Locating Truth in Fictional Depictions

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Abstract. This paper examines notions of truth in relation to fictive modalities and discourses presented in animation and constructed imagery. It explores how notions of minimal departure and recentering of the audience are utilised within fictive depictions as narrative devices that allow the viewer to integrate truth statements into an understanding of their own world. Drawing upon discussion of Paul Ward's analysis of Documentary Animation, it considers how constructed images utilise a range of modalities in order to position discourses and make statements about reality that can affect the audience through emotional connections. Following this, the paper considers Marie-Laure Ryan's examination of possible worlds within literary texts. It examines how constructed images negotiate the telling of truths via truth clusters, and how the recentering of audiences in relation to the fictive worlds through those clusters allows for truth to emerge in the bridging between their world and the fictive world. The paper proceeds to question whether texts exhibiting low modalities or high fictionality are able to present truths through a collusion between the audience and authors' worlds. It explores this notion through an analysis of the animated film Don't Hug Me I'm Scared.We suggest that such texts are able to shift the truth potential from the specific to the universal through the utilisation of this combination of low modality and high fictionality. We thus contend that truth can be created via fiction.

1. Introduction.

This paper seeks to develop an enquiry and analysis of contemporary animation in order to examine notions of truth and truth-telling. In contrast to existing theoretical investigations which position the subjective form of animation against the telling of real-world events (i.e. documentary animation), this paper considers fabricated worlds in order to consider their ability to communicate truths.

Utilising Ryan's notion of minimal departure and its application to fictional texts, we explore ways in which constructed worlds may make use of images to convey discourses that collude with the reader's own experiences in order to articulate truths or truth statements.

Extending this analysis, we consider how such fabricated articulations of discourses may be re-orientated towards the real world, and as such consider to what extent factual source material is a prerequisite of truthful storytelling. Building upon Ward's engagement with the animated film *Andersartig*, and a case study investigation into the animated film *Don't Hug Me I'm Scared*, we suggest a re-evaluation of an adherence to reality that characterises much contemporary animated and illustrative forms, and establish the potential of fabricated forms to communicate universal truths that may conform to Herzog's notion of an 'Ecstatic Truth'.

2. Authenticity, and signs of factuality.

In an emerging socio-media environment in which truth and fake become increasingly relevant concepts, analysis of these concerns within the visual arts become pertinent.

Illustration in particular, has become concerned in recent years with notions of authenticity and a search for the tangible, the real, and truth - in rupture with decades of increasingly refined image-making whose object was the creation and evocation of imaginary worlds. These have taken varied forms which include but are not limited to a particular focus upon reportage illustration that engages with real-world issues; the return of the hand-printed image; illustrators engaging with ceramics and 3D objects; and a resurgent publishing industry seemingly pushing back against the digital tidal wave. Each exists as evidence of a rejection of fake media, the digital and corrupt inauthentic image, in favour of the truthful object.

Whilst in many ways, the illustrated image shares many characteristics with the animated image, the tendency of much animation has been towards a closer rendering of the real than of the fabricated. Characters often inhabit Euclidian spaces, while lighting, gravity other earthly phenomenon are given special attention. Time also places animated worlds closer to our actual world, in that the time of the narration is necessarily the time of the viewing. However, the construction of the animated image is always apparent, and despite a dominant turn to CGI and

the use of realistic textures within the mainstream animation industry, it is difficult to suggest that the animated image effectively simulates reality to an extent that can fool the audience.

Animated and illustrated worlds are still, for a while, blatantly artificial constructs, but despite their detachment from a real-world referent - which exists on a spectrum of abstraction within animated and illustrated images - can it be argued that constructed images speak truths?

3. Depictions: drawing and referencing the real.

Arguably we can ascertain that the constructed image of real-world events such as is found in reportage illustration asserts the truth of the event through the subjectivity of the author [1]. The drawn image asserts the 'has-been' of an event through the signalling of its authorship with markers of subjectivity such as point of views, paint stroke, or even digital gradient consistently betraying the hands of the maker. Whilst we may question the veracity of the author's assertion in such images (the artists' framing, the articulation of specific discourses over others, the authors intent), it is equally true to suggest that the photographic image might be similarly corrupted.

