

What is it for a Literary Artwork to Survive?

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I

In a short paper entitled 'Postmodern Shakespeare: Strictly Romeo' Jim Welsh claims the following about Baz Luhrmann's 1997 film:

William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet is deceptively titled, because it is really Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet*. Visually it is more *Strictly Ballroom* than strictly *Romeo*, though the dialogue – what survives of it – is strictly Shakespeare. It would get high marks if its evaluation were strictly verbal, but the setting is so visually bizarre that its 'fidelity' is questionable.

Welsh suggests that the film has an 'ugly twentieth century urban setting' and that the opening scene looks like a cross between '*West Side Story*, *Miami Vice*, and Fellini's *Satyricon*'.¹ On the other hand, in a paper entitled 'Baz vs. the Bardolators or Why William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet Deserves Another Look', Lucy Hamilton claims of Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* that the film 'revolutionary in its time, was more apparently traditional in its use of the original, and so the criticism he [Zeffirelli] received, for his cutting of the text . . . was more muted in nature'. She goes on to note that in Zeffirelli's version the 'glorious scenery [of the film's] "Renaissance Verona" [is] superb in the attempt to evoke the history and atmosphere of familiar paintings'.²

At least part of the concern here, as elsewhere in the critical literature surrounding adaptations of Shakespeare's works, seems to me to centre on the question of whether these works *survive* in the later versions; that is, whether the purported adaptations of the plays still *are* Shakespeare. Although it is no part of my intention here to *adjudicate* in the specific debates which arise concerning this question, I will be interested in the question of what criteria are *relevant* to this adjudication. Should it simply be a matter of how much of the relevant text is included in the film? Should it be whether the film *looks* like we think that the play or Verona looked in Shakespeare's time? Do modern references necessarily undermine the extent of the survival of the original in the film? Can Shakespeare still survive in a work

which is noticeably reminiscent of the work of another artist (such as Luhrmann's *Strictly Ballroom*)?

Thus, the present paper requires us to take a step back from the question of *how* various aspects of Medieval and Renaissance literature have survived and to attempt to address the question of *what it is* for a work of literature (Medieval, Renaissance, or any other kind) to survive.³ My question is, therefore, primarily *philosophical* in nature, rather than literary or historical. However, not only does it have its origins in a consideration of filmic adaptations of a prominent Renaissance text but part of my answer *to* this question makes use of an idea which was prominent amongst philosophers in the medieval period, namely the notion of *universalia in rebus*, or a universal in the object. Hence, not only is the present paper *about* the survival of works of literature, but the survival of philosophical ideas from the medieval period is evidenced *in* the paper.

In asking what it is for a literary work to survive we are necessarily concerned with the question of what the *nature* of the literary work is. For, it would seem, we cannot say under what conditions a work of literature continues, or fails to continue, to exist unless we can say something about what kind of a thing a work of literature is. And, conversely, following Amie Thomasson, we can see the question of what *kind* of thing a work of literature is as reducing to the question of under what conditions a work of literature comes into existence, continues to exist and passes out of existence, conjoined with the question of when items are to count as being the *same* work of literature. The first question concerns the, so called, *persistence* conditions of a work of literature; the second question the, so called, *identity* conditions of the work of literature.⁴ For simplicity, I will call the question of what it is for a literary artwork to *survive* 'the survival question', and I will call the question of what *kind* of thing a literary artwork is 'the ontological question'.

Prima facie it seems plausible to think that the survival question can be answered by giving the persistence conditions of a work of literature. However, I will suggest that the correct account of these persistence conditions fails to capture much of that in which we are interested when we consider the question of whether some literary artwork survives. I will also suggest, however, that the correct account of these persistence conditions 'shows us the way forward', so to speak, with respect to answering the survival question.⁵ The strategy in arguing for this twofold conclusion will be as follows: (1) I will construct, from a range of considerations evident in the literature, what I take to be a fundamental puzzle about the ontological status of literary artworks in order to motivate the account of the nature of the work of literature and its persistence conditions which I favour; (2) I will then proceed to

suggest a number of ways in which this account of these conditions fails to satisfy some of our central interests regarding the survival question; (3) finally, I will use this account of the nature of the literary artwork to suggest an approach to a sense of survival which *does* satisfy these interests.

