

SUSANNA SOOSAAR

Reading Time:
Experiencing Story Time
in Postmodernist Fiction



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Listen, it began like this.

The criticism I would like to write would always take off from personal experience, would always be in some way a chronicle of my hours and days, would speak in a voice which can talk about everything, would reach out to a reader like me and touch me where I want to be touched

(Tompkins 1987: 173)

While it feels longer, I have to believe whatever clocks say – and calendars. My readings here are a chronicle of the hours and days that made up the five years (to the month) of reading and writing about the experience of time. The structure of the doctoral program and the strict format of a dissertation may have limited my ability to speak in a voice which can talk about anything and everything but I am fortunate to have been able to read and write from personal experience. The community of readers and listeners sharing this experience with me may have been small but their encouragement has been significant. The support of those who have read or listened to the various bits and pieces of this work has meant the world to me.

All this happened, more or less. I am happy to have experienced a supportive research environment of the doctoral program throughout my studies. The seminars of Siobhan Kattago, Eduard Parhomenko, and Bruno Mölder in the philosophy department had many wonderful things to teach, especially about time. I am also indebted to the review committee, especially to Janika Päll and Tanel Lepsoo, for asking me, year after year, about the most valuable thing I had learned so far and for pushing me to answer all the challenging questions. I am deeply appreciative of everyone attending the doctoral seminars and following the evolution of my work. I was there, so were my old PhD buddies, Hella and Sven, constantly ready to engage with my work whenever I had to present my progress during the seminars. I also really appreciate the encouraging preliminary review and insightful suggestions of Epp Annus and Maria Mäkelä. Thank you for discussing with me whether the dissertation was dead or not. So it goes.

I really could not have asked for a more attentive, knowledgeable, dedicated supervisor. Thank you, Raili Marling, for being so patient when reading about the same ups-and-downs over and over again and for not asking if there wasn't, please, some other reading matters around. I am so grateful to you for doing the work of reading with me. For declaring a death to ambiguity and then attacking all the repetition. So it goes.

To all my fellow travelers, friends and family, thank you for providing a space to concentrate on the happy moments of this journey. Somewhere a small dog barked. That was my dog, Bibi. Karl, thank you for always being the first to listen. Thank you for not letting me turn to steam and float up among the treetops.

Over the years, people I've met have often asked me what I'm working on and I've usually replied that the main thing was a book about reading time. People aren't supposed to look back. I'm certainly not going to do it anymore. I've finished my reading-time book now. The next one I write is going to be fun.

Dissertation, *finis*. *Poo-tee-weet?*

INTRODUCTION

It was love at first sight. The first time Yossarian saw the chaplain he fell madly in love with him

(Heller 2004: 7)

What can this sentence do? The sentence above could potentially “reveal the world in its human dimensions /.../ as it is disclosed to individuals at once connected and separated” (Beauvoir 2011: 206). The sentence above holds the “power to restore generality to what we have that is most singular: the passage of time, the taste of our life, death, solitude” (Beauvoir 2011: 204). In her essay “What Can Literature Do?” Simone de Beauvoir (2011: 201) argues that literature, the “privileged place of intersubjectivity,” invites readers and writers to take part in the reciprocal activity of meaning-making through the act of reading. The sentence above speaks to our experience, to “the sorrow, as well as the joy, the ambiguity, and the contradictions that are the truth of our human condition” through language (Beauvoir 2011: 204). By speaking to our experience, the words above can reconcile “all the irreconcilable moments of a human experience” (Beauvoir 2011: 204). By reading the words above, a reader evokes the potentialities of meaning within the sentence. By responding to the words “as if he were faced with lived events,” the reader “ponders, doubts, and takes sides” while undergoing “imaginary experiences that are as complete and disturbing as lived experience” (Beauvoir 2004: 270). Readers do so because “we need to know and to feel that these experiences” are shared by others (2011: 205).

The moment of seeing someone for the first time will not last long and falling madly in love with someone will come to an end. Yossarian, however, will always fall madly in love with the chaplain the first time he sees the chaplain as long as there is someone who reads about it, someone who is willing to be thrown into another world. While this other world “has its own values, its own colors,” it is also a place that the reader meticulously makes, constructs, and produces, as stories do not exist independent of the reader (Beauvoir 2011: 201). At the same time, the reader herself is being moved, shaped, and transformed by the world of the novel. This dissertation is about the point of contact between the world of the novel and the world of the reader, it is about the thrownness of the reader and their creative agency within a literary work of art. This dissertation concerns the moments that last forever in a novel but which disappear in an instant in our lived experience. Finally, this dissertation is about Yossarian’s first meeting with the chaplain and falling madly in love with him, Billy’s unstuckness in time and the soul of Odilo Unverdorben.

Listen: Billy Pilgrim has come unstuck in time

(Vonnegut 2019: 19)

The story of Billy Pilgrim's journey through time begins with an appeal (or a demand) to *listen*. Who is to listen to Billy Pilgrim's story? If the request is presented by a narrator, it is addressed to the narratee. If it is the request of an author, it is addressed to a reader. The addressee of the invocation to listen could be either of the two, depending on which element of the reading process is under investigation. If the narratee is examined, the rest of the process of study is simple(ish) – all following instances of the narrator's communication with the narratee are to be analyzed. But what would it mean to study a reader?

While academic interest in readers and reading is generally considered to have culminated in the latter half of the twentieth century when reader-oriented criticism was the subject of ongoing debate, reading as an activity continues to be topical within literary studies. Long before the theoretical debates, readers, their response, and the reading process have been the subject of prior discussion both by fiction writers and academic authors (e.g. Woolf 1924; Richards 1924, 1929; Rosenblatt 1938). However, the 1960s–1980s marked a turning point for reading theories as reader-oriented criticism gained momentum and garnered widespread attention and recognition within literary studies. The reader and the reading process were focalized through several interdisciplinary theories of reading, under various names such as reader-response criticism, reception aesthetics, subjective criticism (e.g. Holland 1975, 1989; Bleich 1975, 1986; Iser 1978a, 1978b; Fish 1980). The emergence of reader-response criticism led to intense debates among the theorists over the advantages and disadvantages of the various theories and resulted in the publication of numerous reviews and critiques of reader-response theories (e.g. Tompkins 1980; Suleiman & Crosman 1980; Mailloux 1982).¹ During this era of discussion on reading, most of the attention was directed to the abstract figure of the reader, not actual living readers.²

A contemporary version of reading debates surfaced in English-speaking academia after an essay by Best and Marcus (2009).³ The essay, which argues for a way of reading that focuses on the surface-level features of the text, sparked a decade's worth of articles, essays and books on how to read, how not to read,

¹ An especially contentious discussion was held in the journal *Diacritics* between Stanley Fish (1981) and Wolfgang Iser (1981). Since Iser maintains that meaning is produced *between* the text and the reader, Fish's main source of contention rests on Iser's seeming inability to decide which elements contribute most to meaning production.

² While the reader figure discussed within reader-response theories was hypothetical rather than flesh-and-blood, the response of actual readers is the main focus in a related field – reception theory.

³ Although the topic of reading has been discussed throughout the 1990s and early 2000s (e.g. Miall & Kuiken 1998; Sumara 1998; Smagorinsky 2001; Harkin 2005), the latest reading and method debates are considered to have been sparked by the essay by Best and Marcus.

what to read and what not to read.⁴ The focus of contemporary and previous reading debates is not entirely aligned. While theorists in the second half of the 20th century were attempting to understand the reader and the reading activity as a process, contemporary scholars are mostly discussing the various theoretical and methodical approaches to literature to understand the process of interpretation.

In the present thesis, I consider both focal points to be equally important. It is important to know *who* is to “listen” as well as *what* is to be “listened” to. My dissertation seeks to establish a dialogue between the two periods of reading theories. I will address the shortcomings of both eras of debates and will explore potential solutions. Rather unexpectedly, I have found that discussions of reading have failed to notice and address some earlier studies that present potential resolutions for the issues raised during the debates. The work of Louise Rosenblatt has been overlooked to a significant degree despite her early recognition of the reader’s contribution to the process of reading. Since it provides a promising perspective to the concerns brought to light by the reading and method debates, I use Rosenblatt’s transactional theory of reading and her concepts of efferent and aesthetic reading to confront some of the unresolved challenges within theories of reading.

While all contributions on theories of reading are valuable, my intellectual companions share an interest in the phenomenology of reading. Besides Rosenblatt, the theoretical framework of my dissertation is inspired by the theories of reading and strategies of interpretation of Simone de Beauvoir, Georges Poulet, Wolfgang Iser, Rita Felski, Paul Armstrong, and Marco Caracciolo. The diversity of viewpoints creates new dialogues between perspectives ranging from phenomenology to narratology. While the theories of Poulet and Iser have inspired the experiential framework for my study of reading, contemporary narratologists and neo-phenomenologist theorists provide the theoretical context for the discussion of the role of the reader and the function of text during the interactive process of reading. Beauvoir’s work functions as a frame for much of the metatheoretical reflection in the dissertation as her contemplations resonate with the various movements, disciplines, and theories employed in this dissertation.

While theories of reading have the potential to address the listener of Billy Pilgrim’s story, another set of theories may be needed to evaluate who or what *Billy Pilgrim* is. In reading about him, Billy Pilgrim acquires distinctive features for the reader which “together create the effect of a character” (Bal 2009: 112). As a character in a fictional world, can Billy come unstuck in time? What does

⁴ Most of these debates focus on the method of reading literary texts and discuss how to contextualize the literary within a larger cultural framework. While some authors argue for a more descriptive approach that rejects ideology, others maintain that reading cannot be removed from personal experience. Some examples of opinions on different ways of reading can be found in e.g. Bewes 2010; Culler 2010; Hayles 2010; Love 2010; Favret 2015; Bronstein 2016; Beckwith 2017; Best 2017; Booth 2017; Brown 2017; Drucker 2017; Friedman 2017; Fuss 2017; Jagoda 2017; Love 2017; Goldstone 2017; Glover 2018; Felski 2018; Auyoung 2020; Frank 2020; Landy 2020; Rossi 2020.

Billy experience? Since this dissertation focuses on the reading of time, it is not only Billy Pilgrim's experience that I will assess but also the reader's experience of reading about Billy's experience. Although Billy himself is an invented paper-person in a fictional world, who feels and knows nothing, through games of make-believe, readers are able to imagine Billy, and, therefore, respond accordingly to his experience (see Walton 1990, Hughes 2013). While the reader's emotional entanglement with a character is mostly in effect while reading the text, Billy's impression on the reader may stretch beyond the reading act; additionally, various kinds of previous knowledge and experience on the reader's part affect the way the reader responds to Billy's predicament (Ricoeur 1984; Caracciolo 2014).

Understanding Billy's problem means understanding the experience of *coming unstuck*. Although Billy will always remain stuck on paper, his experience of unstuckness will be actualized by the reader as she moves Billy forward and back in time on his paper journey. The reader's experience of Billy's tale is itself a type of lived experience. As is the case with any experience, the reading experience is "a constant flow of retentions and protentions /.../ in which the living now of the experience comes to the consciousness" (Husserl 2012: 153). While it is, indeed, words that are read on paper and directly perceived, a willing reader is often so captivated by the storyworld that she is able to unstick herself from the material words and her material environment in order to experientially engage with the fictional events (Woolf 1924; Poulet 1969; Felski 2008). The experience of reading about Billy's unstuckness becomes "not what we know but what we have lived" (Serpell 2014: 26; c.f. Rosenblatt 1994).

Recognizing the act of reading as a lived experience requires an understanding of the phenomenological concept of experience. The renewed emphasis on experientiality has produced a gradual shift in focus across disciplines as the growing need to understand the lived experience extends beyond the humanities.⁵ It follows, naturally, that phenomenological concepts and theories have been rediscovered. In the context of this dissertation, phenomenology enables me to access the experience of reading. Although the previous decade has seen a pronounced emphasis on many of the topics central to phenomenology, few of the more recent approaches inspired by phenomenology in literary studies offer a thorough investigation into reading as a lived experience.⁶ Instead, the lived experience is commonly regarded as something self-evident that requires no elaboration. However, in order to understand the effects of the text and the work of reading, a comprehensive study of the phenomenology of reading is essential. Phenomenology will help me describe the reading process and the reader's experience of the text. I will explore the experience of reading by combining Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading with the theories of first-generation

⁵ Fields such as e.g. medicine (Charon 2006; Charon et al 2016; Kottow 2017), education, (Kolb 1984; Lewis & Williams 1994), as well as social sciences (Burack-Weiss et al 2017; Mitchell & Vincent 2021) emphasize the importance of experientiality and the lived experience.

⁶ Some notable exceptions can be found. For example, Caracciolo's (2014) work on the experientiality of narrative is incredibly detailed.

(Edmund Husserl) and mid-20th century phenomenologists (Simone de Beauvoir), as well as the phenomenology-guided perspectives of literary theorists (Georges Poulet, Paul Ricœur, Paul Armstrong, Rita Felski, Namwali Serpell, Marco Caracciolo).

Billy's unstuckness *in time* contains a multiplicity of meanings. In this dissertation, I intend to approach temporality with the following in mind: time structures experience itself and time determines the structure of narrative. To start with, as time is a fundamental aspect of experience, it also shapes our experience of reading. Built upon the tradition of exploring the meaning of time from the first-person perspective, Husserl's theory of inner time-consciousness can reveal the intricacies of the temporal process of reading. Phenomenology, then, can help me untangle what it means for the reader to become unstuck in time with Billy. However, as the text exists as a material object in a temporal world, the study of literary temporality requires a framework that can provide a set of analytical tools.

Noticing that a philosophy of time is often absent in discussions of narrative time, Mark Currie (2007, 2009, 2018) has proposed a theory of tense-based narratology that he develops through the metaphysics of time. To broaden the discussion on narrative temporality, I will borrow Currie's framework that integrates philosophy of time in the analytical tradition into Genettian narratology.⁷ Currie (2007) suggests that the tensed (A-theoretical) and untensed (B-theoretical) views of time can expand our understanding of narrative time. A-theories understand time as something tensed, dynamic, and fluid, while B-theories view time as a static, tenseless dimension of the four-dimensional spacetime manifold.⁸ Combined with Gérard Genette's distinction of story and discourse, both perspectives can be implemented in the study of textual temporality. As the text is an intentional object, carefully crafted by an author, with every word and character deliberately placed on a specific page in the material book, discourse can be compared to B-theory. However, as our experience of literature does not unfold in a tenseless, static manner, the perspective of A-theory is just as relevant to understand narrative temporality. Reading itself is a tensed, dynamic process, meaning that as we read, the text does not remain still but we move the narrative along with us. Throughout the process of reading, the reader's engagement with the text will produce a dynamic, multi-layered storyworld that exists beyond the fixed words on the page.

⁷ Although my own approach to narrative temporality is directly inspired by Currie's theory and I will, similarly, employ the tensed and untensed views of time, I will not be adopting his tense-based theory of narrative. Additionally, I will not engage in a philosophical discussion on the nature of time. Instead, terminology from philosophy of time will be used as a tool to explore the formal aspects of the novel.

⁸ While the division of time into A- and B-series is somewhat outdated and most scholars tend to view time as a combination of the two series or find the division trivial in the first place, it is still common in philosophy of time to engage with J.M.E. McTaggart's initial distinction of the A/B/C-series of time.

While narratology has introduced certain descriptive tools for analyzing the temporality of a literary text, much of the conversation about narrative temporality circles around realist and modernist texts.⁹ Although the temporality of postmodern texts has been discussed by a handful of theorists (e.g. Heise 1997; Richardson 2000), the idea that modernity is temporal and postmodernity is spatial remains quite prevalent (e.g. McHale 1987; Jameson 1991). As the principles governing the structure of postmodern novels can be considered unnatural, I intend to study the textual elements that create the effect of unnatural temporality (see Alber 2016). However, I should note that despite appearing in the title of the manuscript, I use postmodernism as a broad label to describe the rejection of conventional narrative structures and to categorize the themes and techniques employed within the three novels I analyze. Regardless of, or perhaps even as a result of, the distorted temporality of postmodern works, the reader will engage in “time-making” by reorganizing the complex and multilayered narrative temporality to correspond to their personal and subjective understanding of time (Brockmeier 1995).

*Around midnight, sometimes, Tod Friendly will create things.
Wildly he will mend and heal.*

(Amis 2003: 63)

If the text is a static object and its dynamic quality is provided by the reading process, to read is to produce the literary work. Following Rosenblatt, I argue that stories are created through the transactional process of reading, with the formal aspect of the text providing a guide for the reader’s creative activation of the potentials of meaning. On its own, the material text is a collection of symbols and does not contain any inherent meaning. Meaning is created through readerly engagement. Stories are necessarily tied to the work of reading and proceed from the subjective response of the reader and her individual interpretation of the textual cues. My aim is to explore how the reader produces a story.

Each of the three novels chosen for this dissertation – Joseph Heller’s *Catch-22* (1961), Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), and Martin Amis’s *Time’s Arrow* (1991) – presents a distorted temporality. My intention with the three novels is to draw attention to the ways in which the texts, in both form and content, invite readers to contribute to time-making and story-making. The reader, writes Simone de Beauvoir (2005: 276) “must not try to elude /.../ his share of the adventure. He should not forget that his collaboration is necessary, since the novel’s distinctive feature is /.../ to appeal to his freedom.”

⁹ When texts by postmodern or contemporary authors are analyzed, Genette’s *Narrative Discourse* (originally published in 1972) is still the authoritative model for analyzing temporality. Genette’s account is based on a modernist text and while his model may be universal in some ways, it may not always be suited for analyzing the sort of temporal experiments that postmodern and contemporary authors practice.

My discussion of the experience of reading time unfolds in three theoretical chapters, each emphasizing a specific component of this experience: experientiality, reading, and temporality. Chapter one examines the experiential dimension of reading through Husserl's theory of the consciousness of internal time. I describe the reading activity as an intentional, embodied, and intersubjective experience and employ Husserl's concepts primary memory and secondary memory to illustrate the continuous flow of the reading experience.