Nevertheless, it is rare that we look at such constructed images and consider, was the artist really there? Even in the most crude sketches we are convinced of the artists' presence and participation in the rendering of a truthful event. As Moskovitz asserts, illustration "allows one person to re-experience elements of an original event through the productive life of the illustrator/illustration; it is literally seeing the world through his/its eyes." [2]

The depiction's fabricated texture professes its sincerity in that it is at once a factual sign and a signpost of fictionality; the construct becomes a sincere image in its affirmation of authorship and subjectivity.

Arguably, the modality of reportage or documentary animation presents us with signifiers that hint at their relation to reality. The viewer comes armed with a knowledge of drawing and the construction of images that enables them to decode the clues presented within the visual artefact as representations of the real-world. The crudely drawn image asserts its reality through its conjuring of all drawings and images within the viewer's experience: i.e. their own attempts at depictions of the world, the cartoons of the great masters, engagement with previous documentary images; and thus, categorise appropriately. This is not to suggest that the constructed image requires fidelity to the real, or is more 'real' due to high mimesis, but rather, that its existence on a spectrum of modalities between a multitude of depictions already categorised as real-world depictions allows it to be incorporated within this wider corpus. Moreover, the context of such images which present additional signifiers of truth claims (narrative text, voiceover) solidifies such imagery as factual rather than fictional.

4. Modality as affective device.

Alongside the consideration of still images, authors such as Paul Ward have examined in length the notion of truth via the animated documentaries. Ward points to the ability of the modality of the form to extend and add meaning to the narrative. The 'fake' image world according to Ward has an illocutionary effect, not merely stating a fact, but utilising the utterance (in images and sound) in order to present a discursive event that bring the real event, the framing of the event, and the audience's interpretive moments into a unity. Documentary animation, like reportage illustration, is thus a method of offering perspective in the articulation of truths through the 'reimagination' of an event.

In *The Illocutionary Force of the Animated Documentary* [3], Ward discusses the use of a drawn rendering of a photograph image in the animation *Andersartig*[4]. The animation relates the story of a survivor (we are told through narration) of the bombing of an orphanage during World War 2. In this one sequence presented by Ward, characters in the 'photo' slowly fade, leaving behind a solitary character who the reader identifies as the narrator of the piece and lone survivor of the event. This sequence symbolises the death of these auxiliary characters. For Ward, the power of this image lies in its low mimetic rendering which enables the drawn 'photograph' to stand at once as both signifier of a real event, and real loss (death); but also as a broader statement about loss, memory, and 'truths' that may have wider emotional connections with the audience. For Ward it is the difference between the drawn example and its referent that points to the additional potential of animation to extend meaning and provide additional weight to the event.

5. Magnitude.

Ward cites Nichols in suggesting that it is not the verisimilitude of the medium that is important in considering its importance in the portrayal of an event, instead it is a matter of its effects [5]. As Nichols argues,

> Magnitude, then, raises questions not only of indexical correspondence between a text and the visual world but also of ideological correspondence between a text and the historical world. The magnitudes opened up by a text are not merely a matter of naming something of profound importance but, more tellingly, of situating the reader in a position where these magnitudes receive subjective intensity. [6]

In other words, magnitude refers not only to how *accurately*, or for what *purpose*, a documentary represents a recognizable anterior reality, but also *how this makes us feel*. [7]. Its magnitude then is reliant upon its specific ability to engage the viewer at an individual level, drawing upon their experiences, their humanity.

6. Specific vs. Universal images.

In Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida* he discusses the notion of *Punctum* [*8*]: a full stop or 'moment that pricks' the viewer, arresting them through a specific emotional connection. For Barthes, one photograph of his mother as a young girl offers such a *Punctum,* connecting with his memories and experiences in such a way that it offers a truthful and emotionally poignant representation. However, Barthes' conclusions about photography suggest that such an arresting moment can only occur when he views this image himself. It may draw an affective response from another viewer, however it will not be the same emotional response as felt by Barthes, and not for the same reasons. The photographic image is, to a certain extent, specific. For many, the photograph of Barthes' mother presents simply an image of a young girl – it thus moves from the realm of the specific towards the universal, and we can analyse it as such. It then stands as a universal image of the category girl, human, a social document, when viewed by anyone but Barthes.