Before beginning, however, it should be noted that the issue whether *Romeo and Juliet* survives in Zeffirelli's and Luhrmann's respective film adaptations is complicated, first, by the fact that film is a medium which is distinct from theatre, and, second, by the fact that, to a certain extent, our judgements concerning the nature of Shakespeare's work are based on our reading of *Romeo and Juliet* as a work of *literature* rather than as a work of *performance*. For the purposes of the present paper the question of what the criteria for correct *performance* of the work, *as a work of performance*, are will be bracketed. Rather, it will simply be assumed that, insofar as the name '*Romeo and Juliet*' can apply *both* to a work of literature and to a work of performance, there must exist some principled way in which to correctly transform the work of literature into a work of performance. This principled way, moreover, may leave room for an interpretive 'filling in of the gaps' which the bare text leaves open when it comes to performance.⁶

II

What *kind* of thing is a literary artwork? That is, what is the *ontological status* of the work of literature? Are literary artworks physical objects? Abstract objects? Mental objects? Universals?⁷ In addressing these questions it seems to me that we are confronted by a fundamental puzzle or dilemma; this dilemma is particularly nasty because it has, not two, but four horns.

The first horn of the dilemma emerges from a rather unlikely source: the consideration of the phenomenon of forgery. One of the ways in which the different arts differ is that whereas in some arts the phenomenon of forgery is possible, in others it would seem to be impossible.⁸ Forgery, as I understand it, involves, first, the production of an item ('the fake') which differs *minimally* from some other item ('the original') in certain of its *qualitative* properties, and, second, the putting forward of the fake as the original. Here 'qualitative properties' refers to those properties which make a difference to the sensory impression which the item makes on us. Consequently, in the case of painting the putting forward as the original of a canvas which *looks* the same as (or highly similar *to*) the original would constitute a forgery.⁹

In such a case we don't merely say that the fake is not the *original*; rather we say that the fake is not the same *artwork*, nor an instance of it. And the reason for this seems to be relatively clear: In some artforms, such as painting, artworks *just don't have multiple instances*.¹⁰ We speak of the artwork as if it were identical with the original: we say that *The Mona Lisa* hangs in the Louvre, and we say this because the canvas to which Leonardo applied pigment hangs in the Louvre.¹¹

However, in the case of literature it seems that forgery is *not* possible. Should someone produce a word for word replica of *Romeo and Juliet* and claim that it is Shakespeare's literary work, we would not impune him as a forger, but would rather claim that he has said something true. Following Nelson Goodman,¹² we *may* say that if an individual were to produce a word for word copy of *Romeo and Juliet* and put it forward as *Shakespeare's own original manuscript* then we would take him to be a forger. But what we would want to say here differs from the case of painting, above: what we want to say in this case is that whilst the forger has produced an instance of *Romeo and Juliet*, he has not produced the *original* instance of that work. And the reason for this too seems to be clear: unlike paintings, we do not regard the literary artwork as if it were identical with the original manuscript;¹³ we do not say things like *Pride and Prejudice* is in such and such a museum or *Disgrace* is in J. M. Coetzee's office. And, as Thomasson notes, although we think of works of literature as items the copyright or publishing rights of which may be bought or sold, we do not think that the work *itself* can be bought or sold.¹⁴ At least, unlike the case of painting, we do not think that a work of literature can be bought or sold to the exclusion of *other buyers or sellers*.

One conclusion to which these examples point is that whilst some artforms, such as painting or non-cast sculpture, are *singular* (that is, there is only one physical 'manifestation' of the artwork); other art forms, such as literature, music or drama are *multiple*, in that they may have more than one instance.¹⁵ However, the impossibility of forgery in the literary arts tells us something more about the ontological status of the work of literature than simply that it can have multiple instances. As Goodman notes, not all multiple art forms are ones in which forgery is impossible: print-making, for instance, is multiple, in that multiple prints can be pulled from the same plate; however, any print pulled from a plate which is non-identical with the plate fashioned by the original artist will, if passed-off as original, constitute a forgery.¹⁶ In such a case, therefore, the plate functions much like the painted canvas. In contrast, what the multiple nature of literature and the impossibility of the forgery of literary works suggest is that the identity conditions of a work of literature are *independent* of the

context of the work's production: Regardless of the historical circumstances of the production of a textual item, so long as that item is qualitatively identical in suitable respects to the original manuscript, the item counts as an instance of the work.^{17 18}

Turning to the second horn of our dilemma, we meet a number of arguments which seem to indicate precisely the *opposite*, namely that the identity conditions of a work of literature are *dependent* on the historical context of production of a literary work. Gregory Currie asks us to consider the following case/argument. Suppose that unbeknownst to Jane Austen and to the audience of English literature, Anne Radcliffe, the author of a number of Gothic fictions, wrote a manuscript that is syntactically identical to the manuscript of *Northanger Abbey*. Suppose also that, amazingly, this occurred ten years prior to Austen's authoring the latter work. Then, although the artwork composed by Radcliffe is qualitatively (both in terms of syntax and, given the short interval between the two compositions, plausibly in terms of semantics) identical to *Northanger Abbey*, it would seem that Radcliffe's work is not the same artwork as that composed by Austen. The reason for this is that Radcliffe's artwork and Austen's seem to possess distinct and incompatible properties. Currie claims that Austen's *Northanger Abbey* satirises the Gothic tradition which preceded Austen's creation of it; and, in order to satirise this tradition, *Northanger Abbey* must comment upon the tradition and implicitly refer to various elements within it. However, it would seem that Radcliffe's hypothetical work could not possibly have these properties. This is so since it would be anachronistic to think of Radcliffe's text as referring to, and ironically commenting on, certain works in the Gothic tradition which were actually written *by Radcliffe, after* the date of her hypothetical composition of the work which is textually identical to *Northanger Abbey*. Indeed, such a thought would, in certain respects, seem to be absurd. However, since nothing can *both* be a satire of the Gothic tradition and *not* a satire of the Gothic tradition, Radcliffe's hypothetical work and *Northanger Abbey* would have to be *distinct* works.¹⁹ One plausible explanation of this is that the identity conditions of a work of literature are, at least partly, dependent on the *context* of the work's production.