In the second chapter, the focus shifts to the reader's relationship with the literary work. Using Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading, I explore the collaborative process of reading and argue that literary meaning is contingent upon the active participation of the reader. By interacting with the narrated events, readers will produce stories. I continue to develop this idea in chapter three where I focus on the reader's creation of story time. Drawing on Currie's (2007) work, I explore narrative temporality through the philosophy of time. Adapting Genettian terminology, I introduce the concepts of discourse time and story time as analytical categories to study layers of narrative temporality.

To explore the process of story creation and discover how readers make time with the meaning potentials the texts provide, I employ the two terms in my readings of Heller's *Catch-22*, Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, and Amis's *Time's Arrow*. The distortion of temporality in the three novels is shaped by the shared backdrop of World War II. The trauma potentials underscore the distinct narrative styles that challenge traditional notions of storytelling. In chapter four, I describe the discourse time of *Catch-22* and study how the absurdly repetitive, looped, fragmented discourse disorients the reader and complicates the production of story time. While similar elements of repetition and fragmentation of events surface in the discourse time of *Slaughterhouse-Five*, the function of these elements serves a different purpose. Chapter five describes the effect of these elements on the reader's construction of the story time of *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Rather than disorient the reader, repetition, for example, helps readers navigate within the timeline of Billy Pilgrim's life. Finally, chapter six explores the backwards temporality of *Time's Arrow*. While previous scholarship has addressed the unnatural time of the novel, my particular emphasis is on the effect of reversed temporality on the relationships between the reader and the storyworld, the storyworld and the narrator, and the reader and the narrator.

The main objective of this dissertation is to rethink the reader's contribution to the development of narrative temporality and to analyze textual elements that influence the reader's interpretation of stories. I will discuss what happens when a text is read, how stories are created by reading and why the shape of stories may vary. I will specifically focus on the temporality of stories and how texts influence readers in their creation of a story time. While some textual elements encourage a linear interpretation of a story time, other elements may interfere in the process. As readers are in the position to experience the making of time, the three novels will be employed as case studies to analyze how the reader's experience of temporality unfolds. I propose that the dialogue between the different theories used in this dissertation will help us understand better the collaborative process between the reader and text during the process of reading.

CHAPTER ONE

1. EXPERIENTIALITY

Phenomenology-inspired frameworks have recently enjoyed a moderate revival in popularity in a number of disciplines, for example cognitive sciences (e.g. Petitot et al 1999; Gallagher & Schmicking 2010; Bayne & Montague 2014), anthropology (e.g. Throop 2003, 2009), and medicine (e.g. Toombs 2001; Charon 2006; Carel 2010). In literary studies, a number of mid-20th century scholars (e.g. Simone de Beauvoir, Jean-Paul Sartre, Georges Poulet, Wolfgang Iser, Paul Ricœur) have provided phenomenological accounts of reading and literature. This tradition has been extended by contemporary neo-phenomenological approaches within literary theory (e.g. Paul Armstrong, Rita Felski, Namwali Serpell, Marco Caracciolo). Unlike earlier phenomenological scholars who primarily relied on the classic frameworks developed by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, neo-phenomenological scholars place greater emphasis on practical experientiality rather than abstract theoretical engagement, thereby causing an intriguing disruption in theoretical continuity.

Although frameworks centralizing affect, embodiment, materiality, and ways of being have recently become prominent within literary theory, the points of contact between these concepts and phenomenology are rarely systematically investigated.¹⁰ However, I believe that any phenomenological framework requires at least some degree of interaction with the early phenomenologists. The lack of a context for the terminology derived from phenomenology may result in theoretical vagueness. To prevent theoretical ambiguity, I will reexamine the original ideas of Edmund Husserl and, to a lesser extent, Martin Heidegger to bring them into the investigation of the reading process.¹¹

In the present chapter, I focus on lived experience.¹² Lived experience, in the widest sense, is a conscious, meaningful process that is lived through in the first person. It is perceptual, embodied, intentional and temporal. The primary focus of this dissertation is to study how readers engage with the text and the dynamics at play during that experience. This has been explored previously to an extent (e.g. by Iser 1978a, 1978b; Caracciolo 2014) but I will employ phenomenology more extensively to inquire into the experience of reading time. I will also

¹⁰ A prominent example is Rita Felski. While she positions her work as neo-phenomenological and uses terminology derived from the field, she has also distanced herself and her work from phenomenology (Felski 2008; 2020).

¹¹ Heidegger's connections with the Nazi party trouble his use in academic discussion (see Farias 1989; Rockmore 1992; Pattison 2000). While I do not wish to ignore these troubling associations, they do not appear to affect the limited ways I am using his concepts in the discussion of the phenomenology of reading and time

¹² Husserl's *Erlebnis*.

investigate our experience of temporality and how readers access temporality while reading a text. As I intend to analyze the collaborative process between reader and text that produces time, reading is conceptualized as a lived experience.

While I will adopt the ideas of several phenomenologists and neo-phenomenologists, I mostly rely on Husserl to discuss the temporality of the reading moment. Although Husserl's name has long been associated with several literary-phenomenological accounts, previous research on phenomenological models of reading have largely overlooked the application of Husserlian phenomenology and his ideas about time-consciousness.¹³ Hence, the key objective of this chapter is to address this gap by examining whether Husserl's notions of primary and secondary memory can help provide insight into our engagement with the text as a material object and generate a more comprehensive understanding of the reading experience.¹⁴

I have chosen to approach experientiality through the concepts of temporality, embodiment, intentionality, intersubjectivity, and imagination because these aspects of our lived experience substantially affect our reading experience. I will discuss temporality both as a structuring element of experience and as an objectified focus of study. Since all readers are embodied readers, the idea of the lived body will be relevant for understanding the extent of the reading experience on the reader's physical reality. Intentionality refers to one's directedness towards an object or an event, giving insight to one's state of mind during the reading process. The notion of intersubjectivity will help clarify the levels of communication in process during the reading activity. Finally, the reading process could be considered as something that requires the active participation of the reader's imagination. Therefore, the phenomenological reading process will be explored as an immersive, imagined experience, affecting the reader's mental state as well as their physical reality.

¹³ Although Iser (1978a, 1978b) also relies on Husserl, he does not explore the experiential aspect of reading in detail. Caracciolo's (2014) account is perhaps the most comprehensive model for studying experientiality of narrative. Caracciolo also combines phenomenology with cognitive sciences to provide a detailed overview of aspects that affect our experience of the text. However, since Caracciolo does not engage with Husserl, I believe Husserlian phenomenology warrants a revisit.

¹⁴ That being said, I will not present a comprehensive philosophical overview of phenomenology. My interest in phenomenology centers on its relevance for the reading process

1.1 Lived Experience

[R]eality is not a fixed being; it is a becoming. It is, I repeat, a swirling of singular experiences that envelop each other while remaining separate.

(Beauvoir 2011: 200)

Phenomenology approaches human experience through phenomena. According to Heidegger (1962: 54), a phenomenon is “that which shows itself in itself.” Phenomenology is “interested in understanding *how it is possible* for *anyone* to experience a world,” and to experience things that show themselves (Gallagher & Zahavi 2012: 28, original emphasis). Phenomenology is not about the ‘what’, but rather about the ‘how’ of phenomena (Heidegger 1962: 59). Husserl’s (2001) well-known invitation to return to the things themselves, that is, to phenomena, represents the need to study the structure of experience through objects and events that disclose and reveal the principal foundations of our experience. Husserl (1991: 93, 94) identifies two categories of experience: “[e]very constituted experience is either impression or reproduction,” meaning that there are 1) experiences that are directly experienced through our senses and that “refer to something;” and 2) experiences that are more abstract, that *do not* refer to something. Both of these, however, can be perceived on some level, and share qualities of feeling, intentionality and temporality. Experience is always lived through in the first person

Husserl’s first type of experience, impression, is encountered through perception. “Perception in this case,” according to Husserl (1991: 43, original emphasis), “is the act that places something before our eyes as the thing itself, the act that *originally constitutes* the object.” Perception occurs in the present, is “action-oriented” and always involves objects that are physically present with the person who is perceiving (Gallagher & Zahavi 2014: 84). The other type of experience, re-presentation, is “understood as the act that does not place an object itself before our eyes but just *re-presents* it” (Husserl 1991: 43, original emphasis). The two distinct experiences are interrelated. While impression only requires a perception of a physically present object, re-production is “a modification of perception” and concerns “a re-presentation of the perceived object” in which “the object, the physical thing, is phantasied, remembered, expected” (Husserl 1991: 94). Re-presentations are formerly experienced perceptions that are, upon their activation, once-again experienced through one’s imagination in the form of memory or original “phantasy.” A re-presentation, then, may come in the form of a recollection (e.g. a summer’s day two years ago); or, it may be formed by one’s imagination (e.g. by reading a narrative and imagining the events). It should be noted, however, that both perception and re-presentation are experiences of temporal objects or events (Husserl 1991: 101–102).

Husserl’s *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* (1991), translated by John Barnett Brough, contains meticulous notes and lectures that Husserl gave in 1893–1917. It has been remarked that the volume is

disorganized and Husserl's ideas seem to be "refusing to settle into a stable and coherent pattern" (Brough 1991: xv). This, however, may derive from the editing process as his students, Edith Stein and Martin Heidegger, carried out most of the editing at various points in time but did not follow the development of Husserl's ideas chronologically (Brough 1991: xiv).¹⁵ Since Husserlian phenomenology is, to this day, being pieced together from the immense archive of writings, some of which have been published and some that have never been published, I will be relying on Brough's translation and introduction as well as on the research of other scholars who have studied different Husserlian manuscripts and have elaborated upon the different phases of Husserl's theoretical development.

1.1.1 Intentional Experience

The idea of intentionality, often considered one of Husserl's most significant contributions to phenomenology, refers to the "relation between consciousness and its object" (Zahavi 2003: 15). Intentionality is instilled into every experience, whether the experience is that of perception or of re-production. Intentionality is "never empty but is always consciousness of something" and always "directed toward its object in a dynamic fashion, in the sense that it wants to get an ever closer grasp of this object" (Lewis & Staehler 2010: 22). We are also never merely aware of objects and events; instead, "one is always conscious of an object in a particular way, that is, to be intentionally directed at something is to intend something *as something*" (Zahavi 2003: 24). Intentionality, then, refers to the way in which we position ourselves in relation to objects and events.

In the perception of physical objects, intentionality is also the action that fills the blanks, so to say. The object or event we perceive is "never given in its totality but always from a certain limited perspective" (Zahavi 2003: 95–96). The object-directedness of intention allows us to understand the object as a whole. When one picks up a book, it is not possible to experience each page, the cover, and the back of the book at once. If the book is closed, the pages inside are hidden from our perception. Nevertheless, we do not doubt that this is, indeed, a book since we are still intentionally directed toward the book and we expect the book "to appear and to behave in a certain way" (Lewis & Staehler 2010: 22). Therefore, "our intuitive consciousness" of the closed book "is always accompanied by an

¹⁵ Although Husserl was involved in the publishing efforts, the lion's share of the editing work was conducted by his student, Edith Stein. Stein compiled the volume by focusing on Husserl's lectures from 1905 and 1907–1911 but also included comments and notes by Husserl from as early as 1893 to as late as 1917 (Brough 1991: xiii–xv). Stein completed a draft of the manuscript in 1917 but the volume was not published until 1928. Upon Husserl's request, Martin Heidegger, perhaps Husserl's best-known student, carried out further editing and eventually published Husserl's work after having published his own seminal work, *Sein und Zeit* in 1927. Neither Stein nor Heidegger tracked Husserl's terminological changes throughout the years and failed to disclose which aspects and concepts belonged to which periods (Brough 1991: xvi).

intentional consciousness” of the aspects of the book that are currently not perceived (Zahavi 2003: 96).

Intentionality also extends to the concept re-presentation. Zahavi (2003: 14) explains that “[w]hen I am thinking about a unicorn, I am not thinking about nothing, but about something, and an analysis of our fantasies and hallucinations quickly reveals that they are also intentional.” The object-directedness that intentionality provides is evident in both impression and re-presentation, as intentionality extends not only the material book but also to the stories inside the book. Being intentionally directed towards a book means experiencing the symbols on the page, as well as what they convey. As the material book often functions as a tool for a certain purpose – to access a storyworld – the story (that is, re-presentation) often takes priority over the physical object.

1.1.2 Embodied Experience

In the real world, the meaning of an object is not a concept graspable by pure understanding. Its meaning is the object as it is disclosed to us in the overall relation we sustain with it, and which is action, emotion, and feeling.

(Beauvoir 2004: 270)

The reader’s physical experience can be altered by their immersion in narrative. Becoming deeply absorbed in a book can make a reader oblivious to their physical surroundings. Sudden clouds and impending rain on an otherwise sunny day may go unnoticed when the reader is lost in a story. A captivating book allows for awareness to be regained only by the sudden remainder of the rough pages that need to be turned in order for the story to continue. Or, a reader may have an entirely different experience while reading a text on a digital device. Outdoors, the sun’s glare off the screen may bother the reader and bring them out of their immersion; or perhaps the battery will die, bringing the reading activity to an abrupt end and forcing the reader to move their body in order to charge their device. The ability to read a book on a summer’s day depends on the material reality of the object that provides the text; environmental factors, such as whether the day is hot or rainy, or whether there is any suitable space for a reader to read outdoors; as well as on multiple physiological factors, such as “a properly balanced nutrition, a properly balanced mix of hormones and neurotransmitters, and a complex stream of sensory information” (Gallagher & Zahavi 2012: 149).

As hosts to our actions, our bodies structure our experience, “our primary way of being-in-the-world” (Gallagher & Zahavi 2012: 155). Physical sensation affects all the various aspects of our experience, as “*our* cognitive experience is shaped by an embodied brain and that the brains we have are shaped by the bodies we have,” which in turn are shaped by our environment (Gallagher & Zahavi 2012: 150, original emphasis). Phenomenologists differentiate between body as being

lived and body as an object.¹⁶ The body structuring our experience of the world is the lived body. The lived body experiences the effects of weather, perceives original impressions and re-presentations, and is directed towards objects, events and other lived bodies.

The lived body is situated in the intersubjective world. Through the body, we have access to the world and to others within the world. Our situatedness also indicates a certain confinement in our own bodies and thus also to a certain here-ness and nowness, a specific spatial and temporal position. The space around us is occupied through here-ness – the lived body experiences egocentric space as it is always here and other places are always there.¹⁷ The book that is on the book-shelf is far from me, it is there but if I walk closer to it and pick it up, it is here. I do not experience the book’s distance from me in the objective space (e.g. it is in Tartu) but rather through its distance from the “zero-point set by the perceiving body” (Gallagher & Zahavi 2012: 160).

Our experience of time is also affected by the lived body.¹⁸ According to Sylvie Droit-Volet (2014: 478), “time is also a pure product of our emotions and of the upheavals they produce in our bodies and minds.”¹⁹ Droit-Volet (2014: 488–491, 496) points out that several different emotional states influence our perception of time and may produce temporal distortions. Studies show that our internal passage of time can be affected significantly by, for example, “depressed mood or anxiety” as well as the “absence of a stimulating environment” (Wittman 2014: 510). Anxiety and boredom while waiting for a root canal may make time

¹⁶ Gallagher & Zahavi (2012: 154) follow the distinctions made by Husserl (*Leib* vs *Körper*) and Merleau-Ponty (*corps proper/corps vécu* vs *le corps objectif*)

¹⁷ Gallagher & Zahavi (2012: 160) define egocentric space as “the perspectival space of perception and action that is defined relative to the perceiving or acting body;” this can be compared to allocentric space, which refers to “purely objective space that can be defined in terms of latitude and longitude.” Similarly, temporality can also be either allocentric or egocentric and I will discuss it in section 3.1.1 B-Theories and Physical Time.

¹⁸ Our perception of temporal passage can be explained by the perceived fluctuations in the rate of time’s passage and is mainly affected by our age and by how we direct our attention (Dyke & McLaurin 2013: 526).

¹⁹ Our experience of time is largely a product of “high-frequency processing system generating discrete time quanta in the domain of approximately 30 milliseconds” and “low-frequency processing system” that create meaningful continuity out of separate stimuli (Pöppel 1997: 107–109). The systems of temporal segmentation, which, on the one hand, separate the stimuli we receive and, on the other hand combine the received signals in, respectively, 3-second and 30-millisecond temporal windows, are necessary for the production of relevant temporal data and are responsible for interpreting every sensory input into a meaningful continuity of experience. Interestingly, the high-frequency processing system can also produce the illusion of motion in instances where there is no motion (Kiverstein & Arstila 2013: 446). Experiments show that in the case of a temporal gap of about 50 to 200 milliseconds between two intervals, “we experience the illusory or apparent motion” between two otherwise distinct and unmoving entities (Kiverstein & Arstila 2013: 446). Therefore, it is possible to argue that “the flow we perceive and feel is a secondary quality: it is in us rather than in the things that are observed” (Dieks 2016: 16).

seem to pass slowly. Being immersed in reading an enjoyable novel, on the other hand, may make time seem to pass faster than expected.

The relation a reader might have to a book is often disclosed by the emotions and feelings it evokes or, perhaps, fails to evoke, in the body (Caracciolo 2014: 58, 158–161; Gallagher & Zahavi 2012: 123). While the physical materiality of the book – an illegible font, for example – could be responsible for certain emotions and feelings while reading, the reader’s response to a book is more often determined by its narrative. A tragic narrative may leave a reader sorrowful and a joyful one may offer the reader hope. Non-physical stimuli can also contribute to physical experience: texts as “conveyors of complex and multi-layered meanings,” often produce sensory stimuli, and, therefore, affect the lived body (Littau 2006: 2, 5).