Similarly, the hypothetical use of a real photograph in the previously discussed *Andersartig* could have asserted 'this person died', whereas the drawn image asserts 'a person died', 'a child died', 'children have died'. The specific shifts towards the universal. However, at the point of comprehension, this universal symbol has the potential to re-assert its specificity in its collision and collusion with the memory and experience of the viewer. Its magnitude can therefore be seen to be amplified by the reader in the reading of the text, rather than the author asserting it solely within the text. We are not saddened by the death of a specific person we may have never known, but rather at the death of a child, a human being; an assertion that resonates with the viewer because of its universal truth and specific personal meaning.

In constructed images, we frequently find a shift from the specific towards the universal. As we move towards more stylised or abstracted images, we have less recognition of individuality, and move towards classes, groups, families, types. For McLoud, the ultimate universal visual symbolism of a human face consists of a circle with 2 dots and a line [9] - this is the face of all humans, a set that includes the specific, and all in between.

The author of a constructed image selects modalities of representation that allow the image-object to operate at a defined level of specificity or universality according to their needs and desires. We may find for example the rendering in one gestural image to simply suggest 'goldfish'; whilst in another, the intricate rendering of a *Carrasius Auratus* may allow for identification and distinction from other fish within the genus. This would suggest a shift of the truth potential of constructed images away from the specific towards the universal as the modality gets lower. The shift does not suggest an undermining of truth – each is of a goldfish –but rather a relocation of truth. The cruder rendering has arguably more potential to remind you your beloved childhood Shubunkin than a detailed scientific depiction of a Bubble Eye specimen that matches neither its colour or shape. Howells [10] draws similar conclusions in a paper discussing his own illustrations of elephants which are used by animal welfare experts to assess the health of real world captive animals. Such drawings, Howells suggests, smooth out the biases which are exhibited in photographic images of specific animals, and can hinder accurate diagnosis.

7. Depictions: assertive and discursive objects.

Whilst we can assert that the truth claims in the above examples are partially contingent upon the representation of real-world events or objects, many of our media experiences relate to fictional tales and worlds, and even those that are based in factual worlds utilise fiction to varying extents in their 'reimagining'. It therefore behoves us to explore the possibility of truth within fictional discourses.

Literary theory has long grappled with the problem of truth in fiction and developed concepts that enable us to reconcile the fictive world with our experience of reality. As Marie-Laure Ryan explains:

> Fictional propositions can thus be evaluated in different *reference worlds. While they may be true or false of worlds that exist independently of the text in which they appear, they are automatically true of their own fictional world by virtue of a convention that grants declarative (or performative) force to fictional statements: unless its narrator is judged unreliable (see reliability), the fictional text gives imaginative existence to worlds, objects, and states of affairs by simply describing them. In creating what is objectively a non-actual PW, the fictional text establishes a new actual world which imposes its laws on the reader and determines its own horizon of possibilities. [11]

An assertion that would be a blatant lie in our actual world might be truthful in other possible worlds. Alternate realities are deployed on a spectrum of fictionality; they may follow closely our own experience of the world, or present the most alien system of existence. The completeness of these worlds is assured by what Ryan calls the 'principle of minimal departure', which:

> states that when readers construct fictional worlds, they fill in the gaps … in the text by assuming the similarity of the fictional world to their own experiential reality. This model can only be overruled by the text itself; thus, if a text mentions a blue deer, the reader will imagine an animal that resembles her idea of real deer in all respects other than the colour. [12]

The principle of minimal departure allows the reader to integrate new fictional propositions into a fictive world that remains complete and consistent. The reader assumes that whatever is not specified is aligned with his own experience of reality: not only the blue deer will resemble a deer apart from its colour, it will also move the way reader assumes it moves, inhabit spaces the reader imagines deers inhabit, unless otherwise mentioned.

Ryan describes a process of relocation in fiction that enables actual and possible worlds to exist simultaneously.

> The contrast actual/non-actual is thus reinscribed within the textural universe. Author and reader engage in an act of make-believe by which they relocate themselves as *narrator and *narratee in TAW. This imaginative relocation results in a reorganisation of the modal system around a new centre. [13]

Ryan's above proposition, which is primarily focused on literary fiction, becomes seemingly problematic however when considered in relation to visual depictions and methods of communication. As Kress suggests, images contain different 'epistemological commitments' [14] than text, that force a particular way of articulating information, in particular, the articulation of specific spatial relationships. In images, Ryan's 'blue deer' no longer relies exclusively upon an imaginative overlap between the author's words and their own actual-world experience, but instead is presented as an evident fact with multiple features. In the visual world, the deer-object is indeed blue, and more specifically a shade of blue determined by the author. Its proportions, level of stylisation and the space he sits in are asserted in a cluster of truth claims [15] – even a space left blank will be seen as 'somewhere white or empty'. The image's 'deerness' is therefore somewhat determined by the author in the image event and its specific relation to the readers' actual world experience are presented to be evaluated and assessed.