That the context of production forms part of the identity conditions of a work of literature, seems to suggest that a work of literature must be a sort of entity that can have properties dependent on being produced in a certain *place* and at a certain *time* (for the context of production of a work surely refers to the cultural, social, political and, perhaps, environmental climate which prevails at a certain time, and, perhaps, in a certain place). Since the paradigmatic sort of object which can have spatio-temporal features is a *physical* object, it would seem that the literary artwork object is plausibly a *physical* object. This

brings us to the third horn of our dilemma, for, it would seem, the literary object *cannot* be a physical object. This is so, since, as Richard Wollheim notes, any copy of the work of literature, including the author's original manuscript could be lost/destroyed and yet we would still not take this to be a destruction of the work of literature.²⁰ But if the literary work *were* identical with any of these physical objects then the destruction of that physical object would be the destruction of the work.

The final horn of our dilemma is that if the literary artwork cannot be a physical object, then it looks like it cannot be a non-physical, abstract object or structure either. To see this we might consider, first, that abstract objects/structures have traditionally been conceived of as standing outside of space and time and, therefore, as being non-causal;²¹ this non-spatial, non-temporal, non-causal nature brings with it a number of problems. For instance, on this conception it is difficult to see how literary artworks could be created by their authors or destroyed, since the notions of creation and destruction seem to be *temporal* notions.²² At most authors can only *discover* these artworks.²³ In a related vein, it is difficult to see how we may *read* the literary artwork, since reading, surely, requires causal interaction between the work and ourselves.²⁴

III

The above dilemma is so nasty since it seems that when encountering each horn we are compelled to place the literary artwork into a different ontological category. And, indeed, the various theories of the nature of the literary work can be seen to fall foul of one or more of the considerations embodied in the four horns of the dilemma above.

I would like to consider one such theory, since its failings suggest the account which I think is the most promising. Richard Wollheim and Nelson Goodman suggest that we can think of literary works as *types* and of copies of the work as *tokens* of those types.²⁵ This type-token distinction can be conceptualised through the example of the English alphabet. One letter may have a multitude of particular instances in books, diaries, on exam papers and sometimes on train station walls. That which has instances is a type; that which is a particular instance is a token of that type.²⁶ One type may, therefore, have many tokens; what can be said of letters can, of course, be said of words, sentences, paragraphs and so on.²⁷

For Wollheim and Goodman, therefore, the literary work is a *text* type and the respective copies of the work are *tokens* of this type. For Goodman the text type is a purely *syntactic* structure: what determines whether an item is a token of a particular type is that it is

spelled the same as the original. Hence, all and only those physical objects which have the same sequence of letters, spaces and punctuation marks as the original manuscript penned by Shakespeare count as instances of *Romeo and Juliet*.

What does this account tell us about the survival question? Since types have, conventionally, been thought of as certain sorts of abstract objects, which, in turn, have traditionally been thought to be non-spatial and non-temporal, it would seem that, on this conception, an artwork cannot be created or destroyed but exists eternally or else sempiternally, that is at every moment.²⁸ More interestingly, the account tells us that a certain artwork survives, in the sense of being instanced in a copy, in all and only those texts which are spelt the same as the original Shakespeare manuscript. In this second sense, therefore, the literary artwork of *Romeo and Juliet* simply fails to survive in either the script of Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* or in the script of Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*. And (in what seems to me to be the most natural extension of this account to the case of works from different genres) it survives in the films only if *all* of the textual elements which are omitted in each script are transposed or transformed into non-textual filmic elements. Whatever we say about the ways in which Zeffirelli and Luhrmann might succeed in transposing *some* of these elements, I think it is safe to say that they do not transpose *all* such elements. Hence, on this account, *Romeo and Juliet* just fails to survive in these films. Perhaps for traditionalists this is a satisfactory conclusion.