1.1.3 Intersubjective Experience

As our lived experience “occurs in a threefold structure, *subjectivity-intersubjectivity-world*,” we are always involved with the surrounding environment (Zahavi 2003: 76, original emphasis). Our experience is structured through interactions with other subjects and entities. Our subjective selves are fundamentally intertwined with a social-linguistic context, with which we are in constant interaction (Crossley 1996: 14). Our experience is influenced by the people we encounter and the objects and events we are involved with. We are also shaped by the “world of coexistence” in which we share social resources to create shared meanings (Crossley 1996: 40). While the lived body lives in a world shared by other lived bodies, intersubjectivity is always “analyzed in its experiential manifestation from a first-person perspective” (Zahavi 2003: 112). It is through this first-person experience that the public world of others is accessible and meaningful.

As the bridge between the individual subject and the shared world, intersubjectivity enables the subject to imagine the shared world as available for other subjects in the same manner. While another subject might ascribe different meaning to entities and other beings, we can still imagine that we share a common experience of our surrounding world. We are in “immediate relations with others” through “interactive processes” (Gallagher & Zahavi 2012: 208–209). Our experience is also largely defined by language (Gallagher & Zahavi 2012: 215). Language not only shapes the external, material world but also frames the private realm of the subject. Our mental states and thoughts are “intersubjectively constituted” as they are constructed by “intersubjective resources” (Crossley 1996: 47–48).

The shared meanings we construct with other subjects also require a capacity for narrative competency. Narrative competency, according to Gallagher & Zahavi (2012: 215), “provides a more nuanced way of understanding others:”

I encounter the other person, not abstracted from their circumstances, but in the middle of something that has a beginning and that is going somewhere. I see them in the framework of a story in which either I have a part to play or I don’t. The

narrative is not primarily about what is 'going on inside their heads'; it's about what is going on in our shared world and about how they understand and respond to it. (Gallagher & Zahavi 2012: 215).

It provides the ability to construct, interpret and communicate the shared world. We often frame the world and our understanding of others "in a narrative way" by recognizing the elements that shape identities, by being able to reflect on the "self-narratives" that define us as subjects, and by understanding our relation to a broader cultural context, which helps constitute "shared normative practices" in the intersubjective world (Gallagher & Zahavi 2012: 216–217). Narrative competency and intersubjectivity are interconnected and essential for creating shared meanings and values among subjects.

Without the ability to relate to one another and to the environment, readers would not be able to produce stories. The reader's personal experience, their understanding of the world and others within it, will affect how they relate to the storyworld and the characters. The stories we encounter through the reading process affect our understanding of ourselves and the world we inhabit. We can also develop a more nuanced understanding of the experience of others from reading about fictional lives and transfer that knowledge into our understanding of our actual world. (Crossley 1996: 59–62, 68–71; Gallagher & Zahavi 2012: 223–224, 227–228).

1.2 Experience of Time

The experience of reading unfolds in time. Every object or event perceived or reproduced in lived experience is perceived and reproduced in temporal dimension. Phenomenology of time deals with temporality in a manner that is considered to be ontologically more fundamental than the accounts of time presented in physics and analytical philosophy.²⁰ The following section provides an overview of the phenomenological approach to time. By discussing the temporality of a moment and time as unfolding between birth and death, I aim to provide a framework for approaching the reading process and the structure of a literary work of art.

In his 1928 volume *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, Husserl discusses *how* we experience time. Formulating a theory of inner time-consciousness, Husserl's work reflects on the smallest units of experience that can be consciously perceived.²¹ These units constitute what Husserl refers to

²⁰ I will, however, still briefly discuss philosophies of time in section 3.1 Theories of Time

²¹ It has been argued that the notion of time perception is not an entirely accurate term as perception is predicated on sensory input and time is an abstract concept. Time itself cannot be perceived in the same manner as concrete entities. Instead, perception takes place in time and is a temporally extended activity (McInerney 1991: 15–16, Wittman 2016: 48). Time perception, therefore, concerns understandings of the temporal extension of entities as well as observations about the contents of time.

as primary memory. According to Husserl, primary memory consists of primal impression, retention, and protention. Primal impression refers to the “now,” the point of time that is always present; retention to the just-past “now,” the moment that follows right after the present now; and protention to the just ahead, the moment that precedes the “now” through anticipation (Husserl 1991: 29). Primary memory “belongs to all experience” as its parts combine to create the stretchy fabric of experience that covers the living present (Carr 1987: 200; Rodemeyer 2006). According to Husserl (1991: 93–94), our experience of temporality is dependent on the triad of primary memory, as it is a fundamental aspect of all experience. Without retention and protention, primal impressions constitute a series of isolated “now-”moments, lacking cohesion and continuity. Retention and protention provide structural cohesion for our experience of time.

Husserl exemplifies the idea behind time-consciousness with his famous illustration of hearing a melody. If we were to perceive music and only hear a series of successive notes with nothing connecting the notes into a melody, we would not be listening to music but simply hearing sounds. Music requires an awareness of past notes and an expectation of future notes. Each tone is temporally extended and when “it begins to sound, I hear it as now; but while it continues to sound it has an ever new now, and the now that immediately precedes it changes into a past” (Husserl 1991: 25). Retentions and protentions inform us of previous tones and anticipate the following tones and which, therefore, create a field in which we experience the melody as a whole. During this process, retentions of earlier notes fade and are replaced by new retentions just as new notes replace previous ones. Music is notes forming a “successive unity with a common effect” (Husserl 1991: 22). As with the experience of a melody, the flow of time, according to Husserlian phenomenology is composed of primary memory creating a stretched moment of now. The three components of the moment, primal impression, retention and protention, form an interdependent system and construct a field of experience in the present.

Just as *here* represents space through an egocentric position, “the now supplies the point of reference for temporal experience. It is in relation to the now that things and events appear as past or future” (Brough 1991: xxvi). Our egocentric position in the world creates a sense of a subjective nowness of primal impression. The *here* of our spatial awareness is in constant flux as we move through the physical world; in a similar fashion, as time passes, the now is constantly exchanged for a new now. While each new now that sinks into the past “maintains its strict identity,” it is being pushed into a new position for new nows to appear (Husserl 1991: 64–65). If nows are constantly being pushed aside for new nows, it raises questions about the temporality of the present: when exactly is present? Is the present in each new now? And what happens to the ‘old’ nows? Husserl explains that

Each actually present now creates a new time-point because it creates a new object, or rather a new object-point, which is held fast in the flow of modification as one and the same individual object-point. And the continuity in which a new now becomes constituted again and again shows us that it is not a question of “newness” as such but of a continuous moment of individuation in which the temporal position has its origin. (Husserl 1991: 68).

A now is a now only when it is in the immediate present. As soon as a new now appears, the old now becomes the past as there is a continuous change of the position of new nows. However, this raises another question. For how long does a now persist? When exactly does the now change? And how long does the present now last until it starts sinking into the past?

These questions would be impossible to answer. In theory, nows could be divided into smaller and smaller parts infinitely, proving that the now itself is “an abstract component” (Gallagher & Zahavi 2014: 85). However, our spatio-temporal lives are defined by subjective positions which are “‘stretched’ into a ‘field’ or a ‘phase’ that extends beyond any notion of a ‘point’” (Rodemeyer 2006: 34). Therefore, a primal impression alone, isolated from the rest of the triad, does not define the present, since “one can no more experience the present in isolation from its past and future than one can see an object apart from its spatial surroundings” (Carr 1987: 252). Our subjective hereness and nowness are necessarily connected to thereness and pastness-futureness, without which, nowness and hereness would not have a point of reference and would be empty of meaning.

The just-past of our primary experience, retention, is likened to a comet’s tail, in that it “attaches itself to the perception of the moment” (Husserl 1991: 37). Like a comet, the primal impression itself is experienced as a bright point, rich in meaning, which retentions start modifying. As nows sink into the past, they are retained in the primary memory. This does not mean that the just-past-nows are being actively remembered. Retention itself “produces no enduring objectivities /.../ but only holds in consciousness what has been produced and stamps on it character of the ‘just past’” (Husserl 1991: 38). While retention retains the primal impressions and keeps the new nows in the “elapsed living present,” it does not constitute the past itself (Sokolowski 2000: 137). The function of retention is to register primal impressions as part of the field of experience. As illustrated by the end of the comet’s tail, retention does not only keep primal impressions in the temporal horizon but also holds on to retentions and retentions of retentions: “[t]hese sedimented experiences are no longer ‘on the surface’, as it were, but instead are compacted down underneath it, acting as inevitable foundation of the present” (Rodemeyer 2006: 87).

Husserl offered only a limited discussion of the concept of protention. Husserl considered protentions to “emptily constitute what is coming as coming,” eventually catching the coming, and then bringing the coming “toward fulfillment” (Husserl 1991: 54). Protention can be considered as the “anticipatory” component of the temporal horizon – “my primal impression of the present is already involved in an enactive anticipation of how the stimulus will work out” (Gallagher

2013: 146). Other scholars have noted that protention could be best understood through a comparison to speech:

When one is speaking, consciousness must be 'ahead' of the sounds that form words. It is consciousness that makes sounds into words through protention. Consciousness must have at least some kind of an idea of what is about to be spoken for the words to make sense in the context. (Rodemeyer 2006: 11).

If we were constantly surprised by every next word, we would struggle to comprehend language and speech. Protentions, shaped by our previous experience of language, can offer a glimpse of what may lie ahead. Protention provides an awareness of being ahead of the now, without which we would be caught off guard with the appearance of each new now.

In primary memory, protention and retention are “integrated into one another” as “they influence the meaning and direction of each other’s content” (Rodemeyer 2006: 143). Protentions ensure the anticipated fulfillment of the current field of experience and knowledge of the eventual fulfillment is provided by retentions. The back-and-forth between retention and protention constitute a kind of “before and after of experience” (Rodemeyer 2006: 12). This activity also requires a primal impression, forming a foundation for the reciprocal exchange. The three components constantly modify our awareness of the now and constitute a temporal structure of the present.

Secondary memory in Husserlian philosophy, organizes the experience of reproduction and forms a triad of re-presentation, recollection, and expectation²². Secondary memory is the place in our minds where we “re-live in the present what is not present” (Carr 1987: 200).²³ So, for example, by mentally performing a song that we just heard, we reproduce an experience of previously perceived music.²⁴ Re-presentations are different from actual perceptual impressions because secondary memory is usually not capable of perfectly reproducing previous experience in real time. The remembered past perception is often vague, as

²² While the triad of secondary memory shares relational parallels with the triad of primary memory, re-presentation, recollection, and expectation do not coincide with primal impression, retention, and protention.

²³ Secondary memory can be compared to the concept of episodic memory, first developed by Endel Tulving (1972). However, Husserl focuses on describing the reproductive nature of secondary memory rather than discussing the role of memory in storing and retrieving information.

²⁴ With no reference to Husserl or phenomenology, the analytic philosopher D.H. Mellor (2012) similarly suggests that there are two levels of experience: primary and secondary. They are connected as secondary experiences are representations of primary experiences. Primary experiences refer to e.g. hearing a tune and secondary experiences refer to the imagination of the same tune in one’s ‘mind’s eye’ (Mellor 2012: 13, 18).

the memory brings forward, intuitively, a privileged momentary phase, but it does not repeat its object. Or we execute a memory that actually does reproduce and repeat, a memory in which the temporal object is completely built up afresh in a continuum of re-presentations and in which we perceive it again, as it were-but only “as it were”. The whole process is a re-presentational modification of the perceptual process with all of the latter’s phases and stages right down to and including the retentions: but everything has the index of reproductive modification. (Husserl 1991: 39).

Essentially, this means that memories of a melody become “phantasms” that represent the identity of the once-heard actual melody (Husserl 1991: 48). Reproducing the once-heard melody still occurs in the present but it re-presents a past perception in a foreground-background system.²⁵ The re-presented object or event reappears through our recollection and its re-presentation may be subject to errors or distortion.

Besides its function as constructing our perceivable present, primary memory is a significant component of secondary memory. Temporal objects in secondary memory are the re-presentations of temporal objects once experienced through primary memory. The functioning of secondary memory is wholly dependent on primary memory as remembering makes use of the same field of experience composed of protention, primal impression, and retention. If a past perception is remembered incorrectly, our re-presentation of it still employs the structure of primary memory and follows the succession of impressions (Husserl 1991: 51). As the temporal constitution of secondary memory is “built up afresh in a continuum of re-presentations,” the structure of primary memory is embedded within secondary memory (Husserl 1991: 39).²⁶

Husserl employs the terms recollection and expectation to represent qualities of pastness and futureness in secondary memory. Recollection, according to Husserl (1991: 42–43, 62), is the act of reproducing past perceptions, which resurface “as having been present.”²⁷ While retention refers to the immediate awareness of a just-passed now, recollection marks the process of retrieving a past now. Although retention and recollection are separate concepts, there is no clear-cut boundary between them as it is not possible to determine at which point

²⁵ The foreground-background system is an idea introduced by Carr (1987). I will discuss this concept further at the end of this section.

²⁶ Confirming Husserlian ideas about the temporality of secondary memory, Wittman (2016: 83) explains that memories and anticipation about future events “occur now” because “[w]e make plans for the future and recall memories in the temporal dimension of presence.” Fernández (2013: 439, 441) also argues that memories do not include the past perceptions but their representations that consequently create an illusion of perceiving the past, or, a “feeling of pastness.” In reality, our memories of the past have nothing to do with time itself but rather its contents (Fernández 2013: 442). Therefore, it could be said that memory includes an *as-if-ness*: memories of the past are not of past itself, but of *as-if* it were past. Similarly, anticipations about the future are of *as-if* it were future.

²⁷ This act is sometimes referred to as mental time travel (e.g. Tulving 1985, 2002a, 2002b; Suddendorf and Corballis 1997; Suddendorf et al 2009).

a retention of a retention becomes a recollection. While Husserl did not establish any discernible points of separation between the concepts, Rodemeyer (2006: 86) assumes that “there must be some ‘in-between’ that exists between immediate retention and recollection.” Instead of a clear boundary, the concepts are intertwined and seem to blend together. The only obvious difference between retention and recollection concerns the intentionality of our experience.²⁸ While retentional nows surface spontaneously, recollection always requires intentional action. In recollection, secondary memory does not create new fields of experience but actualizes the present that has already taken place.

While recollection is clearly defined by Husserl, expectation is not. Expectation is the fixed projection of an anticipated future experience and is based on the subject’s past experiences (Husserl 1991: 55). The difference between protention and expectation concerns levels of openness towards the future. In primary memory, while listening to music, we usually have an idea of how the next tone should sound and the anticipatory inkling provided by protention is either realized or left unfulfilled. This open possibility of fulfillment is exclusive to primary memory. Expectation in secondary memory is always fixed. When we remember a song and mentally sing it, the future of the remembered tones is never open but determined by calculated action. As the perceptual act of hearing the melody in primary memory has concluded, any open possibility is closed off. Therefore, in secondary memory, expectation is determined before the act of recollection. Although the act of re-presentation occurs in the present, through primary memory, its fixed horizon does not constitute a real present but a “quasi-present” (Husserl 1991: 55). The quasi-present of secondary memory does not create new fields of experience but actualizes the present that has already transpired.

Although not explicitly distinguished within Husserl’s work, secondary memory contains a form of intentional experience that is defined by limitless possibility. When we imagine something that has never been part of our perceptual experience we are engaged in a fantasy (Rodemeyer 2006: 135).²⁹ While the act of imagining was not prioritized in Husserl’s work, he observed that “[i]n mere phantasy no positing of the reproduced now and no coinciding of this now with a past now is given” (Husserl 1991: 53). The act of envisioning events and objects independent of a particular past perception is a type of re-presentation.³⁰

²⁸ Primary memory, of course, is still intentional, as the subject is always conscious of their experience.

²⁹ It should be noted that all “[i]maginings, however creative and unusual in form, are constructed out of visual and linguistic images which are derived from the intersubjective world” (Crossley 1996: 50–51).

³⁰ Imagination and memory are “structurally very similar, and one easily slips into the other” (Sokolowski 2000: 71). Neuroimaging studies have shown that actual, reconstructed memories and “imagined fictitious experiences” both include “scene construction” and involve “the generation, maintenance and visualization of complex spatial contexts” (Hassabis et al 2007: 14365). However, as imagined events “recruit fewer hippocampal resources during retrieval,” it follows that “imagined events are typically less detailed than memories of real experiences” (Suddendorf et al 2009: 1318).

Imagining is an intentional act of producing a fantasy. During the experience of reading, a reader will have expectations of the future of the narrative. While the totality of the narrative is determined before the reading process, the reader's expectations are shaped by the knowledge they have in the "now" of reading. The reader's expectations of pages that follow the "now" of reading may or may not coincide with the reality of the narrative. While the actual narrative is fixed, the reader's experience of the narrative is open to limitless potentiality. As the reading progresses, new knowledge will shape the reader's expectations and the reader will thus constantly modify their expectation of the potential outcome of the narrative.

Finally, I would like to expand on the embedded structure of primary and secondary memory. David Carr (1987) devised a framework of a foreground-background horizon to describe the conditions that enable us to experience the past in secondary memory while still inhabiting the present in primary memory. When a memory resurfaces through re-presentation, "I still inhabit present time, I continue to live through it, but no part of it figures as the focus of my interest; present time as a whole sinks into the background while I dwell on the past" (Carr 1987: 257). Our intentional focus determines which experiences are foregrounded in our consciousness. Although secondary memory transpires in the present, the quasi-present of memory will occupy the foreground of our experience during recollection and the actual perceptual field will be pushed into the background.

1.2.1 Being-Toward-Death

In Heidegger's most influential work, *Being and Time* (originally published as *Sein und Zeit* in 1927), the exploration of the concept of "being" is far more prevalent than ideas about time. Nevertheless, many of his concepts are still employed in discussions about the philosophy of time.³¹ While Husserl provides a comprehensive description of the structure of a moment, Heidegger's arguments regarding time concern the duration of an individual's entire temporal existence. For Heidegger, temporality is not an entity but something that "makes up the primordial meaning of Dasein's Being" (Heidegger 1962: 278).³² In other words, Dasein's existence is not about being *in* time; rather, it is about "Dasein's relationship with time" (Roubach 2016: 166). Dasein's temporality is interpreted through its being-in-the-world and through its understanding of itself in terms of other entities.