Although artists do reduce the meaning of their images to what they precisely want to convey, the nature of image making implies that they cannot not specify: without external verification, the author cannot assert fully that 'this is a deer' in the same way that a photographic image resembles the real at the level of mimesis. Instead the artist utilises symbolic elements in order to convey the notion of 'deer'. Thus, the modality of the image and its characteristics may conform more or less to the reader's notion of 'deer'.

Yet it cannot be stated that the image is untrue or a lie. A poor image, one lacking in high modality, may not effectively articulate 'deer', however its characteristics may still suggest to the reader animal, quadruped, object; and at these levels such visual statements exist as true. As Winfred Noth articulates:

> a message which conveys a plurality of facts about the world must not therefore be less true than a message that conveys only a single true statement. Neither polysemy nor ambiguity can thus be accepted as general arguments against the truth potential of pictures. [16]

What Ryan considers as verbal identifiable truth claims translates visually in identifiable clusters of truth claims; similarly, fictional verbal propositions could visually appear as a fictional ensemble of propositions – a fictional, depictive world. As the reader takes these symbol clusters and fills the gaps, the universal becomes specific.

These clusters of truth claims are usually consistent in that they share a vector – defining rules, connections and modality. Inconsistencies potentially stretch the viewer's ability to fill the gaps and reconcile those truth claims into a coherent ensemble. It is the conforming to a set of given rules that enables the audience to suspend disbelief for the time of the contemplation. Authors of imaginary illustrated worlds deploy objects, spaces and states-of-affairs as descriptions of non-actual possibilities, within the frame of their fictional universe's laws.

That the spatial composition of much illustration bends and breaks notions of perspective, and physical reality does not matter. It is the inner coherence of the illustrated construct, the conservation of its causal and temporal connections that provide the consistency key to make believe. If these narrative, temporal and spatial rules – however familiar, or unfamiliar they may be – are kept consistent, the illustrated world appear as possible, however distinct from our actual world.

Applying the theory of possible worlds to illustrated and animated worlds thus offers the possibility of considering the notion of truth in relation to these images, without having to question or quantify their (non)-resemblance to reality. Illustrated and animated worlds also seek to establish the truth of their existence, a claim resolved with the acceptance of their possibility – at the condition that they conform to the rules they set for themselves. Those animated worlds, for the audience, extend beyond the viewing, outside the frame; their objects, inhabitants and states of affairs persist outside their description.

Accepting the possibility of such worlds' existence lets us consider truth, lies, and the distinction between the two in a different light. Discrimination then becomes not only about recognising what doesn't fit within the fictional world, and its cluster of fictional truths associated so far with it, but also about recognising diverging propositions what for they are: pointers towards other systems, vectors of alternate realities. Diverging clusters of truths signal less a forgery than the existence of other possibilities, or to borrow Leibniz's concept, the existence of compatible possibilities – compossibilities [17].

The most divergent propositions may be contradictory, the viewer's experience stretched in what could be called the principle of maximal departure, trying to connect what can't possibly coexist: incompossibles belonging to the same world [18], which present the highest degree of fictionality.

It is quite easy to verify that fictional worlds with minimal departure present examples of truth telling – it is easy to imagine how an animation can utilise worlds not dissimilar to our own which speak to us of real truths. Studio Ghibli's *Grave of the Fireflies* [19] for example presents a potential alternative world that sits comfortably alongside our own knowledge about events of the Second World War, the tragedy of civilians caught up in conflict, and represents minimal departure from the real world despite its fictive aspects (the story is based on a Semi-Autobiographical short story, not a documentary account). What is less clear however is how far such fictional worlds are able to depart from our own reality and experiences before the truth becomes untenable.

This paper thus seeks to extend this discussion towards examples that are more highly fictionalised, that utilise low modalities or overt signalling of their fictionality, and narratives that occupy spaces far removed our own reality – what might be characterised less as possible worlds, and instead occupy fantastical and potentially incompossible worlds.