However, such traditionalists are doomed to disappointment, for the text-type account is mistaken. Although the account explains well the multiple nature of the literary work and the impossibility of forging such a work, and although the account does not claim that the work of literature is a physical object, it falls foul of the second and fourth horns of the above dilemma. For the pure syntactic structure does not include contextual properties.²⁹ This can be seen by considering that Radcliffe's hypothetical text and *Northanger Abbey* are, by hypothesis, syntactically identical. Equally, since the text-type account seems to entail that artworks are abstract objects existing outside of space and time, the account cannot avoid the fourth horn of our dilemma.³⁰

Nevertheless, despite its problems, it seems to me that the spirit of this account is worth preserving. What follows is one way in which to do this which seems to me to be promising.

Let us define a *universal* as that which can have more than one instance at the same time.³¹ Hence, the property 'being red' is a universal, since lots of things are red at any one time. Let us, furthermore, follow a number of philosophers in taking types to be universals. I

want to suggest that we can avoid all of the horns of the dilemma above if we conceive of those literary universals as being wholly *in* each of their instances; that is, it seems that we can solve many of the problems of the ontological status of the work of literature if we take such artworks to be *universalia in rebus*.

Before looking at how it promises to solve our problems we need to make one amendment to the Goodman account above. The idea that the identity of the literary work depends upon sameness of spelling seems to be far too restrictive. For, as Currie notes, this would mean that should the author of a work make a spelling mistake in writing the original manuscript, any *corrected* copy would not be an instance of the work composed by that author;³² hence, all editors would, it seems, be out of a job. Second, as Wetzell notes, the same word may have *different* correct spellings, and, it would seem that, in at least some cases we would acknowledge that a string of letters which is not an instance of any *correctly spelled* word may still be an instance of a word; it's just not a *correct* instance of the word.³³ But if a text occurrence were to differ from the original in that some of the words were differently spelled in either of these two ways, it seems that we would still classify it as an instance of the same literary work. Thus sameness of *word* sequence rather than sameness of *spelling* seems to be a more plausible contender for defining the text type with which the literary work is identical. Literary artworks on this account really are, in a certain sense, just 'words, words, words', as Hamlet would have it.³⁴ Let us call this adjusted type theory in which types are *universalia in rebus* the word-sequence theory.^{35 36} It is still open to us on this theory to insist that sameness of spelling is necessary for a copy of a work to be a *correct* instance of that work.

How, then, does conceiving of literary works as *universalia in rebus* promise to solve our problems? First, since universals *in rebus* are still *universals* this account can explain, as well as the text-type account can, the multiple nature of literature and the impossibility of forging the literary work. Second, since universals *in rebus* are located wholly *within* each of their instances, plausibly they have spatiotemporal properties and can, therefore, have causal powers. Consequently, they are best taken as *concrete* rather than *abstract*.³⁷ But, though they are concrete they are not *objects*, they are not spatio-temporal *particulars* but rather spatiotemporal *universals*. Hence, artworks are not physical objects either. As such, conceiving of literary works as *universalia in rebus* allows us to avoid the first, third and fourth horns of our dilemma.³⁸

In terms of the second horn, it seems to me that conceiving of literary universals as *in* their instances allows us to diffuse the force of the contextualist arguments proposed by

Currie and others. One of the consequences of claiming that universals are located in their instances is that the universal can bear some rather strange relationships to itself, since its relational properties can be rather odd. For instance, as Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra notes, if the universal ‘whiteness’ is *in rebus* then the universal can occupy more than one spatial location at one time and, thus, can literally be six metres away from itself.

How can we make sense of such an idea? In his overview of the medieval problem of universals Gyula Klima summarises the view of universals of the philosopher Abelard (1079–1142 AD) as follows:

. . . in his *Logica Ingredientibus* he [Abelard] concludes that . . . to give an account of the universality of our universal words . . . we have to be able to assign a *common cause* by the recognition of which in terms of a *common concept* we can give a *common name* to a *potential infinity of individuals* belonging to the same kind. But this common cause . . . of the imposition of universal words cannot be any one thing, or a multitude of things (section 6).³⁹

This idea seems to me to be reminiscent of, though importantly different from, the modern idea that we should count properties as being the same ‘just in case they confer the same causal powers . . . on their instances’.⁴⁰ We correctly apply a universal term to a multiplicity of particulars in virtue of each having the same property, where the properties are the same in virtue of the sameness of causal powers conferred by them. Hence, we say that whiteness is six metres away from itself partly in virtue of particulars which have certain of the same causal powers being six metres away from one another; this latter idea, I think, seems far easier to swallow.