According to Heidegger, existing, or Being, is being in time, temporally existing between birth and death. Death makes Dasein whole; its wholeness is

³¹ While I will not use Heideggerian terminology within my discussions the process of reading, the ideas presented by Heidegger will still echo in later chapters. In addition, some of Heidegger's concepts (e.g. being-toward-death) will be used in my analysis of Amis's *Time's Arrow*.

³² Heidegger's concept of *Dasein* refers to the individual subject who is aware of their consciousness.

best examined as being-toward-death. The possibilities available to Dasein are unveiled while Dasein is stretched between birth and death (Heidegger 1996: 343). In this process the past and future are continually affecting our present – the past “serves as the horizon and background” of our experience, while our focus in the present is directed toward “the future goals that we intend or project” (Gallagher & Zahavi 2012: 94).

Dasein’s temporality is mostly future-oriented. Dasein possesses certain potentialities-for-being, which disclose the various possibilities available to Dasein (Heidegger 1962: 184). While Dasein can choose to explore the various potentialities-for-being available to it, not all potentialities will be actualized. When born, Dasein, “is already dying, in the sense of Being-towards-death” (Heidegger 1962: 426). Since Dasein’s existence is limited by no-longer-Being-there, something will always remain “to be settled” within the “basic constitution of Dasein” (Heidegger 1962: 279–280).

Another aspect defining Dasein is its thrownness into existence (Heidegger (1962: 264). Dasein is thrown into a co-existence with others and into a world which has a defined history (Heidegger 1962: 264). Dasein thus has an opportunity as well as a responsibility to maintain the existence that is presented to it. The tradition and history that Dasein inherits determines Dasein “as an entity which has to be as it is and as it can be” (Heidegger 1962: 321). As “[h]uman time is the time of our life stories,” Dasein’s story is intertwined with the stories of others and “embedded in a larger historical and communal meaning-giving structure” (Gallagher & Zahavi 2012: 95; c.f. McInerney 1991: 131; Tietz 2011: 194).

While I will return to the idea of death in the discussion of the novels analyzed in this dissertation, the fixed length of life is also relevant in our experience reading. Novels have a beginning and an end, and our experience of reading is affected by the knowledge that the book will eventually end. That is, the reading process illustrates being-toward-the-end as the novels we read will be actualized by their endings. In the process of reading, the narrative is always pushing forward, toward its future and its eventual ending. While reaching the end of life is not something that Dasein is actually able to experience, the structure of this experience is revealed by the reading activity. Just as being-toward-death has a certain finite quality, so does the novel and the reading process. In addition, the reading activity is characterized by thrownness – we are thrown into the middle of the story. It is then the reader’s task to start making sense of the storyworld, which was in existence before the reading process.

1.3 The Lived Experience of Reading

Reading as an experience occupies an interesting position as it mobilizes perception as well as re-presentation. On the one hand, reading requires a reader to perceive and to understand the text – the words and sentences presented on paper. The concepts of intentionality, primary memory and secondary memory come into play here as these are relevant in our experiences of everyday objects

and events. On the other hand, there is a certain “referentiality” within literary texts, which affects the relationship between reader and text and which offers “us the possibility of both reading the world and ourselves at the same time” (Rossi 2020: 479). As an activity, reading can be considered as a perceptual act as well as a re-presentational act since it requires the activation of the reader’s imaginative abilities.

The structure of the reading activity can be likened to Husserl’s example of hearing a melody. The retentive-protentive aspect of reading was already pointed out by Wolfgang Iser (1978b: 122) who saw that “every moment of reading is a dialectic of protention and retention, conveying a future horizon yet to be occupied, along with a past (and continually fading) horizon already filled.” The correlation between reading and listening to music is supported by research in brain imaging, which suggests that similar areas are activated in the brain during the two activities. Significantly, those neural processes are invoked because both “involve temporal acts of pattern formation” (Armstrong 2013: 95).

Husserl’s example of the experience of melody can be transferred to the reading moment. First, while we read, our experience is not that of a single word or character. We need to have an awareness of at least the current sentence; usually we have to retain entire paragraphs of thought to have an understanding of what we are currently reading. Second, as we read, the information previously retained also informs us of how the next sentence might logically connect to the one currently being read: we expect the sentences to be grammatically coherent and the thoughts under development to be finished in a meaningful manner. When these developments surprise us or disappoint us, the reciprocal modification of protentions and retentions constantly reshape our experience of the narrative. Third, we cannot retain all of the information presented during the reading process – previous information that goes back several pages or chapters is only loosely kept in mind, eventually only in the form of recollection.

As this example shows, the reading process establishes a similar kind of field of experience as any other activity. From the moment we open the physical book, and even before that, we experience a flexible form of the present that contains primal impressions, retentions and protentions, which together modify our experience of reading. Without primary memory, the reading activity would be impossible. It should also be noted that the structure of a literary work, as something confined between beginning and end, mirrors our experience of temporality as something extended between birth and death. During the reading process, the reader is suspended between the material past and future of the novel while consistently moving towards an end. However, unlike Dasein, the reader can eventually settle the novel’s potentialities as the reader is not limited by the finite structure of the narrative.

1.3.1 Reading Re-presentation

While reading, we are intentionally directed toward a physical object. The book itself can be seen and touched. It can be opened and we can see that it contains symbols that form words. Sometimes, due to different practices of printing, we can even feel the characters themselves protruding from the paper. Reading, therefore, involves physical perception on several levels. However, during the activity of reading, we are also directed toward the more abstract aspects of narrative, towards stories. While the characters and events in the story are not real, readers are “not thinking about nothing” but about specific characters and events that inhabit the as-if-world of text along with the readers (Zahavi 2003: 14, cf. Caracciolo 2014: 31–44; Gallagher & Zahavi 2012: 61, 123). As fictive elements of the narrative text are “phantasy,” readers are able to experience stories through intentional re-presentation:

Phantasy is consciousness characterized as re-presentation (reproduction). Now there certainly is re-presented time; but it necessarily points back to a time that is given originally, a time not phantasied but presented. Re-presentation is the opposite of the act that gives something originally; no presentation [*Vorstellung*] can “spring” from it. (Husserl 1991: 47).

The reading activity is a perceptual act involving a material object unfolding in real time through primary memory.³³ The temporal location of the fictive elements of the material text, however, is much harder to ascertain. If we read about a flying saucer, for example, and imagine it, where is the flying saucer? A fictive flying saucer will certainly not appear in front of us as an original perception, as “not to give the object itself is the very essence of phantasy” (Husserl 1991: 47; c.f. Gallagher & Zahavi 2012: 130). Nonetheless, we might be able to see the flying saucer in the so-called mind’s eye as we either spontaneously or deliberately imagine it. We can conjure the flying saucer into our imagination by reading about it.³⁴ However, even if we see the flying saucer in our imagination, we cannot summon it to appear in front of us as an original perception. Therefore, the flying saucer ought to be considered a re-presentation. The words that we are seeing on the page about the flying saucer, however, are an original perception. During the reading process, then, both our primary memory as well as our secondary memory are simultaneously in operation. When we imagine the flying saucer while reading about it, the material text is perceived as an impression and the fictive element is experienced as a re-presentation.

³³ Caracciolo (2014: 32) explains that during the reading process, the imagined events and characters “depend on a simulative mechanism whereby we use our cognitive resources in an ‘off-line’ mode.”

³⁴ Keunen (2011: 5) claims that while images created by readers are not very precise, they “enable us to picture for ourselves a *world-in-motion*.” Iser (1993: 3) describes the images as “fleeing impressions” that “may suddenly flash before our mind’s eye, almost as an arbitrary apparition, only to disappear again or to dissolve into quite another form.”

Husserl used the term re-presentation to denote memories of perceived events and objects as well as to refer to “phantasy.” Upon a closer inspection, there is a world of difference between once-perceived re-presentations and imagined re-presentations. Although memories focus on specific past events that they reproduce, imagined re-presentations have no ‘nows’ that they coincide with (Husserl 1991: 53). Sokolowski (2007: 71) suggests that imagined objects and events are “taken from my real perceptions or from my memories,” but when imagined, they are “projected into situations and transactions that did not occur.” Both remembering and imagining take their content from primary memory, then. While remembering is a secondary experience based on a specific primary memory, imagining is not associated with a specific primary impression and is only loosely based on primary experiences. While reading, the reader is actively creating new ‘nows’ – the imagined re-presentations are the reader’s own creation as the fictive elements presented through words are not based on the reader’s actual past perceptions.

The reader’s past original perceptions still figure in her consciousness during the reading process. It is the reader’s imagination that is synthesizing previous experience and knowledge into re-presentation. However, if a reader has never seen a flying saucer, how would she imagine it? If a reader does imagine a flying saucer, will it coincide with what the text references? For imagination to be activated by re-presentation, there, indeed, must be at least some kind of an original perception, whether it has a specific memory associated with it or not. As our experience is largely determined by our thrownness into a social, already inhabited world, our understanding of events and entities depends on the shared social resources available in the intersubjective world (Crossley 1996).³⁵ We most likely will not have a specific memory that refers to the flying saucer, but as we may have general knowledge about flying saucers, we are able to imagine the flying saucer during the reading process.

Finally, while reading, re-presentation will materialize into the foreground of our experience:

if I begin to daydream about a sun-drenched beach in the Caribbean, and my eyes assume the well-known ‘far-away look’, what happens to the space I am actually inhabiting? The best way to characterize it is to say that this real space as a whole recedes into the background and that, if there is a foreground, it is not perceptual at all, not a part of the real space about me, but just those unreal or absent objects on which my mind dwells. The real space I inhabit by no means disappears; I continue to dwell in it bodily and to experience it. But in a certain sense I do not perceive it; I don’t look at or even see anything in particular, nothing presents itself to my view. (Carr 1987: 257)

³⁵ It could also be argued that these shared social resources contribute to the system of what is referred to as semantic memory (Tulving 1972; 1985; 1993).

In his interpretation of Husserl, David Carr (1987) highlights that our experience is structured by a foreground-background horizon. Carr's example of day-dreaming about being on a beach in the Caribbean shows how easy it is to switch between different states of being. The foreground-background horizon is significant for the process of reading as well. During the reading activity, the reader can seamlessly switch between states of being, as works of literature, according to Terry Eagleton (2012: 154), "resemble nothing quite so much as an agreeable narcotic or paralysing drug whereby, as in a dream, our practical life is put temporarily on hold."³⁶ As immersion within the text "decouples" the consciousness of the reader "away from [their] immediate environment," during the reading process, we switch the fictional into the foreground of our experience (Kuzmičová 2020: 278; c.f. Poulet 1969). At the same time, the words we are reading about as well as our actual reality figures in the background. If the reading is not engaging enough, however, or if we are not able to imagine certain aspects that we are reading about, we might have the words themselves occupy the foreground of our experience and the space around us occupy the background. If something outside of the reading activity captures our attention while we read, for example, we suddenly hear a melody we might recognize, listening to the melody may come into the foreground and the text fades into the background of our consciousness.

As we do not live in an isolated environment, but exist in an intersubjective relationship with the world and other individuals, our experience is defined by the "world of social coexistence" (Crossley 1996: 40). Our understanding of experience is shaped by our sensory and embodied engagement with the world and other beings-in-the-world and framed by the social-linguistic context of our environment. Phenomenology offers a theoretical framework for exploring the various cognitive, perceptual, and social factors that constitute our experience.

Husserl's observations on the consciousness of internal time can be applied to the experience of reading. The reading process is shaped by impressions, retentions, and protentions, which are integral in forming a coherent understanding of the text. While Husserl focuses on capturing the essence of a moment, our experience of time is not confined to isolated events; rather, it is mostly shaped by a broader sense of temporal continuity. As we progress through our lives, we experience changes in our physical, emotional, and psychological states, which shape our sense of self and our understanding of the intersubjective world. These changes occur in a continuous, unfolding process, affected by our understanding of our past self and shaping our projections of a future self.

This means that the reading activity is also necessarily shaped by embodied, temporal, and intersubjective experience. Reading is affected by sensory experience, as the material text is a physical object that requires the operation of multiple physical processes. The materiality of text implies a spatial context for the activity of reading: the physical layout of a text enables the reader to experience

³⁶ Since "the brain can regulate several functions simultaneously beneath conscious awareness," inhabiting both the fictional world as well as the real is entirely possible (Armstrong 2013: 108).

the progression of events and ideas through textual space. While the reader's experience is framed by a spatiotemporal context, readers are also influenced by their own previous experience. The reader's previous knowledge, memories, and expectations structure their understanding and interpretation of the text.

As the reading process does not only involve material text but also the imaginative dimension of narrative, reading is characterized by the intentional act of re-presentation. Although re-presentational activity relies on the shared resources of the intersubjective world and the material text is experienced through perception, re-presentation of fantasy is not contingent on any specific perceptual experience. As we read, we are actively constructing meaning through our imagination. While the reading moment is foregrounded in the reader's consciousness, the concrete reader's presence in the real world is relegated to the background and when the text is in the foreground, the reader starts inhabiting the virtual dimension of the text – the storyworld. By imagining fictive events and characters that are communicated to us via text, we are intentionally composing a cohesive storyworld, complete with temporal continuity and causality. The collaborative space of reading, where the text and the imagination of the reader meet, is the focus of the next chapter. As each reader's imagination is different, the virtual dimension of the literary object will vary from reader to reader. The shape of the story depends on how readers actualize the material presented to them and how they recreate the world of the text through re-presentation.

CHAPTER TWO

2. EXPERIENCE OF READING

This chapter focuses on the activity of reading. By attending to different theories of reading, I will present a study of the reading process that focuses on the function of the text, the role of the reader, and the transactional relationship between reader and text. I consider the reader's engagement with the text as the most significant aspect of the reading process and will, therefore, seek to understand how this process unfolds. As I consider literature an experiential space that requires active engagement, I proceed from the understanding that the text provides potentials of meaning and the reader's contribution to the process lies in the activation of these potentials. My main aim in this chapter, then, is to shift the attention to reading as a versatile lived experience. While phenomenology will allow me to access the reading process, the various reading theories presented in this chapter will help me frame the relationship between reader and text. Through an investigation into reading theories, both old and contemporary, I will study the various understandings concerning the reading process and the effects of literature on the reader.

Since experientiality is deeply entangled within discussions of reading, it also remains at the core of the present chapter. While I will address the various reading debates that transpired in the last decades of the previous century, and will outline contemporary discussions about reading, I will mostly rely on the work of Louise Rosenblatt in discussing the experientiality of literature. In addition to Rosenblatt, this chapter will build on the works of authors who explicitly promote the practical value of the phenomenology of reading (e.g., Poulet, Iser, Armstrong, and Caracciolo) as well as those who emphasize the importance of experientiality in literary criticism (e.g. Bleich, Felski, Auyoung).

Following Rosenblatt, I consider reading a transactional, temporal process, unfolding between the reader and the text. While many of Rosenblatt's central arguments about the relationship between reader and text are now widely acknowledged, this cannot be said for her theory as a whole.³⁷ Inspired by John Dewey's work, Rosenblatt developed a pragmatic framework to study the process of reading. Rosenblatt (1994: xi) stresses the importance of Dewey's "vision of aesthetic values woven into the texture of the daily life of human beings" in his seminal work *Art as Experience* (1934) as the primary theoretical influence for her transactional theory but does not follow his "specific treatment of the literary arts." While the phenomenological framework seemed to Rosenblatt (1994: 111) "less congenial than [William] James and Dewey in providing a live context

³⁷ While she was the first to discuss many of the aspects of the experiential dimension of the literary work in her 1938 work *Literature as Exploration*, Rosenblatt's work remained largely unnoticed in the literary theory of the 20th century.

within which to place the aesthetic event,” she considers her position to largely coincide with Husserlian phenomenology.³⁸ While I will not follow Rosenblatt in her theoretical positioning, I find her transactional theory of reading overall to be compatible with the arguments developed in this dissertation.

Commenting on her preference to describe the activity between reader and text as “transaction” instead of “interaction,” Rosenblatt (1994: 180) explains that the term transaction allows her to “designate a relationship in which each element, instead of being fixed and predefined, conditions and is conditioned by the other.” Defending neither the dominance of the reader nor the authority of the text, Rosenblatt (1994: 183) argues that “literariness” is neither an “inherent attribute of the text” nor “an attitude of the reader sans text.” There is no literature without the text but there is also no reader without a text. Therefore, following Rosenblatt, the current chapter will adopt a view that the literary work is created through the reading experience, between text and reader. While I will discuss the function of the text and the reader’s role in the reading process, following Rosenblatt, I acknowledge that reader and text cannot be considered in isolation.

2.1 Reading Debates

While an exhaustive history of reading theories is not central for this dissertation, to contextualize the present study, I will provide a brief overview of some of the main points of discussion concerning reading and readers in critical exchanges within the academic literary community.³⁹ Although the origins of reader-oriented criticism can easily be traced to Louise Rosenblatt (1938) in the Anglo-American context, Rosenblatt’s arguments were largely overlooked within the more elite community of literary theorists and, for a while, she remained the “lone voice acclaiming the reader” (Rosenblatt 1994: xiii). In fact, Rosenblatt’s work, in general, has not become part of the wider canon of reader-response criticism. Although her early ideas about the reader’s role in the reading process were often reproduced in the writings of reader-response theorists, few theorists publicly recognized Rosenblatt’s significant influence.⁴⁰ While her absence in reading theory cannot be definitively explained, David Bleich (1986: 401–402) suspects

³⁸ Rosenblatt’s hesitancy regarding phenomenology may come from her disagreement with how Husserlian phenomenology was interpreted and applied by other scholars, such as, for example E.D. Hirsch and Roman Ingarden (see Rosenblatt 1994: 107–113). However, she also recognizes her own connection to phenomenology through Husserl’s “indebtedness” to William James, whom she considers a significant theoretical inspiration (Rosenblatt 1994: 111).

