

Using the Hypothesis of Nested Types, I explain the relationship between plays, their versions, and their examples as follows: At the highest level, a play is defined as a story designed to be staged, representing a higher-order type (T). At a lower-order level, there are narratives of the play intended for staging, and these are the versions. Each version is a different interpretation of the play and is considered a lower-order type (T_n), an instance of the higher-order type. Finally, these versions have various manifestations, such as a performance, a written script, or an oral

narration, which are the tokens (p_nv) of the versions. This framework illustrates how the same play can be interpreted in different narratives, each expressed in various ways.

In this framework, I argue that there can be authentic or inauthentic and improper or proper instantiations of theater plays; while some versions may accurately capture the meaning of plays, others may fail to grasp their meaning, and only those versions that capture the meaning of the plays, whether weakly or strongly can be considered as proper examples. However, for this, it is necessary to decide what properties the versions should have, and this is not an easy problem to solve; it requires considering both aesthetic and ontological criteria. Nevertheless, in this thesis, I show why a theater play differs from its text, performance, and copies, why it is an abstract artifact, and how different versions can be considered valid examples of a play. So, it provides a necessary foundation for future discussions on the nature of theater plays.

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