Accepting an *in rebus* conception of universals, consider a case in which we have two white objects, one six feet away from a red object and one three feet away from the same red object. Then when we come to consider that instance of whiteness which is three feet away from redness, we see that *in the respect* that the universal ‘whiteness’ is *in* that instance it is *not* six feet away from redness (since three feet does not equal six feet). On the other hand, when we come to consider that instance of whiteness which is six feet away from redness, we see that *in the respect* that the universal ‘whiteness’ is *in* that instance it *is* six feet away from redness. Hence, *there is a sense* in which we can, either simultaneously or non-simultaneously, think of whiteness as being six feet away from redness and *also* as *not* being six feet away from redness.⁴¹

Now, the properties which Currie cites in his Radcliffe argument are, like the spatial property ‘being six metres away from’, *relational* properties because they are properties which Austen’s work has in virtue of being related to other literary artworks. We have already seen that the relevant relations in Currie’s argument either are or depend upon the referential relation. Furthermore, it seems highly plausible to me that an item refers to a referent (a state of affairs, a context, a literary work etc.) partly in virtue of being causally related to that referent.⁴² Hence, what I would like to claim is that if we conceive of types as universals *in rebus*, then we can coherently think of Currie’s case analogously to that of the ‘whiteness/redness’ case above. When we come to consider tokens of the Radcliffe text, we see that none of these tokens are causally related to the texts of the later Gothic period in that manner which grounds the referential relation; hence, none of these text tokens can be satires of this tradition. On the other hand, when we come to consider tokens of *Northanger Abbey*, we see that all of these tokens are causally related to the texts of the later Gothic period in that manner which grounds the referential relation; hence, all of those text tokens *are* able to be satires of this tradition (or, at least, they bear these relations/are able to be satires for the sake of Currie’s argument). The reason for this difference is that Austen, but not Radcliffe, had read these texts at the time of writing the relevant manuscript, and this reading had contributed, in the appropriate manner, to the composition of the manuscript. Now, if we were to take literary artworks to be universals *in rebus*, then *in the respect* that the literary artwork of which the Radcliffe tokens are tokens is *in* those tokens, that artwork is *not* related causally to the texts of the later Gothic period, does *not* refer to them and, hence, *cannot* be a satire of them. Similarly, *in the respect* that the literary artwork of which the *Northanger Abbey* tokens are tokens is *in* those tokens, that artwork *is* related causally to the texts of the later Gothic period, *does* refer to them and, hence, *can* be a satire of them. Hence, it would seem that, in parallel to the case of whiteness, *there is a sense* in which we can say that *Northanger Abbey* is related to the Gothic tradition in some manner (for example, in a satiric manner) and also that Radcliffe’s hypothetical text is *not* related to the Gothic tradition in this manner. All of this is compatible with the intuitions which Currie marshals. However, just as we can coherently attribute the seemingly incompatible properties to whiteness which we do in the ‘whiteness/redness’ case whilst still maintaining that whiteness is identical with itself, we should be able to attribute the seemingly incompatible properties discussed by Currie to the hypothetical Radcliffe artwork and *Northanger Abbey* respectively whilst still maintaining that the former is identical with the latter.

Thus, there seems to be no block to saying that Radcliffe's hypothetical text is identical with *Northanger Abbey*, although all of the tokens of Radcliffe's text will not be satires, whilst all of the tokens of *Northanger Abbey* will be. Currie's argument is a good one, therefore, if we take literary artworks to be universals on a broadly Platonic conception (universals *ante rem*), but it falters when we take literary artworks to be universals *in rebus*. What I think is important about the preceding discussion of Currie's case is that, if it is correct, then it suggests that copies of the *same* literary work can have *different* aesthetic properties depending on the context in which they were produced and whether they are related to other artworks through the intentions of the author.⁴³

IV

Thus the word-sequence account can successfully negotiate each horn of our dilemma. What this account tells us about the survival question is also slightly more interesting than the text-type account because, presumably, if the literary universals are wholly *in* their instances then if all instances of a work are destroyed then so is the literary universal.⁴⁴ So, the literary artwork does *not* exist eternally. What it is for the work of literature to survive (in the sense of persistence), therefore, is for there to be a copy of a text which is word for word identical with the original; moreover, the work only survives in such texts. Once again, therefore, the literary artwork of *Romeo and Juliet* simply fails to survive in either film script. And, once again (in what seems to me to be the most natural extension of this account to the case of works from different genres) it survives in the films only if *all* of the word sequences which are omitted in each script are transposed or transformed into non-textual filmic elements. Hence, it seems fair to conclude that, on this account *Romeo and Juliet* simply fails to survive in either Luhrmann's or Zeffirelli's film adaptation.

If we identify the survival conditions of a work of literature with its persistence conditions, therefore, the survival of the literary work becomes an all or nothing affair. However, I would like to suggest that when we ask the question of whether a work of literature survives we are often interested in a different sense of survival, which is informed by, yet different from, this notion of persistence. We think of a work as surviving in *translations* and, at least some, later adaptations; we think that editors might unintentionally *incorrectly* change a word here or there whilst not completely destroying the literary work. Yet, on the word sequence account, in none of these cases does the literary artwork persist. Survival, it seems, may, in some cases, be an all or nothing affair; but more often it is likely to be a matter of degree: the literary work may survive to a greater or lesser extent in translations and these texts may, in fact, constitute *distinct* works of literature; works that

may serve as a foundation for the development of the literature of a language. The literary work may survive to a greater or lesser extent in edited copies of original manuscripts, and will survive to a *greater* rather than *lesser* extent if the editing is *good*. And, of course, a literary work may survive in *another* artwork even while we acknowledge the latter work to *be* a distinct work.