8. Don't Hug Me I'm Scared.

Don't Hug Me I'm Scared is a series of films that utilise a multitude of modalities in order to tell a series of surreal narrative tales. Whilst the series presents a consistent set of characters, each film is by no means episodic. This case study focuses on the events depicted in Episode 4 [20] of the series. Whilst we refer to this case study as a film, it shares many characteristics with animated or illustrated worlds in a significant proportion of its run-time, and also operates within the logic of these media more so than the notion of film would suggest.

The plot of the film is as follows: three characters in a dining room, wanting to know more about the world, get bullied by an increasingly hysterical computer that thrusts them through different worlds that mimic their actual world – until one character questions the reality of his reality, and explodes.

There are four different worlds in which the characters interact through their avatars. Each world features a different level of modality, and of fictionality. In what's presented as their actual world (W1), the characters are puppets on a set dominated by an average modality treatment of textiles and hand-made painted cardboard objects, and real objects – the characters are stylised, playful and mimic the address of a children's programme to a young audience, although with sinister undertones.

The second possible (digital) world (W2) translates the same characters in a lower modality treatment that simplifies them into 3D modelling shapes, in a pastoral environment that recalls low-budget 3D cartoons for children. However, disturbing elements such as unnatural loops, unpleasant colours and shapes highlight its constructed nature and hint at an underlying threat.

The third possible world (W3) presents a low-modality 3D visual language associated with early video games, where elements appear abstracted, bare and technical.

This unveiling of the illusory culminates with the last live-action version of the room (W4), which brings us back to a studio workroom where simple objects crudely represent each character. The high modality quality of the image contrasts with the complete fictionality of the scene, an absurd representation of earlier representations signalling a 'maximal' departure from the viewer's expectations and series as a whole. In an unexpected twist, having accepted the lower modality universe as the actual premise of the narration, the viewer experiences the live action act as the most fictional and deranging proposition of the film.

We would expect that the asserted fictionality and overall low modality would give DHMIS a very limited truth claim, if not for the strong experience the viewer gets from the shifting from one possible world to another. The strong signalling of artifice (visible puppet strings, awkward movements that are seemingly accidental, the hand-made qualities of the characters) all position the starting scene within the realm of play and fantasy rather than reality, and each subsequent scene further from our own. Whilst it is possible to suggest that the use of signifiers such as the domestic setting, and objects such as computers, a globe, a lamp, all indicate partial simulacra of the real world, such simulacra are suitably flawed as to suggest sufficient distance from the modern world as to place DHMIS within another realm of time and space.

Each departure (apart from the last) from this starting realm clearly utilise their own modalities, and retain a level of consistency across each setting. Moreover, clear signalling of transitions is utilised to indicate the move between worlds. In the first transition, a glitch effect articulates the movement between W1 and W2, in the second transition, doors are used as portals between W2 and W3. As such, the viewer is allowed to relocate themselves within the early stages of the animation within W1, and identify and assess the veracity of each subsequent world against this new centre. As suggested above, the viewer assesses the contrasting real / not real from this new centre.

DHMIS plays with this centering however in a number of ways which consistently attempt to throw this centering off balance. At a basic level, the film relies on the viewers preconceived notion of the format and content of children's television programmes. The viewer projects his intertextual knowledge in developing expectations and evaluations of content. The deviations from this expectation (such as a fleshy brain emerging from a textile puppet computer) provides a shock to these expectations and forces the viewer to re-evaluate and re-assimilate these new propositions into a coherent world.

In the second digital world (W2), as a response to being told 'you are not you, you are the digital you', the digital avatar of Yellow Guy looks at himself in a mirror, and sees a textile puppet-like

figure of himself that mimics but does not conform to the 3D basic modelling of W3 - a representation that belongs neither to their actual, nor to any of the other possible worlds deployed in the film. Later on, digital avatars appear in their characters' actual world in an increasingly dense and mashed-up movement between worlds and modalities. Such deviations offer what might be considered maximal departures which stretch the viewer's ability to unify and make sense of contradictory propositions.