³⁹ For a more comprehensive and nuanced discussion of reading theories, see Tompkins (1980), Suleiman & Crossman (1980), Harkin & Sosnoski (2003) Harkin (2005), and Armstrong (2011).

⁴⁰ David Bleich’s (1986) engagement with Rosenblatt’s work is a notable exception.

that it may have something to do with her position as “a woman in a School of Education.”⁴¹

While Rosenblatt’s work is now (e.g. in Glover 2018) often situated within the larger framework of reading theories, the emergence of reader-response criticism is commonly associated with the widespread reaction against New Criticism, or, rather, against the 1949 article “The Affective Fallacy” by W. K. Wimsatt and M. C. Beardsley (Tompkins 1980: 223).⁴² The disillusionment with New Criticism produced a shift that sparked the “birth of the reader” (Barthes 1977: 148). With this transition, the locus of meaning-making was switched from the text to the reader. However, the emergence of the reader did not initiate a full paradigm shift (Tompkins 1980: 201). While some theories pivoted towards reading models based on subjectivism (e.g. Holland, Bleich), most reader-response criticism remained rather text-oriented (e.g. Culler, Fish, and even Iser, to some extent). Interpretation of texts remained a key concern in reader-response theories. Thus, many of the text-based approaches developed by the New Critics have endured within reader-response theories (Davis & Womack 2002: 14). Although the vigorous debate of reader-response theories dwindled away at some point during the 1980s, the discussions on the identity, value and contributions of the reader are still significant in contemporary literary theory.

2.1.1 Constructing a Reader

Much of the debate that took place from the 1960s until the 1980s tended to fixate on reader figures. Theories proposing different models of frequently idealized hypothetical readers abounded. These discussions provided insights into the process of reading. Many of the assumptions of reader-response theories have become so standard in today’s literary criticism that they are considered “common-place” (Harkin 2005: 414). That readers produce meanings is no longer a topic that requires discussion and neither does the idea that text affects readers on a physical and emotional level. However, disagreements emerged among theorists as to the degree of influence that text exerts on the reader and vice versa. Social models (e.g. Culler 1975; Fish 1970, 1980)⁴³, for example, consider social conventions to be the principal influence on literary interpretation, while the

⁴¹ It seems that her work remained popular among educators, however, as five editions of *Literature as Exploration* (1938) have been published, with the latest edition in 1995.

⁴² Much of Rosenblatt’s work is also framed by her rejection of the formalist approach of New Critics. However, her early work significantly predates conventional reader-response criticism.

⁴³ Both Culler (1975) and Fish (1970, 1980) found that the reader’s literary competence, their responsibility of becoming “informed,” to use Fish’s term, largely determines their interpretation. While this position (somewhat) acknowledges the individual reader’s intersubjective background, both Fish and Culler stress the significance of the structure of the text. While these structures may be based on shared conventions of reading and are determined by various interpretive communities, the models attend to text rather than the communities of readers.

primary driver of interpretation within psychological models, (e.g. Holland 1975, 1989; Bleich 1975; 1986) is the reader's mind.⁴⁴ Iser's (1978a, 1978b) phenomenological model falls somewhere in between, with Iser focusing on examining the effects of the text through an implied reader, that is, a hypothetical reader collaborating with the text to bring forth the text's meaning. Following Rosenblatt (1994: 106), I do not think it constructive to formulate another hypothetical reader figure. However, as reader figures were the focus of the reading debates in the 1960s and 1970s, I will briefly outline some of the more prevalent issues raised, using Iser's implied reader as the example.⁴⁵

Despite the seeming simplicity of the idea of the reader, it is one of the most misunderstood concepts within reading theories. Even theories that define readers often fail to explain whether the definitions apply to real readers or to theoretically constructed reader figures. Thus, the first problem with the reader emerges from the fact that we can discuss different reader concepts or a flesh-and-blood reader. Hypothetical reader figures can be assembled under the generalized term of the "abstract reader" (Schmid 2010). The abstract reader is considered to be dependent "on the reading and understanding of the text by the concrete reader" and is considered as a "semantic reconstruction" of what the text might intend (Schmid 2010: 51, 52). In most formulations, the abstract reader is present in the text as evidence of a concrete author's footprint and its meaning and influence is dependent on a concrete reader's construction of meanings.

The different reader figures reside in specific layers of the text. One way of separating textual layers is proposed by Seymour Chatman (1987), who suggests that there are three parallel levels of communication in a narrative text. The first level concerns real people, the actual author of the work and the actual reader(s). The second level concerns the implied author and the implied reader and finally, the third level involves the narrator and the narratee. The three levels position different transmitting and receiving sides in a parallel alignment. I use Schmid's (2010: 34–35) labeling for these levels, the first concerning author communication, the second concerning narrative communication and the third level consisting of character communication.

While each level has one receiving side, there are two ways of receiving: being the addressee or the recipient. While the addressee "is the receiver presumed or intended by the transmitter," the recipient "is the factual receiver, of whom the transmitter possibly /.../ has only a general mental picture" (Schmid 2010: 34). On the first level, the addressee is the reader the author had imagined but the recipient is the reader who actually reads the text and who need not have been targeted by the author. On the second level, that of narrative communication, the addressee is the textually implied reader. It is the reader that is not part of the narrative itself but is part of the text. It is the impression of the reader to whom

⁴⁴ The differentiation of reading models into social, psychological, and phenomenological is introduced by Mailloux (1982).

⁴⁵ I specifically single out Iser's implied reader because he uses phenomenology as a theoretical framework in his discussions of reading.

the actual author has addressed the text. The recipient of the first level may or may not cooperate with the implied addressee on the second level.⁴⁶ The third level of communication unfolds between fictive entities, between the narrator and the narratee. On the level of character communication, the narrator's addressee is the entity towards whom the narration is directed. The recipient on the third level is the one who "appears as a reader or listener in the primary narrative," whether they are explicitly marked in the narrative or whether their presence is only implied, for example, by the narrator's direct address to a "dear reader" (Schmid 2010: 79).

Most reading theories at the end of the previous century focused on the second level, narrative communication, and the abstract reader. The abstract reader, within reader-response theories, is a hypothetically constructed reader implied by the fixed text through "specific indexical signs" (Schmid 2010: 54). The function of the abstract reader is twofold. First, the abstract reader "is the bearer of the codes and norms presumed in the readership;" second, "the abstract reader functions as an image of the *ideal recipient* who understands the work in a way that optimally matches its structure, and who adopts the interpretive position and esthetic standpoint put forward by the work" (Schmid 2010: 55). Accordingly, a unique abstract reader, determined by a concrete author and their intended interpretation of the work, should be discerned in every individual text. The goal of several reading theories of the 20th century was to develop methods to extract this abstract reader from the text.

Wolfgang Iser's re-interpretation of Wayne Booth's concept of the *implied reader* is perhaps the best-known abstract reader figure in reading theories.⁴⁷ Booth (1983: 138) defines the implied reader as an image of the living reader created by the living author. The implied reader, according to Iser, is completely hypothetical. It is not a fictive element of a text or an image of the concrete reader but rather, "a transcendental model which makes it possible for the structured effects of literary texts to be described" (Iser 1978b: 38). Iser (1978a: 55) argues that the model offers "a frame of possible decisions" that is available for the living reader in the form of the implied reader. The implied reader creates a space for the projection of the effects of the text, a space that the living reader may inhabit (Iser 1978b: 27). The background of experience that the concrete reader maintains while being settled in the role of the implied reader accounts for all the different interpretations that concrete readers develop while reading the same text (Iser 1978b: 35, 37).

Iser's theory of the implied reader was, on the one hand, hugely popular, but on the other, extensively criticized as his work occupied an interesting "hybrid position" between German and Anglo-American varieties of reader-response

⁴⁶ If they do not comply, they might become "resisting readers" (Fetterley 1978)

⁴⁷ In *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), Booth first developed the idea of the implied author as an aspect of narrative communication. For Booth, the implied reader was simply the receiving equivalent of the implied author and not an independent concept.

criticism (De Bruyn 2012: 97).⁴⁸ While Iser mostly worked with English modernist novels, his philosophy of literature was influenced by German-language philosophers Roman Ingarden and Hans-Georg Gadamer (De Bruyn 2012: 97, 101).⁴⁹ Although Iser can be considered a representative of the German tradition of reception theory, he is also established as one of the most important reader-response theorists in the Anglo-American tradition.⁵⁰

A major criticism against Iser concerns the lack of a definition of the implied reader in his first work, *The Implied Reader* (1978a). Although *The Act of Reading* (1978b) includes definitions of the concept, these were often regarded as too muddled to be practical (Mailloux 1982). Iser's work is also often considered as quite contradictory. Stanley Fish (1981: 12) viewed Iser's theory as "nothing more than a loosely constructed network of pasted-together contradictions; push it hard at any point, and it immediately falls apart." While, on the one hand, Iser (1978b: 27, 34–35, 97–98, 149, 189–196, 204) recognizes that texts only "initiate 'performances' of meaning," his arguments throughout his books suggest that he has not abandoned the assumption, inherited from formalist approaches, that the text has a fixed meaning.⁵¹ While a generous reading of Iser could interpret his statements about the text's meaning as referring to the potentialities of meaning that require the reader's actualization, it is possible to find contradictory arguments within his work, as Fish did.⁵² Fish (1981: 3–4) noted that Iser's ambiguous position helps him avoid the debate on "interpretive authority."⁵³ Instead of developing a theory in which meaning is produced in the collaborative space between text and reader, Iser's work supports two contradictory positions: he argues for the total interpretive authority of the individual reader and upholds the position

⁴⁸ Along with Hans Robert Jauss, Iser is the founder of the German variety of reception theory, *Rezeptionsästhetik*

⁴⁹ It is worth mentioning that Gadamer's and Ingarden's most important works were not available in English until the second half of the 20th century; therefore, it is through Iser that the English-speaking academia became familiar with their phenomenological philosophies of language and reading.

⁵⁰ Iser's works were translated fairly quickly to English – perhaps this is why his position in the Anglo-American tradition of reader-response criticism is so firmly established. In addition, De Bruyn (2012: 96) suggests that Iser's popularity in the Anglo-American context is also due to many popular overview studies of reader-response criticism, which included Iser's perspectives on the topic and presented his theories in a favorable light.

⁵¹ As opposed to the often accepted understanding that a particular meaning resides within the text. See Rosenblatt's (1994: 101–130) arguments against this common understanding. I will also elaborate on this point in section 2.2.

⁵² This can be contested, however. Iser (1978b; 1981) himself mostly remains firm on his stance that meaning is produced in the reading interaction but other readings of Iser (e.g. Fish 1981; Mailloux 1982) recognize that certain parts of his theory as well as his practice of literary analysis contradict this point. I would argue that besides the confusing use of the implied reader, Iser's theory is relatively consistent.

⁵³ To be clear, Fish himself did not suggest that literary meaning is produced through the reading transaction. His theory mostly upholds the idea of the fixed meaning of the text.

that text contains predetermined meaning. By not choosing sides, Iser's theory, according to Fish (1981) remains unconvincing.⁵⁴

Another remarkable contradiction within Iser's work was identified by W. Daniel Wilson (1981). The implied reader, in Iser's theory, is construed as an abstract reader figure, present in the form of the narrative but not in the content of the narrative. Iser's (1978a, 1978b) analyses, however, demonstrate that he did not differentiate between the implied reader and the narratee. Iser's attempt at extracting the abstract reader from the text results in him analyzing the function of the fictive reader. This brings into question whether the implied reader can be used as a concept to analyze literature – Iser's definitions of the implied reader point to the second level of narrative communication and yet, his own application of the reader figure points to the third level of communication. Considering this significant oversight, I will not employ this concept.

Although other reader figures have been proposed, they largely encounter the same problems as Iser's implied reader.⁵⁵ While abstract reader figures have value in theory, the practical application is limited. Bleich (1986: 402) noted that hypothetical readers were often simply used to justify the theorist's personal interpretation and to pretend "as if it were a feature of the texts under study." Currently, I believe there are no working models for using the abstract reader figure.

However, there have been proposals to discuss the role of the real reader. Paul Ricœur (1988: 171) argues that "the phenomenology of the act of reading requires a flesh-and-blood reader, who, in actualizing the role of the reader prestructured in and through the text, transforms it." Similarly to Iser, Ricœur (1988: 162, 169, 170) believes in the usefulness of the concept of the implied reader. According to Ricœur, a concrete reader plays a role through the implied reader and in this process, meaning is ascribed to the text. However, since Ricœur sees the implied reader as merely a set of instructions for the concrete reader, he stresses that a real, flesh-and-blood reader must be considered in the act of reading.

Janice Radway ([1984] 1991) is perhaps among the earliest authors to examine real, flesh-and-blood readers. Essentially, Radway performs a study of a specific interpretive community of lay readers, which is rare in a field that has otherwise tended to focus on elite professional readers.⁵⁶ Among others, Radway's work has influenced Rita Felski (2008, 2015, 2020b), a theorist focused on the affective aspects of reading, as well as Karin Littau, an advocate of a feminist perspective on reading. Jane Tompkins's article, titled "Me and My Shadow" (1987) is another significant contribution acknowledging the importance of flesh-and-blood readers. Tompkins's text is notable as she was one the first among academic scholars to

⁵⁴ Fish (1981: 3) also asserts that the following is a problematic position: "for in his theory meaning /.../ is something that is produced or built up or assembled by a *process* of interaction in which the two parties play quite different, but interdependent roles." As this opinion by Iser carries over to the current thesis, Fish's grievances would probably apply to my dissertation as well.

⁵⁵ E.g. informed reader (Fish 1970) and model reader (Eco 1979).

⁵⁶ The concept of interpretive community was developed by Stanley Fish (1980)

discuss how her personal experience and interpretive goals affect her readings and academic output.

However, even with flesh-and-blood readers, a layer of subjective interpretation is involved. Abstract readers can be considered textual constructions that function to provide a seemingly objective basis for interpretation by reader-response theorists. The same could be said about concrete flesh-and-blood readers as they also become constructions as soon as their responses are analyzed on paper (Travis 1998: 2, Mailloux 1982: 204). Therefore, it should not be assumed that only abstract readers are constructed and that concrete readers escape the interpretive structure set by the researching scholar.⁵⁷ “Even members of ‘real audiences’ interviewed within the remit of cultural studies,” Littau (2006: 10) points out, “are never flesh and blood, but subjects from whom ethnographic researchers elicit subversive meanings and counter-readings.”

While I will not be using the concept of the implied reader (or any other reader-construct) in this dissertation, I do find Iser’s work valuable and will employ many of the ideas and concepts he developed. Following Iser (1978b: ix–x, 10, 35), I consider the reading process a form of communication that requires the active participation of the reader. I also find Iser’s concept of the wandering viewpoint valuable. For Iser (1978b: 118), the wandering viewpoint is “a means of describing the way in which the reader is present in the text.” The concept is derived from Husserl’s idea of primary memory and explains how reading unfolds through the reader’s moving viewpoint, which highlights segments of the text until moving on to the next segment.⁵⁸ Finally, the generous reading of Iser (see e.g., 1978b: 126–131) which suggests that meaning is, indeed, produced by readers based on (materially) fixed text, is one of the main convictions of this dissertation and coincides with the assumptions maintained by Rosenblatt.⁵⁹ These ideas will be further elaborated upon in the following sections and chapters.

⁵⁷ Of course, there is a difference between real readers as a construct and the abstract reader as a construct since real readers and abstract readers operate on different levels of communication.

⁵⁸ The wandering viewpoint is based on Husserl’s concepts of retention and protention – a not-yet memory of an immediate present moment and a not-yet anticipation of immediate future moments – to explain the reader’s position in the text as each sentence of the text “prefigures a particular horizon, but this is immediately transformed into the background for the next correlate and must therefore necessarily be modified” (Iser 1978b: 111).

⁵⁹ Mailloux (1982: 37) also noted that despite her resolute “emphasis on the individuality of reading experiences, Rosenblatt’s transactional theory more closely resembles Iser’s phenomenology than Holland’s and Bleich’s psychological perspectives.” The theories of Holland and Bleich prioritized the reader’s personality and subjective experience without much regard to the stimulus provided by the text. Rosenblatt, on the other hand, like Iser, considers the text an important starting point for the reader’s response.

2.1.2 How to Read (Critically)

Discussions around the topic of reading within the English-language academia were reignited in the late 2000s and 2010s, which prompted several influential journals to publish special issues dedicated to ways of reading.⁶⁰ The discussions about ways of reading and criticism have reopened dialogues around topics that were assumed to be settled. Contemporary academic discussion around topics such as (new) structuralism, (new) formalism, (new) historicism, phenomenology, and affect theory suggests that scholars still find questions about interpretation and meaning-making noteworthy (c.f. Serpell 2017; Anderson 2020). The so-called contemporary method debates have produced a wide array of responses to questions of critical reading.⁶¹ The centralization of certain types of text, for example, is being argued for and against (see Hayles 2010; Brinkema 2014; Clune 2017; Drucker 2017; Ioanes 2017; Hammer 2017; White 2020). Then there are theorists who maintain that literary criticism is too critical (Felski 2008, 2015; Frank 2020), and does not acknowledge the aesthetic pleasure of reading (Favret 2015; Auyoung 2020; Felski 2020b). Some readers read very closely (Wolff 2019), see a problem with the distant (Drucker 2017), and decide to read with the grain (Bewes 2010). Reading for form to perform ethical, political, or affective readings has become increasingly common (Serpell 2014; Brinkema 2014; Levine 2015; Hammer 2017; Ioanes 2017) even if it is heavily criticized by some scholars (Levinson 2007). Finally, while some prefer to read for depth (Landy 2020) they may face opposition from those who think our reading is already too deep so we should keep to the surface (Best & Marcus 2008; Love 2010). Perhaps the disagreement could be solved if we read just once to be done and move on for good (Bronstein 2016).⁶² Although several ways of reading and interpreting have been tested, no consensus has yet been achieved about the best ways of approaching literature.