What it is for a work of literature to survive, therefore, *may* sometimes be what it is for that work to persist. However, if our question of whether a work survives may also sometimes be whether the work survives *in another* work, then it would seem that we cannot be asking whether the first work is identical with the second. What then *is* it for a work of literature to survive in this second sense? The discussion above prompts me to suggest, tentatively, that this second sense of survival depends on, at least, three things.

First, this sense of survival depends upon there being a causal connection between the tokens of the first work and the tokens of the second. When we ask whether a work like *Romeo and Juliet* survives in another work, it seems that we are happy to rephrase the question as whether the other work still is Shakespeare. This suggests to me that what we are concerned with when we ask about survival in this sense is the relation between the new work and the set of text tokens which we may class together, and which may have certain of their aesthetic properties, in virtue of being related to a particular author. What consideration of Currie's Radcliffe case shows us is that some of these properties may differ systematically if the causal relations between the relevant text tokens are broken. However, consideration of the case also seems to show that saying that Radcliffe survives in Austen on the basis of the relation between the former's hypothetical work and *Northanger Abbey* does not sit well. This is due to the fact that some appropriate relation between the text token related to Radcliffe, and the tokens of *Northanger Abbey*, classed together in virtue of their relation to Austen, does not hold. In contrast, it seems, we would claim that this relation would hold if Austen had come into contact (that is into perceptual/cognitive and, therefore, causal contact) with Radcliffe's text token and this contact had contributed (that is causally contributed) to the production of Austen's original text token. As such the 'appropriate relation' seems to me to be a causal relation. Hence, causal continuity between tokens of the new and the old works is necessary for saying that the old work survives (in the second sense) in the new one. In practice what this amounts to is that the author of the new work *intends* to refer to the old work. Both Zeffirelli's and Luhrmann's version satisfy this condition.

Second, since it has been claimed above that the aesthetic properties of a work may, in part, depend upon the context in which it is created, what matters in assessing the extent to

which a certain author's work survives in a later literary artwork is the relation which the later text bears to the context in which *it* was created, and how this compares to the relation which the earlier text bore to the context in which that was tokened. Given the nature of the properties with which the former claim is concerned and given that both works of literature and works of film can have such properties, the latter point has a natural extension to the case of two works belonging to these genres respectively. Those who praise Zeffirelli's film for looking like what we expect Renaissance Verona to have looked, are *not*, therefore, speaking to the point; nor are those who criticise Luhrmann simply on the basis of his use of modern references. The sorts of things with which we *should* be concerned is what sort of aesthetically relevant properties accrue to Zeffirelli's film in virtue of being first tokened in the nineteen-sixties yet still looking like we expect Renaissance Verona to have looked, and how such properties compare to those accruing to Shakespeare's text in virtue of its context of production.

Finally, the extent to which a literary work survives in another artwork is a matter *not* of how much of the original *text* (construed as 'syntactic structure') is preserved but, *rather* how many correct *interpretations* of the original are preserved in the later work. This is so since in order for the explanation of the idea of a universal *in rebus* above to apply to the word-sequence account of literary artworks as universals, we must, it seems, conceive of the work as a structure of properties or, alternatively, a structural property,⁴⁵ with *causal powers*. Here, the identity of the structure depends, in part, upon the identity of the constituent properties (i.e. word properties), which depends, in turn, on the nature of the causal powers conferred by such properties on their instances.⁴⁶ The best way, it seems to me, to fill out this conception of the literary artwork is to say that a physical structure (an inscription) instantiates the property of being a certain word *partly*⁴⁷ in virtue of having the power to cause a certain set of ideas, feelings or connotations in competent speakers of the language. Different physical structures instantiate the same word in virtue of having the power to *cause* the same ideas, feelings or connotations in such speakers, under normal conditions. However, it is precisely these meaningful or quasi-sensory features of texts with which we are concerned in interpretation. Therefore, interpretation based on syntactic structure, rather than syntactic structure alone is what matters in this sense of survival.

Admittedly these suggestions may not answer all of the questions with which we started. However, they seem to me to be hard won and rewarding insights into what it is for a text to survive.

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NOTES

¹ Jim Welsh, 'Postmodern Shakespeare: Strictly Romeo', *Literature/Film Quarterly* 25 (1997): 152–153.