In the final act, such an unbalancing of the viewers center is performed by transitioning Red Guy to W4, in which he meets an alternate version of himself and the other characters. This version utilises the lowest modality of the Red Guy character - a mop with eyeballs, operated by a figure in a white suit. Such a shift would suggest a transition to the lowest level of the preceding modality shifts (simulacrum of a simulacrum of a simulacrum!). However, we are presented in the final moments with a contextualisation of the scene within a (fake) film studio. Red Guy's confusion and ultimate demise is the culmination of a collapse of all of these realities through a rapid relocation of the viewer towards what is now a new centre, a more real space; and the ultimate signalling of the unreality of all preceding spaces.

The viewer is led, through the principal of minimal departure, to filling the gaps and creating impossible connections between incompatible propositions, drawing the attention to the very relations between these worlds. In fine, the narration puts in doubts the viewer's actual world in its similarity to the fictionalised last live action world (W4) – leading the viewer to consider his real life as just a possibility amongst others. Through layering, self-reference and collision, modality and fictionality, which were first used as narrative devices to discriminate between the worlds, both highlight the characters' confusion and question the viewer's make believe process. The narrative structure of the film, which culminates with the collapse of all worlds, elevates as truths the fictional aspect of all images, and the viewer's difficulty to recognise them as such.

Whilst the authors of the film are reticent to assert any meaning to the film [21], DHMIS episode 4 presents itself as a discourse on our digital lives, the seeming omnipresence of powerful but largely unseen forces operating within virtual spaces with real effects, and the collapse of identity and reality within the digital realm. As such, it presents what can be argued as a strong illocutionary effect which is prefaced by its relation to discourses operating within the real world. DHMIS is not a true story, but it tells a powerful truth by way of overt fictionality operating at both the modal and discursive level.

The above discussion points us to consider a point made by Werner Herzog in his deliberation of the importance of factuality.

> We must ask of reality: how important is it, really? And: how important, really, is the Factual? Of course, we can't disregard the factual; it has normative power. But it can never give us the kind of illumination, the ecstatic flash, from which Truth emerges. [22]

To suggest that DHMIS represents an 'ecstatic flash' as articulated by Herzog may be elevating the film absurdly far, yet we would suggest that its potential does not fall short of the bar in providing such an 'illumination' from which 'truth emerges'.

9. Conclusion.

This paper has sought to consider the notion of truth in relation to fictional images and visual narrative texts. It has considered how fictional representations and the use of fictional discourses can be utilised to present universal truths that have the ability to collude with the audience's experiences and imagination in order to articulate truths. It has suggested that the potential of a shift along a spectrum from the specific towards the universal allows images to make connections with the viewer's experiences; and that through fictional discourses, readers participate in recentering that allows them to bridge the gaps between their own real world experiences and those of fictional texts.

Ryan's assertion that we complete the gaps in our fictional universes with our own mental images drawn from our experience of the real world, and partake in 'playful recentering' when engaging with fictional texts does not however restrict this process to the real world, nor does it suggest a one-way direction of travel only. We very naturally fill the gaps of our fictional universes with mental images drawn from our exposure to other fictional universes –drawing upon a whole range of symbolic and stylistic representations - especially in these times of transmediality, where fictional universes are deployed and transformed in multiple forms.

More importantly, we might even begin to complete gaps in our own world by drawing upon fictional references:

> [As] Pavel has argued, we are also entitled to regard the musicological discussions [in Doktor Faustus] as potentially accurate information about the real world: readers occasionally use fiction as a source of knowledge. Fictional propositions can thus be evaluated in different *reference worlds." [23]

In analysing the animated film, *Don't Hug Me I'm Scared* we have proposed that the principal of minimal departure and playful recentering as articulated by Ryan can be utilised by audiences in order to relocate themselves within fictional texts and draw upon a range of real-world and fictive experiences in order to fill gaps in order to negotiate truth claims within visual texts. We suggest that in the example of DHMIS, the playful approach used by the authors to unbalance this notion of centering and create maximal departures actually offers a means by which the discourse of the film can lead to broader truth claims about the real world.

As such we suggest that highly fictionalised depictions and discourses may offer the potential to articulate truths, and offer a challenge to the notion that factuality and fidelity are prerequisite components in the articulation of truths. We contend that 'playful recentering' in fact actualises our experiences of fictional universes, placing them at a level comparable to those of our real actual world. This in turn allows the viewer to use the fictional experience to inform his engagement with the world. This we contend offers the potential for fictional work to integrate alternative possibilities into our own understanding of reality, in short to tell truths.

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