While not identical, resemblances between the two eras of discussions can easily be noticed. Surprisingly though, contemporary scholars rarely engage with the previous era of debates. Besides a couple of overview articles about reading theories (e.g. Harkin 2005; Armstrong 2011), few comment upon reader-response criticism and most do not contextualize their own work within the wider framework of reading studies. It also seems that the reader figure is no longer something

⁶⁰ Some notable special issues on the topic of reading include *PMLA* 133: 5 (2018), *PMLA* 134: 1 (2019), *New Literary History* 44: 2 (2013); *Poetics Today* 42: 2 (2021).

⁶¹ While often referred to as method debates, what was actually debated was “different interests, and different views of what is important in literature” rather than methods (Moi 2017: 178–179). Therefore, I mostly speak of a second wave of reading debates.

⁶² My representation of Bronstein’s is, of course, exaggerated. Bronstein (2016: 90) argues that literary criticism ought to value first readings more and that the discussion of the experientiality of reading should also seek to understand the aesthetic dimension of the “naïve, durational experience of the text.” Leitch (1987), however, has previously suggested that, although first readings provide an important basis of our experience of text, it might not be possible to access first readings through literary theory.

that is explicitly discussed. While understandings born out of the first debates might have become commonplace, it is still interesting that there has been so little recent engagement with the ideas presented in the 1960s and 1970s. Today's debates also sometimes do not elaborate whether the proposed ways of reading apply to all readers or only professional readers.⁶³ The main difference between the two eras of debates is in the emphasis. While reader-response theorists of the previous century centralized the reader and tried to develop (mostly) text-based methods of readerly interpretation, the current debates fixate on appropriate ways of reading and writing about literature.⁶⁴

The problems identified by reader-response theorists from the 1960s to 1980s largely overlap with the questions presented by contemporary authors over the past decade. In the 1970s, reading theories rejected the formalist fixation on the isolated text and the New Critical hope of extracting objective literary meanings from the text. Recent theories of reading primarily challenge poststructuralist perspectives; although, this time, instead of turning to the author or the reader, the quality of attention afforded to the text is criticized.⁶⁵ Despite a different emphasis, the core of the discussions remain similar. Most of the concerns about reading and methods of textual analysis are repeated – we are still trying to understand the effect of the text on the reader and how the reader extracts meaning from the text.⁶⁶ The current debates still circle around the same issues despite the slight shift in focus. Considering that the abstract reader was simply a means to legitimize certain interpretations, contemporary attempts to determine the most valid critical approaches and establish the best method of textual analysis strive to achieve a similar goal.

It seems then that both sets of discussions have come to an impasse on a similar issue surrounding the reader's contribution to the reading process. While we have now recognized that the (critical and the lay) reader has agency during the reading process, we have no common understanding about the processes unfolding during the reading process and the degree to which the reader affects the meaning of the text. While multiple theorists, within both the previous as well as the current debates, agree that literary meaning is created only through the reader's communication with the text, it is still not entirely accepted as a

⁶³ Some (e.g. Felski) have found that current discussion are too focused on professional reading and are forgetting the perspective of lay readers. On the other hand, as literary criticism is mostly practiced within the academia, the focus on theory and literary interpretation is understandable.

⁶⁴ There is a clear discontent with the current methodologies in the contemporary discussions. While literary studies are continually producing new theoretical frameworks, we are still largely using the same methods (or rather, analytical tools) developed by the New Critics.

⁶⁵ For example, criticizing the lack of attention to what is not hidden in the text, but discernible on the surface (Best & Marcus 2009).

⁶⁶ It is worth stressing that, according to Rosenblatt's theory, since readers produce literary meaning, meaning cannot be extracted.

premise.⁶⁷ In the two final chapters of her second major work, Rosenblatt (1994) argues against the common assumption that text itself provides literary meaning. While several of her contemporaries acknowledged that the reader's experience is significant and ought to be discussed, Rosenblatt observed that many of them (Rosenblatt mentions William Empson, I. A. Richards, René Wellek and Austin Warren, Roman Ingarden, Roman Jakobson, and Roland Barthes) did not agree that meaning is entirely dependent on the reading transaction. This situation has persisted throughout both sets of reading debates.

Even though the lack of agreement between the debaters means that reading studies lack a common theoretical and methodological basis, it also allows each theorist to choose an analytical framework best suited for their theoretical needs. Since reading and method debates are too broad and numerous to fully describe here, I will only continue to expand on topics relevant to this dissertation. Specifically, I will study the reader's experience of the text and the transactional relationship between the text and the reader. The following analysis is not ordered chronologically. Instead, I will discuss the communicative process of reading in a way that blends the different eras of reading debates into one discussion.

I would like to point out that throughout both periods of debates, slowly, but steadily, (neo-)phenomenological studies of reading have gained prominence. The tradition of exploring the experiential dimension of reading stems from French-language authors, such as Beauvoir (1946, 1965), Sartre (1948), and Poulet (1969), was continued in Germany by Iser (1972, 1976), and has been embraced by contemporary Anglo-American theorists, such as Armstrong (2005, 2008, 2013), Felski (2008), and Serpell (2014, 2017). While the connections between fiction and phenomenology were developed throughout the 20th century, a significant recent contribution to a phenomenological reading model is presented by Caracciolo (2014).⁶⁸ In his thorough study, Caracciolo arranges an interdisciplinary dialogue between cognitive narratology and phenomenology. This produces an enactivist reading theory, which offers a detailed description of the experience of reading. Caracciolo's work is also unique in the sense that he applies his theory to literary texts by presenting a series of sample analyses.⁶⁹ In the present chapter, the works of (neo-)phenomenological literary scholars will be merged with ideas developed in the various reading debates to further develop a theory of reading.

⁶⁷ Besides Rosenblatt (1994), this has been accepted by e.g. Holland (1975) and Bleich (1975). While many of the current debaters seem to agree with the assertion, most still tend to avoid arguing that the reader is solely responsible for creating meaning. However, it seems that, for example, Felski (especially in her most recent work) is bolder in supporting this position.

⁶⁸ Besides the authors mentioned above, e.g. Kuspit (1968) explores fiction through Husserlian phenomenology.

⁶⁹ Surprisingly, this is more uncommon than one might expect. With some exceptions, most reading scholars do not show how their theories can be used in literary analysis. The more recent reading discussions have seen more examples of theories put to practice, but many still only present theoretical discussions (e.g. Felski 2020a).

I have chosen to frame this discussion with Rosenblatt's ideas about the transactional relationship between reader and text. While emphasizing the reader's contribution, Rosenblatt does not minimize the importance of the text. Yet, she also does not attribute determinate meaning to the text. Text, as a set of signs and symbols, merely guides the individual reader to respond and to interpret. However, as the material text is singular, the reader's evocations are dependent on the specific set of words and sentences. As her position is clearly defined and attends to both issues of form and experience, I believe that returning to her theory will resolve some of the issues currently still unsettled within studies of reading.

Many of the previous reading theories have focused on creating different models of frequently idealized hypothetical readers or searching for appropriate ways of reading but I would like to emphasize the lived experience of reading. While phenomenology allows me to access the reading moment, Rosenblatt's transactional theory combined with insight shaped by two eras of reading debates will help me frame the relationship between reader and text. As the agency of the reader is an important part of this dissertation, I find it necessary to go through some of the ways in which readers and their position in the reading process have been represented over the years. However, I will not construct a hypothetical reader figure under the guise of having an objective approach to textuality. As I consider reading a personal and subjective activity, the reader will be viewed through their contribution to the literary work, rather than as a self-contained concept. The function of the text will be discussed through its effect on the reader. Above all, however, the reading process will be evaluated as a transactional relationship between two contributors.

2.2. The Reading Process

Reading is induction, interpolation, extrapolation, and the basis of these activities rests on the reader's will

(Sartre 1988: 60)

Central to Rosenblatt's theory (1964; 1994) is the argument that the text is not a poem or a story.⁷⁰ Distinguishing between text as an object and the literary work of art as an event, Rosenblatt argues that the literary work is produced through a transactional event unfolding between reader and text. The poem or the story "is what the reader, under the guidance of the text, crystallizes out from the stuff of memory, image, thought, and feeling which he brings to it" (Rosenblatt 1964: 126). While Rosenblatt argues against the idea that meaning is intrinsic to text, another key premise in her theory of literary transaction concerns the reader's stance toward the text. Similarly to some of the ideas presented in more recent

⁷⁰ Although Rosenblatt (1964; 1994) uses "poem" as an example, her argument expands to all categories of literary work. Correspondingly, I will be using "story" throughout this section.

reading discussions (e.g. Bewes 2010; Best 2017; Moi 2017; Auyoung 2020; Felski 2020a; Landy 2020; Starr & Belfi 2020), Rosenblatt (1982; 1994) differentiates between what she calls an efferent and an aesthetic reading stance. The former focuses on extracting information from the text, the latter stance is necessary for the lived experience of the story. Efferent reading treats the text as a static object but aesthetic reading refers to a dynamic process between the reader and text. While both ways of reading require the reader's engagement with the text, only aesthetic reading produces the story.

A reading stance is not dictated by the text, but is chosen by the reader and refers to the "difference in the reader's focus of attention during the reading-event" (Rosenblatt 1994: 23). Reading stance can be compared to the quality of being attuned to the work of art. Attunement, as a concept, is derived from Heidegger (1962) and refers to how Dasein finds itself in the world.⁷¹ Upon finding themselves in the storyworld, readers are "already biased and attuned when [they] pick up a book" (Eagleton 2012: 56). Attunement, or reading stance, then, refers to the way in which the reader and text are open to reciprocal communication. While efferent or aesthetic reading signifies an intentional type of engagement, it is possible for the reader to adopt a stance subconsciously, based on their previous experiences of different genres and types of text (Rosenblatt 1982: 269). As the efferent and aesthetic represent two points along a spectrum, the reader's stance is usually not fixed to one single position but falls somewhere on a continuum (Rosenblatt 1994: 184). The difference of attention afforded to the text, according to Rosenblatt (1994: 184), is a result of the combination of proportions of "public and private, cognitive and affective aspects of meaning."

At its most extreme, attending only to the public elements of the text, efferent reading isolates and objectifies the text by giving "attention primarily to the referent alone" (Rosenblatt 1994: 75; c.f. Bleich 1975: 750–751). During this process,

the reader disengages his attention as much as possible from the personal and qualitative elements in his response to the verbal symbols; he concentrates on what the symbols designate, what they may be contributing to the end result that he seeks—the information, the concepts, the guides to action, that will be left with him when the reading is over. (Rosenblatt 1994: 27).

⁷¹ Felski (2020b: 42) suggests an alternative way of interpreting attunement, as "not a feeling-about but a feeling-with /.../ attunement is about things resonating, aligning, coming together." Felski draws her definition from Zadie Smith's essay about the experience of attunement. In the essay, Smith (2012) describes the process of becoming attuned to the music of Joni Mitchell after years of dislike. Mitchell's music went from being "just noise" to something that triggers "an emotional overcoming, disconcertingly distant from happiness, more like joy" (Smith 2012: 30, 31). Attunement covers a range of experiences that refer to the way reader and text "tune into" each other, it is a "state of affectedness" in which things are "'coming together' in expected or unexpected ways" (Felski 2020b: 42, 75). Felski's interpretation of attunement is closer to Rosenblatt's concept of aesthetic reading.

The efferent stance tends to prevail in our society, as this type of attention is encouraged throughout the educational process (Rosenblatt 1982: 247–276). We learn to read in an environment that places a heavy emphasis on standardized assessment. Producing measurable outcomes rather than fostering an appreciation of literature through an experiential response is often prioritized in literature classes from primary to post-secondary education. Critical reading, practiced by literary theorists, which attends to the technical, public, and objective elements of the text, is also considered efferent reading (Rosenblatt 1982: 276).

Aesthetic reading, on the other hand, does not extract information but reflects the lived-through relationship between the reader's experience of text and their own personal history. While aesthetic reading may also involve a selection of elements which the reader deems important for the creation of the literary work, it incorporates the reader's subjective experience into the process of creating the story (Rosenblatt 1994: 75, 90). Compared to the information produced through efferent reading, which can be composed during or after the reading event, the aesthetic stance produces the literary work of art within the reading event, during which

A much broader range of elements will be allowed to rise into consciousness, not simply the abstract concepts that the words point to, but also what those objects or referents stir up of personal feelings, ideas, and attitudes. The very sound and rhythm of the words will be attended to. Out of these ideas and feelings, a new experience, the story or poem, is shaped and lived through. (Rosenblatt 1982: 269).

The aesthetic reading is subjective, singular, and spatiotemporal. Aesthetic reading involves the reader in the events of the fictional world and absorbs the reader's attention so that the reader's actual reality is discarded and the storyworld, inspired by a particular text, replaces it in the foreground of the reader's experience (Rosenblatt 1964: 125; c.f. Carr 1987; Miall & Kuiken 1998). While aesthetic reading can be compared to the idea of literary immersion, as described by Woolf (1924), Poulet (1969), and Beauvoir (2004) and the idea of enchantment described by Felski (2008), Rosenblatt's concept refers more to the activity of producing the immersion rather than to being enchanted by the text.

The transactional reading process describes the shared space created by the reader and text in which a literary work is reciprocally created. The collaborative effort, involving both the reader and the text as products of their respective cultural contexts, creates "a dynamic, permeable zone" through which literature is afforded meaning (Smagorinsky 2001: 141). Neither the text nor the reader can be isolated from the reading moment, yet, each has a distinct function in the reading process. The artificial separation of reader and text in the next two sections is slightly violent but will help describe the relationship between the two as well as their respective contributions to the literary work.

2.2.1 Material Text

A true novel, therefore, allows itself neither to be reduced to formulas nor even to be retold; one can no more detach its meaning from it than one can detach the smile from a face. Although made of words, it exists as objects in the world do, which exceed anything that can be said about them in words. Doubtless, this object was constructed by a man and this man had a design. But his presence must be well hidden, otherwise this magical operation of bewitchment by the novel could not be accomplished.

(Beauvoir 2004: 270)

On the one hand, a text seems like an entirely ordinary thing – words arranged to form sentences, paragraphs, chapters. And yet, as Beauvoir suggests, texts operate through magical bewitchment. Words create worlds that readers may enter. Separating the words from the fictional worlds they have created is not easy but still attempted in literary studies. Terry Eagleton (2012: 187) compares the text to an orchestral score that functions as “a set of instructions for the production of meaning.” Like an orchestral score, the text includes fixed information and non-prescribed meaning. While literary text shares features with all other kinds of language use, literature requires “a certain way of conducting or orienting ourselves in the presence of a piece of writing” (Eagleton 2012: 48). This distinctive orientation is born out of the referential function of literary work that merges the “wordy” with “worldly,” making the world portrayed in the text accessible through narrative (Rossi 2020: 484–485; c.f. Eagleton 2012: 172; Annas 2002: 77).

However, without the reader’s activity, the text will remain without a world. Text, viewed only through its formal aspects, reveals a static object (Rosenblatt 1994: 88–89). For the text to portray a world, it must be actualized. The text requires someone to understand that the set of signs presented on the page. For a text to be interpreted as literary, it must provide the necessary “stimulus activating elements of the reader’s past experience, his experience with literature and with life” (Rosenblatt 1964: 126). The arrangement of words, the structure of the work, the aesthetic qualities, themes, and characters that the text contains also indicates that each text can provide a unique experience. While text is not capable of constituting a literary work of art on its own, it remains “an essential element of any reading act” (Rosenblatt 1994: 23).

The most essential aspect of “an artistic narrative text is /.../ that the world represented in it is *fictive*” (Schmid 2010: 21). The two terms, fictional and fictive, represent different narrative aspects: while *fictional* is a characteristic of narrative text, *fictive* concerns the contents of a fictional narrative (Schmid 2010: 21–22). The environment presented in fictional narratives is a constructed world in all of its aspects: its setting, characters, and events.⁷² Although fictional worlds are

⁷² Although real objects, people or places may be represented in fictional texts, if there is any fictionalization in text (and all fictional texts include fictionalization), it is fictive in its entirety (Schmid 2010: 33).

made of text, they include descriptions of elements that exist in the real world. Through language, text exposes readers to “people and lives, places and fates – something that the reader perceives more or less as a complete world,” meaning that the fictive world opens itself up to discussion in the same way as the actual world (Annus 2002: 15, my translation). Therefore, the fictive world is *in language*, its location is within words – “without words there would be nothing, no literary work and no fictive world.” (Annus 2002: 77, my translation).

The existence of the text-based fictive world is determined by the reader’s activity (Annus 2002: 78–81). It is the reader’s task, then, to initiate a construction, shaping and completion of the fictive world. These worlds also occupy an interesting position of beginning and ending *in medias res* – while the narrative text has a beginning and end, the fictive world cannot begin anywhere else but the middle (Annus 2002: 80; c.f. Kermode 2000). While reading, then, readers experience a thrownness into a text and into a world that is already in motion.⁷³ As the text cannot contain all of the world it portrays, it remains incomplete (Annus 2002: 16, 80). Despite this, a world may still emerge. If readers accept the responsibility of filling the empty gaps left by the text, they become co-creators of the world they read about (Iser 1978b: 167–169, 192). Text and reader, then, begin to share a world.