² Lucy Hamilton, 'Baz vs. the Bardolators, or Why *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* Deserves Another Look', *Literature/Film Quarterly* 28 (2000): 118–24 (p. 119).

³ I will, moreover, be interested in this question not only in terms of the survival of a work of literature in a film (or, more generally, a work of performance), but equally in terms of the survival of a work of literature in a work of literature.

⁴ Amie L. Thomasson, 'Debates about the Ontology of Art: What are We Doing Here?' *Philosophy Compass* 1.3 (2006): 245–255 (p. 245).

⁵ In this respect, therefore, my project can be seen as an analogue, in the area of literary identity, to Derek Parfit's project in the area of personal identity. Indeed, the parallel between Parfit's project and my own can be seen most markedly in the following two respects: (i) I draw a distinction between two senses of survival partly on the basis of the distinction between an 'all-or-nothing' and a 'matter-of-degree' relation; (ii) I stress the importance of causal continuity in that relation of survival which is of primary interest to us.

⁶ See Richard Wollheim, *Art and its Objects* (Harmondsworth, 1968), pp. 98–103.

⁷ All of these alternatives have been pursued in the literature. For a useful overview see Amie L. Thomasson, 'The Ontology of Art', *The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics*, ed. Peter Kivy (Malden, Mass., 2004), Blackwell Reference Online, accessed 29 November 2010.

⁸ Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (London, 1969), pp. 112–15.

⁹ Goodman, *Languages of Art*, pp. 99–100; cf. Gregory Currie, *An Ontology of Art* (London, 1988), pp. 111–20.

¹⁰ Cf. Currie, *An Ontology of Art*, p. 5.

¹¹ Cf. Thomasson, 'The Ontology of Art', Introduction.

¹² Goodman, *Languages of Art*, pp. 112–13.

¹³ Wollheim, *Art and its Objects*, pp. 22–24.

¹⁴ Thomasson, 'The Ontology of Art', Introduction.

¹⁵ Currie, *An Ontology of Art*, p. 8.

¹⁶ Goodman, *Languages of Art*, p. 114.

¹⁷ It is precisely this sort of consideration which prompts Goodman to state '[a]ll that matters [to the identity of instances of a literary artwork] is what may be called *sameness of spelling*: exact correspondence as sequences of letters, spaces, and punctuation marks' (*Languages of Art*, p. 115). In this respect literature differs from printmaking, for regardless of the degree of qualitative similarity between two prints, it is the historical circumstance of being pulled from the original plate which determines the identity of these prints.

¹⁸ The idea that some art forms are singular and others multiple has been challenged by a number of authors. For instance, Currie argues that all artworks are action types (*An Ontology of Art* 46–84). As a consequence, he argues that there may be more than one correct instance of a work of painting (*An Ontology of Art* 85–120). The arguments presented in the present paper do not, *strictly*, depend upon the acceptance of the idea that some art forms, including painting and non-cast sculpture, are singular and open to forgery. Rather they depend upon the acceptance of the claim that there are art forms, including literature, which are *multiple* and *not* open to forgery.

Although I accept both of these claims (though their full defence would take me beyond the scope of the present paper), I take the latter claim to be the far less controversial.

¹⁹ Gregory Currie, *Arts and Minds* (New York, 2004), pp. 13–14.

²⁰ Wollheim, *Art and its Objects*, pp. 21–24.

²¹ Linda Wetzel, ‘Types and Tokens’ (section 3), *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2008), ed. Edward N. Zalta (Metaphysics Research Lab, CSLI, Stanford University), accessed 25 August 2010.

²² Guy Rohrbaugh, ‘The Ontology of Art’, *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. Berys Gaut and Dominic Lopes, 2nd edn (London, 2005), pp. 241–54 (p. 249).

²³ Cf. Currie, *An Ontology of Art*, p. 50.

²⁴ See also in this regard Rohrbaugh, ‘The Ontology of Art’, p. 249; cf. Thomasson, ‘The Ontology of Art’, section I.

²⁵ Wollheim, *Art and its Objects*, pp. 90–100; Goodman, *Languages of Art*, pp. 115–16.

²⁶ Wollheim, *Art and its Objects*, p. 91; Wetzel, ‘Types and Tokens’ (section 1). Here ‘instance’ is not to be taken as necessarily implying that types are universals, nor is ‘particular instance’ to be taken as necessarily equivalent to ‘occurrence’: Although all tokens are occurrences of a type, not all occurrences of a type are tokens of that type (Wetzel, ‘Types and Tokens’, section 8).

²⁷ Wetzel, ‘Types and Tokens’ (section 1).

²⁸ Rohrbaugh, ‘The Ontology of Art’, p. 249.

²⁹ Currie, *An Ontology of Art*, pp. 50–53.

³⁰ Cf. Rohrbaugh, ‘The Ontology of Art’, pp. 249–250.

³¹ Wetzel, ‘Types and Token’ (section 3).