Literary works are not just a set of formal features, however. Despite its dependence on mere words, fiction may represent situations that can be experienced by the readers as narratives are often told “in a manner which is detailed, precise, ‘alive,’” a manner that does not only “imitate,” but rather “signifies” something specific (Genette 1983: 164; c.f. Rosenblatt 1994: 56). When it comes to literary works, they are representations of what Walton (1990: 51) has termed “games of make-believe.” Make-believe is one of the central functions of fiction and allows readers to participate in the narrative. According to Walton’s make-believe theory, works of fiction act as props to appreciators who then “imagine, from the inside, doing things and undergoing experiences” (Walton 1990: 213–214). Fiction, then, although not real, presents situations that *seem* real to the readers.⁷⁴

Finally, it should be noted that text does not materialize on its own but it is the author that materializes the text. While the author and the reader are not in direct communication, they share a material text. An author may want to evoke a particular response and will thus choose to write in a way that is most likely to produce certain experiences within the reader. However, the writer, through their text, can only appeal “to the reader’s freedom to collaborate in the production of his work” (Sartre 1988: 54; c.f. Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 76, 86). While the author’s relationship with the text constitutes a creative, dynamic process, once their writing is concluded, they send to the world a static object. As the author, personally, does not participate in the reading moment, their authority over the literary work of art

⁷³ Just as Dasein experiences thrownness into the world at birth (Heidegger 1962).

⁷⁴ While readers are not actually *inside* the narratives that present fictional situations, their engagement with these narratives produces experiences where readers are *almost* experiencing the presented situations, that is, they are experiencing the situations in the ‘as-if’ state.

cannot reach beyond their own process of writing (Rosenblatt 1994: 15–20; c.f. Bleich 1975: 749). However, as the choices made by the author affect how it is eventually perceived by the reader, the text can become a tool for the author, enabling them to create an object that can produce lived experiences (Beauvoir 2004).

While the activity of taking the text apart, categorizing and naming its elements “does not qualify as literary experience, nor does it qualify as ‘criticism,’” picking apart parts of the text has become an often-used tool in literary analysis (Bleich 1975: 749; c.f. Rosenblatt 1994: 89). The term narrative constitution refers to the “individual constitutive tiers” which comprise narrative (Schmid 2010: 175). One commonly recognized distinction is between *story* and *discourse*. Story is often seen as the layer that contains events and existents – things that happen and characters or circumstances that make things happen. Discourse, on the other hand, refers to the way in which the story is presented. Under discourse, elements such as narrative voice, focalization, and style of writing are often analyzed. Essentially, this division permits a structured analysis of narrative layers.

However, the above-mentioned split between story and discourse is not uniform across the literature on this topic. Models of narrative constitution often follow binary categorization. The best-known categorizations are: *fabula/sujet*, *histoire/discours*, and *story/plot* (Scheffel 2009: 282–283). In a simplified manner, it can be said that *fabula* refers to the events taking place in chronological order and *sujet* to “the material of the *fabula* in artistic form,” that is, to the sequence in which the events are presented (Scheffel 2009: 284).⁷⁵ While similar in practice, *histoire* and *discours* are not synonymous with *fabula* and *sujet*. *Histoire* refers not only to “the set of happenings itself, but also the overarching continuum of the narrated world, the continuum within which the set of happenings unfolds” and *discours* to “the result, as it presents itself in the individual narrative work, of a certain way of mediating the set of happenings” (Scheffel 2009: 287–288).

E. M. Forster ([1927] 1985) proposed the terms *story* and *plot*. According to Forster (1985: 27) *story* “is a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence” and its function is “that of making the audience want to know what happens next.” According to Forster’s (1985: 86) famous example, “The king died and then the queen died” is the story; turning this sentence into a plot requires a causal connection: “The king died, and then the queen died of grief.” Hence, the difference between story and plot can be summarized in a relatively simple manner: “If it is in a story we say ‘and then?’ If it is in a plot we ask ‘why?’” (Forster 1985: 86). Seymour Chatman’s (1978: 19) terms do not originate from Forster but are derived from a translation of the Genettian pair *histoire/discours*. Chatman (1978: 19) does, however, resemble Forster in his pursuit of simpler definitions: “the story is the what in a narrative that is depicted, discourse the how.” Although the

⁷⁵ Scheffel (2009: 284–285) claims that among Russian Formalists, there were major discrepancies and opposing views in understanding the terms. The multiple layers of translation and a century of commentary add further complexity.

function of Chatman's *story* and *discourse* is similar to *story/plot*, *fabula/sujet*, and *histoire/discours*, the terms are not synonymous.

The French binary opposition has also generated triadic classifications. First, Genette's (1983: 27) categories include the aspects of *histoire/récit/narration*, which in English have been translated into *story* (as "the signified or narrative content"), *narrative* (as "signifier, statement, discourse, or narrative text itself"), and *narrating* (as the production of "narrative action and, by extension, the whole of the real or fictional situation in which that action takes place"). Another three-tier model was developed by Mieke Bal (2009: 5) who distinguishes between the following narrative categories: *text* ("a finite, structured whole composed of signs"), *story* ("the content of that text" and which "produces a particular manifestation, inflection, and 'colouring' of a fabula"), and *fabula*, ("a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors").⁷⁶ Several other tripartite models have emerged and even four-tier models have been proposed but this has also added further confusion to terminology.

Of the many proposed terms identifying levels of narrative, I have opted to use the categories of story and discourse. *Story*, in the context of this dissertation, indicates a chronological order of events within the fictional world and *discourse* conveys an artistic structuring of causal events. When I refer to discourse as a static, textual category signifying a fixed presentation of narrated events, I mean text as "made to be exactly the way it is" but I do not indicate a fixed meaning (Moi 2017: 203). While text, in its material form, is prearranged on the page, the meaning of the text is, by no means, definitively predetermined. Finally, as the reader is responsible for evoking the literary work of art from the text, following Marie-Laure Ryan (2016: 11), I consider story to be a "cognitive rather than a linguistic construct," meaning that it is produced exclusively through the act of reading.⁷⁷

In the transactional literary communication, both the text and the reader contribute to the act of meaning-creation. Text's material existence has no function on its own (Bleich 1975: 750). With the reader's involvement, however, words can become worlds as the reader, based on the score presented by the text, performs its part in assembling meaning during the reading process. Through the interplay between reader and text, the act of reading becomes a communicative process. In this process, stories are produced.

⁷⁶ I have chosen to use Bal's third edition of her book *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (the first edition was published in 1985) as the significant changes in the second and third editions affect her differentiation of the terms (as evidenced by Bal's three prefaces in the third edition).

⁷⁷ I will further expand on this point in section 3.2. Layers of Narrative Time.

2.2.2 Aesthetic Reader

Whereas Kafka, Balzac, and Robbe-Grillet invite me and convince me to settle down, at least for a moment, in the heart of another world. And that is the miracle of literature and what distinguishes it from information.

A truth that is other becomes mine without ceasing to be an other. I abdicate my “I” in favor of he who is speaking, and yet I remain myself. This confusion is continually initiated and continually undone, and is the only form of communication capable of giving me the incommunicable—capable of giving me the taste of another life. I am thrown into a world that has its own values, its own colors. I do not annex it to myself; it remains separated from mine and yet it exists for me. And it exists for others who are also separated from it and with whom I communicate, through books, in their deepest intimacy.

(Beauvoir 2011: 201)

The story must be produced through the reading act. As it is influenced by the material text, the reading moment, as well as the reader’s past experience, the reading process is an intersubjective experience. The goal of aesthetic reading is to produce a lived-through story from the static text.⁷⁸ In this section, I will discuss the multiple intersubjective layers of that affect the reader’s experience of the literary work. While some of the layers concern aspects that have a more indirect effect on the reading experience, the reader’s background knowledge, past experience, and environment affect the reading process directly. While the reading act can sometimes be considered an escape “from the world of shared perceptions,” it does not isolate the reading subject from the world they inhabit (Crossley 1996: 47–48). Even in the “private space” of imagination, the reader still draws from the intersubjective world and will “rely upon intersubjective resources (such as language)” for the construction of the fictive world (Crossley 1996: 47).

Immediate transaction with the literary work of art is made possible by perception. A material book can be seen and touched. The reader must also be intentionally directed toward the book for the reading activity to begin. As the reader enters into a dialogue with the literary work, their relationship is first mediated through visual means. During the reading process, the “visual word form area” is first informed that something is being perceived, which prompts visual information to be sent forward and translated as referencing specific words (Armstrong 2013: 28, 30). However, it is not only words that are formed while reading. It has been found that mental imagery, rather than individual words or sentences, or even facts about the narrative is most often retained in consciousness after the reading act (Keunen 2011, Kuzmičová 2020). Studies of concrete readers show

⁷⁸ It should be noted that I do not consider the concept of aesthetic reader and efferent reader further additions to the large collection of reader figures. I simply wish to describe the kind of attention afforded to the text and the two terms, suggested by Rosenblatt, can help illustrate the different reading goals a reader might have. While one’s reading stance is often intentional, most readers oscillate between the two during the reading process.

that, while the information retained is dependent on the person reading and on the genre of text, visual imagery is experienced and remembered most frequently during the reading activity (Moore & Schwitzgebel 2018: 66).⁷⁹

Reading, however, does not only remain in the mind and should not only be “reduced to mental representations” (Caracciolo 2014: 10). It has been suggested that reading is a complex whole-body event (Armstrong 2013, 2020). Reading produces physical responses in readers because during the reading activity, everything that is fictive becomes real. According to Mieke Bal (2009: 182), “[n]o matter how absurd, tangled, or unreal a text may be, readers will tend to regard what they consider ‘normal’ as a criterion by which they can give meaning to the text.” Drawing from the research of the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, Armstrong (2020: 242–243) argues that “the brain simulates body states that are not caused by external stimuli” but by “following a story and vicariously, emphatically participating in the actions it represents,” meaning that the brain is able to produce physical responses to the text. Caracciolo (2014: 132) has named this process consciousness-enactment, which refers to the readers’ ability to transfer their own knowledge and experience into empathy for “the bodily-perceptual experience of a fictional character.”⁸⁰ Consciousness-enactment is capable of producing different kinds of sensory stimulation (cf Littau 2006).

While our immediate perception of the text is that of an object, the literary work of art is experienced as a re-presentation. It is through imagination that the reader is able to access the literary work. The act of imagination connects the dimensions of the fictive and the real, and makes the world of the text available to the reader (Iser 1993: 1). While perceiving text is a visual affair, imagining the events are not always tied “to a particular visual material /.../ but rather to the attitude we take towards such material” (Crossley 1996: 79). The reader’s intentional activity in activating the re-presentational quality of the work becomes a key factor in the reader’s ability to imagine the unfolding literary events.

Entering the realm of the imaginary, as part of the process of reading “makes the virtual actual” and allows the reader to “experience the story as an event in

⁷⁹ Studies incorporating brain imaging data have shown that areas associated with language and communication, namely Broca’s and Wernicke’s areas, are most active during the reading process but as a complex process, reading also activates other areas as well communication between several sets of regions in the brain (Armstrong 2020: 237). Armstrong (2013: 32) emphasizes that during reading, “systems associated with speaking and hearing also quickly come into play, as do areas associated with the semantics of meaning (including most importantly memory).”

⁸⁰ Caracciolo (2011, 2014) also discusses the concept of the reader’s virtual body. According to Caracciolo (2014: 160), it is through the reader’s virtual body that the reader is “transported to the fictional world.” The concept of the virtual body, then acts as an in-between, mediating between the reader’s real body and the fictional world. The concept of the virtual body could be classified as belonging among the abstract reader figures as it mediates between the reader and the world of text.

[their] own lives” (Iser 1978a: 37).⁸¹ Through the imagination, the reader is able to incorporate a fictional situation into their own experience. Imagining the events of the narrative means that the world portrayed through the text will be “entirely at the mercy of one’s will” (Crossley, 1996: 69). While imagining, the reader’s mind is in an “as-if” state – events, objects and characters are experienced as-if they were real (c.f. Armstrong 2013: 125).

The reconciliation of the human experience happens “between the written words, ‘the repeated world’ and the world surrounding us” (Poulet 1969: 54). In the as-if, there is “no longer either outside or inside” as “[y]ou are inside it; it is inside you” (Poulet 1969: 54). The as-if allows the reader to experience the sensations that unravel within the narrative. The as-if world of the text displaces the real world of the reader so that the reader would be able to experience the text. This displacement happens through the foreground-background horizon (Carr 1987, c.f. Grethlein 2010). During the reading process, the reader does not “disappear from the world while reading. She exists and is visible,” yet, the reader is also inside the fictive world, taking part in the events that the text describes (Annus 2002: 76, my translation). The reader multitasks by inhabiting the temporality of two spaces at once. Mirroring Carr’s (1987) foreground-background idea, Jonas Grethlein (2010: 317) argues that the as-if frame provides a “duplication of experiences,” as readers have access to both their immediate real world as well as the narrative world.

In order to experience the narrative as if it were real, the reader must be able to imagine the events and characters presented in the text. Iser argues that the imagination of the reader is activated by omissions in the text. The unwritten parts of the text that Iser refers to as “gaps” present “us the opportunity to picture things” (Iser 1978a: 283). In order for the narrative to be coherent and the story’s progress consistent, the reader has to fill gaps left in the text. By this, readers have the capability to “evoke a world of potential plot details,” even if these are not explicitly mentioned (Chatman 1978: 29). The blanks and gaps in the text are only filled if the reader is an active participant in the reading process.⁸² Producing a “consistent pattern” and a working world from the information available is one of the responsibilities readers maintain during the reading process (Iser 1978a: 283, c.f. Fluck 2000: 196). Meaning is produced only if the reader is able to piece together the data of the text and supply their own interpretation to the text’s omissions.

These claims are also supported by neurosciences. According to Armstrong (2013: 65), the brain searches for constancy and patterns, and yet, “the value of constancy depends on its effectiveness in managing /.../ the changeableness of

⁸¹ Iser (1978b: 79) actually goes even further and argues that “the literary text enables its readers to transcend the limitations of their own real-life situation; it is not a reflection of any given reality, but it is an extension or broadening of their own reality.” Hughes (2013: 23) similarly points out that “[r]eaders are able to have emotional responses that depict circumstances beyond their experiences because of the synthetic ability of the imagination.”

⁸² Livingston (2006) argues that readers must *work* with the text in order to produce meanings.

its inputs, and so the brain must remain open in order to respond to these irregularities.” The blanks and gaps in the story, then, are automatically filled based on patterns previously established in the plot. Armstrong (2013: 84) compares this system of filling the gaps in reading to the “tendency to ‘finish off’ incomplete figures” by our visual system. Even in ambiguous texts full of multiplicity, conflicting and incomplete information is arranged into cohesive patterns, meaning that readers are constantly working to produce and synthesize coherent interpretations.

While immersed in the literary work, the story, rather than the material text, will be foregrounded in the reader’s consciousness (Rosenblatt, 1964: 125; c.f. Carr 1987: 257–258). The unfolding events of the narrative will transport the reader into the storyworld. While engrossed with this storyworld, the story will take priority and the set of signs and symbols on the page will fade into the background. Disruption by external stimuli, however, may interrupt the reader’s immersion within the storyworld and may, instead, bring elements of the reader’s physical environment into the foreground. A literary work is produced as long as the reader is able to maintain the storyworld in the foreground of their consciousness as it is only then that the static text can be transformed into a poem, a novel, or a play.

Imagining may be deliberate but also spontaneous, argues Walton (1990: 14–15). Spontaneous imagining occurs when our minds wander in daydreams, or when dreaming. During spontaneous imagining, “[t]he imaginer is more a ‘spectator’ than the perpetrator of them. Rather than constructing her imaginary world, she ‘watches’ as it unfolds” (Walton 1990: 14). However, spontaneous imaginings may also become deliberate once the imaginer takes control of their daydream. In such a case, the deliberate imagining depends on the one who imagines and is built up “bit by bit, by his choices of what to imagine” (Walton 1990: 14). The text may spontaneously trigger certain images in the reader’s mind and the reader may be swept away by what the text prescribes. However, the reader may also deliberately decide to imagine about the events and characters in the narrative.

Once the reader has entered the imagined world of a fictional narrative, Thomas Pavel (1986: 85) argues that readers “lend [their] bodies and emotions for a while to these fictional egos,” who are sent into “fictional lands” to “inhabit them for a while, intermingle with the heroes.” These heroes mostly act like real people, which makes readers respond to them. According to Mieke Bal (2009: 113), fictional characters are “fabricated creatures made up from fantasy, imitation, memory.” She explains that a character “has no real psyche, personality, ideology, or competence to act, but it does possess characteristics that make readers assume it does, and makes psychological and ideological descriptions possible” (Bal 2009: 113). The “paper people,” then, do not exist, yet, the “character-effects” make such great impressions on the readers “that we forget the fundamental difference: we even go so far as to identify with the character, to cry, to laugh, and to search for or with it, or even against it, when the character is a villain” (Bal 2009: 113).

Part of the reason why it is so easy to step into the fictional world and empathize with the characters, according to Caracciolo (2014: 150), is because of the

intimate knowledge of fictional people that readers obtain. As the reader's own personal history and space is put on hold while the literary text is in the foreground, the subjectivity of paper people becomes available. This allows readers access to a shared world with experiences that may not otherwise be available.⁸³ The reader's access to this world, however, also depends on their previous "inter-subjective transactions with real people" (Caracciolo 2014: 133). That is, the reader's understanding and subsequent interpretation of the actions of characters are influenced by their understanding of real people (Caracciolo 2014: 65, c.f. Hughes 2013). Readers' immersion and interest in the lives of characters happens both on the story level as well as discourse level as readers are not only affected by the events that characters go through but also by the "aesthetic qualities" of the text which "can create a certain mood in recipients" (Caracciolo 2014: 65). At the same time, readers' observation of fictional people may also influence their interactions with real people.⁸⁴ Engaging with paper people in "this inter-subjective attunement facilitates our capacity to empathize with another person by enabling us to imagine with a higher level of detail – and accuracy – how he or she would behave in a certain situation," creating a feedback loop which allows for better understanding of both paper people as well as real people (Caracciolo 2014: 134).