³² Currie, *An Ontology of Art*, pp. 53–55.

³³ Wetzel, ‘Types and Tokens’ (section 4.2.3).

³⁴ Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, II. ii. 195.

³⁵ The word-sequence theory, therefore, contains *two* logically separable claims: (i) That sameness of *word* sequence rather than sameness of *spelling* is definitive of the text type with which the literary work is identical; (ii) that literary types are universals. Wollheim argues that although types are non-particulars, they are not universals (*Art and its Objects*, pp. 90–95). A defence of (ii) against Wollheim’s arguments would take us beyond the scope of the present paper. However, it does seem to me that the force of Wollheim’s arguments can be diffused and, hence, that the word-sequence theory can be seen as a version of the type theory. Nevertheless, the word-sequence theory can be adapted to accommodate those who wish to persist in advocating Wollheim’s position by simply considering the theory to consist of (i).

³⁶ Although part (i) of the word-sequence theory (see note 8, above) is a departure from Goodman, it is not entirely clear whether it is a departure from Wollheim. For instance, the latter does not seem to distinguish between a Goodman type account and a word-sequence type account when he claims ‘it might be argued that . . . the tokens of a certain poem are the *many different inscriptions* that occur in books *reproducing the word order* of the poet’s manuscript’ (*The Languages of Art*, p. 96, emphasis added).

³⁷ Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra, 'Nominalism in Metaphysics' (section 2.2), *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008), accessed 20 August 2010.

³⁸ The advantages of adopting an Aristotelian conception of universals with respect to the creation and destruction of works of art are noted also by Rohrbaugh ('The Ontology of Art', p. 249).

³⁹ Gyula Klima, 'The Medieval Problem of Universals' (section 6), *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2008), accessed 25 August 2010.

⁴⁰ Chris Swoyer, 'Properties' (section 6.2) *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2009), accessed 26 August 2010.

⁴¹ Since the respects in which it has these relational properties differ from one another, I am not claiming here that whiteness simultaneously both is and is not six feet away from redness *simpliciter*. Alternatively, the individual who wishes to claim that whiteness *does* have such properties *simpliciter* might do so by denying that 'whiteness is not six feet away from redness' implies 'it is not the case that whiteness is six feet away from redness', consequently avoiding contradiction.

⁴² Here, I am making use of the notion that the causal relation is necessary for reference. See, for instance, Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (MA: Blackwell, 1981), pp. 90–105. In the present case of literary reference and satire, I would suggest that, most commonly, such reference occurs, in part, through the satiriser coming into perceptual contact (i.e. through reading) with that work which is to be referred to. However, nothing is to preclude such reference taking place through a more elaborate causal *chain* of the kind envisioned by Kripke. Moreover, in all cases, what secures the status of *later* copies of the satire as satires, may well be precisely this sort of Kripkean causal chain leading back to the satirised object. This is so since if reproduction requires human intervention, those who intervene may be acquainted with the satirised object only by virtue of the satire; in any case, their intention, insofar as it is an intention to produce a copy, is surely merely the intention to refer to all and only those items to which the satiriser has referred in the work (Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, p. 96).

⁴³ The idea that *some* aesthetically relevant properties depend upon the intentions of an author must be distinguished from the well-discussed idea that the meaning of a work of literature, or its correct interpretation, is necessarily determined (in some sense) by authorial intention. Certainly to assert the truth of the former is to commit oneself to the claim that *in the case of those works of literature the meaning or interpretation of which depends, in whole or in part, on reference to art (or other) contexts, at least part of, the meaning or correct interpretation of the work depends (in some sense) on authorial intention*. Since, it seems to me, not all works of literature depend in this way on such referential relations, claiming that *some* aesthetically relevant properties depend upon the intentions of an author does not commit us to the claim that the meaning of a work of literature, or its correct interpretation, is necessarily determined (in some sense) by authorial intention.

⁴⁴ Rohrbaugh, 'The Ontology of Art', p. 249.

⁴⁵ The notion of a structural universal was formally introduced into the literature, as far as I am aware, by David Armstrong, in *Universals and Scientific Realism* (Cambridge, 1978). Criticism and further discussion can be found in the articles and notes by David Lewis, David Armstrong, Peter Forrest and John Bigelow in the *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 64 (1986), and Joan Pagès, 'Structural Universals and Formal Relations', *Synthese* 131 (2002): 215–221. For the purpose of the present paper the distinction between identifying a literary artwork with a structure of properties or with a structural property will not be addressed.

⁴⁶ See, for instance, David Lewis, 'Against Structural Universals', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 64 (1986): 25–46 (pp. 31–42).

⁴⁷ I emphasise 'partly', since clearly this cannot be a sufficient condition for instantiating a word property: There are many ways in which to cause the occurrence of an idea, and in not all of these would we be willing to regard the causally relevant property as a word property.