As the reader meets the text, the reader shapes the text and the text shapes the reader, forming a system of "reciprocal interplay" (Rosenblatt 1982: 273–276). Experiences gained through reading and the previously alien ideas eventually become part of the reader as the reading process "involves our past, our class, our condition, our projects, basically the entire ensemble of what makes up our individuality" (Beauvoir 2011: 198, cf. Caracciolo 2014: 57, Ricœur 1984: 46–77). According to Hughes (2013: 23), "[e]ach work provides an emotional experience leading to beliefs and interests that become part of [the reader's] autobiography to which he can refer in his subsequent reading." The doubled experience of reading is "a dynamic, mutually constituting relation where the encounter is shaped by both sides" (Armstrong 2011: 102). The readers project their own previous experience on the text to produce an interpretation of the text. Even if the reader's past experiences are in the background and not consciously brought forward, they still shape the reader's response to the text. They form the experiential

⁸³ It has even been argued that literature provides a more complete experience of the world as through narratives "we can get to know other people in their inner lives, and form a reliable image of their innermost feelings, something which, in life, /.../ is ultimately denied to us" (Schmid 2010: 28). Our experience of the world is "detotalized" (Beauvoir 2011: 199) as we can only experience parts of it. The literary world, while incomplete, is imagined as whole by readers.

⁸⁴ Armstrong (2013) points out that this effect is caused by certain neural patterns that readers have developed over years of reading. While one or two books might not be able to produce a considerable change in a person and their outlook on the world, a lifetime of reading may change a person because "repeated experiences alter cortical wiring in a way that reflects our personal and cultural history, including our encounters with literary texts and other art forms" (Armstrong 2013: 119).

background of the reader (Caracciolo 2014). In return, the experiences illustrated by text are incorporated into the reader's "store of knowledge" as new experiences (Iser 1978b: 37). A "feedback effect" is created, then, where reading produces experiences that may revise the reader's "views and outlook on the world" (Caracciolo 2014: 65–66). The new knowledge accepted by the reader becomes another background when reading new texts, as the "reader is shaped by each successive work so that his education comes, not from a single work but from a whole course of reading" (Hughes 2013: 23).

As the reader is shaped by the text, the knowledge they have gained is taken to the outside world. As reading is always "schooled to some degree," it produces meanings that affect and are affected by the reader's socio-linguistic background (Hall 2009: 332, 336). First, although, the reader brings a "personal linguistic-experiential reservoir" of language to the reading material, language is also "socially generated" (Rosenblatt 1994: 182; c.f. Crossley 1996: 47). Second, as the reader is surrounded by a community of other readers, who exert their influence through "elements of affect and interpersonal history," the readings performed by the reader are never solitary (Bleich 1986: 418). Stanley Fish (1980: 322) explains that interpretive communities "are responsible both for the shape of a reader's activities and for the texts those activities produce," that is, both the form as well as the content of the text is determined views held by interpretive communities.⁸⁵ Fish attributes differences in interpretation to different ideologies prevalent in different communities (Fish 1980: 14, 16). Individual reading, then, is predetermined by the agreements dictated by the interpretive community that the reader is part of. While the amount of influence interpretive communities have over readers can be debated, most literary scholars would agree that our interpretations of texts are influenced by certain schools of thought we subscribe to.

2.2.3 Efferent Reader

Poulet (1069: 58) believes that "by reading, we write the book." The story that slowly unravels in the reading process is determined by the reader's previous experience, beliefs, motivations, and interests but also the things said and unsaid by the text. To arrive at an interpretation means to work at understanding the text. This requires readers to commit to interpretive choices. These choices can be viewed as a "leap of faith," since embracing certain interpretations is contingent on "accepting one set of presuppositions and rejecting others" (Armstrong 1983: 342, c.f. Iser 1978a: 280). As reading is a creative process, "different readers can be differently affected by the 'reality' of a particular text" (Iser 1978a: 279). Interpretations do not only vary between different readers but interpretive variation may also exist between a reader's latest reading and their previous readings.

⁸⁵ It should be noted that Fish's theory of interpretive communities mostly concerns professional readers rather than lay readers although lay readers also belong to prevalent interpretive communities.

Interpreting a text involves expectations about the text: “From the very beginning, each text arouses particular expectations, proceeds then to change these, or sometimes fulfills them at a time when we have long since ceased to envisage their fulfillment and have already lost sight of them altogether” (Iser 1978b: 128). Expectations guide the reading process and determine the reading experience. Since the reader knows the text “only bit by bit, moment by moment,” the reader is never able to picture the text as a whole (Fish 1980: 44). Like our ordinary experience of time, the reading experience is asymmetrical. There is a certain future-bias in the reading process. Readers’ expectations are mostly directed towards the following pages as previous events on previous pages have already been acknowledged. The expectations readers have of pages unread “are either fulfilled or disappointed by new experiences, which in turn not only form the background for new expectations but also retroactively transform the memory of previous expectations and experiences” (Grethlein 2010: 316, c.f. Iser 1978a: 58; Rosenblatt 1994: 54). The realization or frustration of the reader’s expectations influences their further assessment of the text. Due to the constant revision of the reader’s expectations, the text’s meaning is also in a constant flux. In each narrative, expectations of future storylines create tensions (Grethlein 2010: 316). This tension must be delicately balanced to keep readers invested in the plot and as willing participants in “the game between story and reader” (Bal 2009: 95).

While expectation and interpretation are also important aspects of aesthetic reading, they become especially prominent in efferent reading. The efferent reading process is performative and thus involves readers who approach text with a specific intention (Auyoung 2020; Serpell 2021). The performative aspect of reading may take different forms, depending on the specific goal of the reader. For example, reading for comprehension and plot, in order to provide a summary of a novel, and reading for certain symbols in the text, in order to provide a specific interpretation, are distinct processes determined by distinct reading goals (Auyoung 2020: 94). When the efferent reading stance is adopted, the reader will start disentangling the text. Analyzing a novel’s themes, dissecting the characters, exploring the structure of the work, unraveling the intricate layers of the text are all activities performed by the efferent reader. While the efferent reader may also at some point engage in aesthetic reading, as soon as they begin to disassemble “the work as an organized whole,” the reading acquires a different stance (Rosenblatt 1994: 108).

Efferent reading is prevalent within literary criticism. The process of critical reading involves a pursuit of coherence: readings of professional readers involve a search for patterns within texts and a goal to create organized interpretations (Auyoung 2020: 94–95). While all readers perform readings, Auyoung (2020) demonstrates that the critic’s treatment of text is produced through attention to particular textual details and is informed by specific goals, questions, and attachments to select theory.

Pierre Bourdieu (1996: 302) has famously said that any reader figure may be assumed to be “none other than the theoretician himself, who /.../ takes as object his own experience /.../ as a cultivated reader.” During any reading activity, “we engage in an active process of performance, with the text unfolding in our

imagination while we are engrossed in a completely subjective experience” (Rossi 2020: 488). This statement is true for both efferent and aesthetic reading. Even the efferent reader cannot remain unaffected by the intersubjective world and their own personal experience. However, while both the aesthetic reader and the efferent reader use a static text, their reading results in differing outcomes. The aesthetic reader creates a dynamic experience, a literary work but the evaluative reading of efferent reader produces a new text, which is

an abstraction, a framework of ideas derived from the living complexity of the actual literary evocation. Literary judgments, too, are the result of particular abstract criteria being applied to selected aspects of the existential multiplicity of the evoked work. (Rosenblatt 1994: 155)

While this dimension of critical reading is often left unacknowledged, obscuring the experiential quality of literary work, calls to recognize one’s theoretical and personal attachments have recently increased. Namwali Serpell (2021: para.3, original emphasis), for example, argues that literary scholars should “allow that subjective feelings play a part in how we read artistic and scholarly texts,” even if “[n]othing is more disavowed than feeling in the discipline.”⁸⁶ Over the years, Rita Felski has been particularly dedicated to this conviction. Felski has borrowed the concept of attachment from Bruno Latour’s actor-network theory to describe how various social and personal aspects influence our reading experience. Attachment “signifies a connection, restriction, restraint and dependence that reminds us that we are prisoners, confined on all sides by our history and our environment,” yet this does not imply a negative connotation (Hennion 2017: 113). Instead, it reveals the various ways in which the intersubjective world influences us; it represents the “emotional ties” we might attribute to things we see and read (Felski 2020b: 28). Therefore, to be attached is to be “affected or moved,” to have feelings for works of art (Felski 2020: 1, 28).

Literary criticism has avoided subjective connection while trying to build objective models for text analysis. Felski (2020b: 5, 28, original emphasis) argues that academia is often considered as “as an affect-free zone;” and yet, “affective ties are often *stronger* in academia than elsewhere” (c.f. Tompkins 1987: 172–173). In this work, I have chosen to present certain theories and analyze certain novels while ignoring others. Already this selection reveals my own attachments. These are works that I have become attuned to. On the one hand, my choices have been deliberate and intentional but, on the other, there is a certain accidental quality to the composition of the dissertation. Several of the works I have discussed here are well-known and widely read, prompting me to study them as well. Yet, the ideas I may have picked up on have been affected by several incidental aspects. Having attachments, then, does not disqualify me from performing academic readings. They do not lessen my critical reasoning. Instead, no matter how “ambivalent, fraught, or vexed,” they provide me with “thought /.../ feeling, values,

⁸⁶ Similar sentiments were expressed much earlier by Tompkins (1987) and Bleich (1975).

and judgements” – all necessary components for performing readings, whether artistic or scholarly (Felski 2020b: ix).

Although the aim of all readers is to produce stories, find patterns, and consistency within literature, the main objective of academic readers is to develop new interpretations of works of literature.⁸⁷ Seeking novel ways to organize and structure works of art “constitutes an end in itself” (Auyoung 2020: 105). Academic readers delight in reading and rereading with their specific reading goals in mind. It is the “pleasing harmonies” that the brain of the professional reader is searching for and creating from the “gaps and indeterminacies in a work” (Armstrong 2013: 86). The interpretations produced are dependent on each scholar’s theoretical and methodological attachments. A first reading of a lay reader or an academic reader would usually have the goal of following the plot while “relying on the narrative to construct a mental representation of the characters and incidents being described,” but a rereading of a particular work would place the focus on specific patterns to be discovered with a distinct theoretical frame (Auyoung 2020: 96; c.f. Leitch 1987).

There is a contradiction within the intentions of literary scholars, however. On the one hand, literary scholars are heavily dependent on their ability to find “fresh pattern or concept” which will “[provide] us with a new structure for understanding the text” (Auyoung 2020: 106). On the other hand, literary theorists must convince the audience that their interpretation or means of arriving at a reading should serve as a model for others. Copying another’s reading performance, however, means abstaining from the discovery of new patterns and concepts. The “conflict of interpretations in the humanities,” revolves around this issue of convincing others of the superiority of one’s theoretical and methodological frameworks (Armstrong 2013: 74).⁸⁸ However, reframing the critic’s reading performance as an exchange of experience, instead of a competition to establish whose reading is the most valid, can help us to

attend to words, phrases, images, scenes, that we have overlooked or slighted. We may be led to reread the text and revise our own interpretation. Sometimes we may be strengthened in our own sense of having “done justice to” the text, without denying its potentialities for other interpretations. (Rosenblatt 1994: 146)

Auyoung (2020: 95, 103) explains that the reading and theory wars/reading debates are an interesting case of polemicizing “specialized attention” directed at artworks since, within literary criticism, there is a “tendency to privilege certain reading goals over goals that seem less worthy of serious critical attention.” Once

⁸⁷ Rita Felski (2015, 2020a, 2020b) feels strongly about distinguishing between lay readers and professional readers. While I agree that lay readers and academic readers may have different goals and objectives, I do not agree with Felski’s criticism of critical readings.

⁸⁸ This conflict has caused controversies within the English-language community of literary studies for the past 10–15 years and has thus generated the lively discussions around reading methods.

academic readers award specialized attention to complex works of art, that attention may be picked apart and criticized by those who question the legitimacy of the chosen reading goals, that is, by those who belong to a different interpretive community. While we may “fear that when we voice our view, we will discover that we are alone,” performing a critical reading is an act of sharing one’s encounter with the story or the text and committing to “one’s own perceptions, on one’s own experience of the text” (Moi 2019: 195).

The attachments we have, whether to theory or to certain analytical tools, will affect the reading process as well as the end-product. These attachments are not only literary or theoretical but political and social as well since interpretation is not limited to literary texts. Interpretation as a process is something we are constantly involved in. Terry Eagleton (2012: 43–44) argues that, if taken to an extreme, interpretive communities would cause informational bubbles which are nearly impossible to escape: common understandings within the interpretive community see no reason for disagreement while different interpretive communities may be “safely ignored.”⁸⁹ When it comes to literature, however, readers at least maintain the freedom to choose their “own preferred interpretive path from a multitude of possibilities and test out different, perhaps contradictory perspectives” (Eagleton 2012: 187). Although our interpretations are often determined by our history, social background, and a myriad of other factors, having the opportunity to choose from a multitude of texts makes it possible to expose oneself to ideologies otherwise not explored within the canon of one’s interpretive communities.⁹⁰

Finally, what I experience during a reading that constructs the literary work of art and what I experience when I wish to approach the text efferently cannot be accessed by means currently available in literary theory nor in any other science.⁹¹ While affected by my personal experience and previous aesthetic reading, what I present in the three analytical chapters do not constitute an aesthetic reading. My aesthetic readings were spatiotemporal events that cannot be reproduced in writing.⁹² However, I can access my efferent readings as these are guided by material text. “The patterned symbols of the text are absolutely essential,” according to Rosenblatt (1994: 91), but they do not constitute the work of art or create the story. Elements of the text affect the reader’s construction of the story, and, as a critical reader, I can “point to the elements of the text that have given

⁸⁹ Considering today’s social media reality, Eagleton’s words of warning acquire new urgency.

⁹⁰ An excellent example is an article by Danielle Christmas (2021), in which she discusses how to approach “ideologically repugnant texts.”

⁹¹ One may argue against this by providing examples from cognitive studies. However, the currently available methods (e.g. interviews about experience) and technology (e.g. functional MRI) are only able to represent how we explain our experience, identify certain cognitive functions, and describe brain activity (c.f. Armstrong 2013).

⁹² I would argue that even a detailed reading journal could not represent my experience, but only my description of the text and not the experience of the literary work; nor would it reproduce the literary work, which is the goal of aesthetic reading.

rise to the interrelated or interwoven “whole” or structure” and yet, my efferent analysis of these elements cannot “predict the work” nor “explain the nature of the work-as-evoked” (Rosenblatt 1994: 91). What is left, then, for the efferent reader, is a reading shaped by the various aspects described above.

2.2.4 Performing a Reading

The reader of a text who evokes a literary work of art is, above all, a performer, in the same sense that a pianist performs a sonata, reading it from the text.

(Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 28)

A transactional reading theory presents the reading process as a relationship between a material text and living reader. While the text provides a stimulus, the reader must provide a response. The text does not contain inherent meanings; yet, it comprises potentialities of meaning that require the reader’s full participation (Rosenblatt 1994: 69). The transactional relationship is defined by the reader’s attunement with the text. An aesthetic reading will produce the literary work as a lived-through experience. An efferent reading, however, will represent the source material through selected elements. Drawing from the entirety of the reader’s “past transactions with the environment,” the reading process “extends the scope of that environment and feeds the growth of the individual, who can then bring a richer self to further transactions with life and literature” (Rosenblatt 1982: 273–274). The discussion above establishes a significant part of my theoretical framework. While I have separately discussed the concepts of text and reader, without the text there is no reader and without the reader, the text is meaningless.

Paul Armstrong (2011: 98) notes that “‘the reader’ is not a universal structure but a social, historical construct.” This raises a set of questions, not about the reader or about “whether to analyze reading but how to do so in a manner that does justice to its political dimensions as a social, historical experience” (Armstrong 2011: 98). Justice for the reading experience can be achieved in two ways. First, one could operate within a framework that takes into account the constructedness of reader concepts. The other option is to focus on the reading experience itself. The first option would require an analysis of response, not text. As I intend to analyze temporal elements of the text that affect the reader’s experience, I will not use a hypothetical reader figure or analyze an actual reader’s response. Reading theories have been justly criticized for not demonstrating successfully how their reader figures function in actual literary analysis, in the context of a necessarily subjective act of reading. Part of the problem is that reading theories have tended to create dyadic models, disconnecting the reader from the text. However, neither the reader, nor the text, according to Rosenblatt (1994: 180–181), should be separated from the experience of reading.

Choosing to focus on the reading experience, however, will still create a contradiction. I can either adopt an entirely subjective approach, describing my

feelings about the texts, or a more detached approach, focusing on the text. Since I will not be studying the responses of lay readers but producing an efferent reading of texts, the reading process will be framed as a performance. While my intention in this dissertation is to analyze how the reading experience unfolds and what it produces, attending to elements that support the creation of the story will inevitably construct a rather conventional type of critical reading. As a critical reader, I will be looking for ways to pattern, organize, and interpret the texts I am reading based on the theoretical frameworks chosen for this dissertation.

Any reading is necessarily subjective. The reader enters the text and at the same time the text enters the reader (Poulet 1969: 55). The reader's consciousness subjectifies the text – it begins to exist upon the point of contact between reader and material which leads to the formation of “a certain identity with the work” (Poulet 1969: 55, 58). Although “one person's self-ethnography” should not be “elevated to grandiose proportions,” no other reader “can have your aesthetic experience” (Felski 2020b: 69, 52). I do not think that the presentation of one's interpretations will necessarily mean that the author believes their reading to be the only correct one. Most academic readers acknowledge that their readings are one possibility among many, but few recognize that their readings are full of attachments and biases. These biases have always been present in literary criticism, even when professional readers have hidden behind abstract labels, like the implied reader. Recognizing my own attachments will allow me to give up the abstract notion of the reader that previous theorists have used to justify their interpretations and, instead, focus on the transactional relationship that has received relatively little attention.

Finally, this dissertation describes *my* experience of reading time. Caracciolo (2014: 13) argues that the intuitions of individual readers “should not be discarded as useless or irrelevant /.../ the interpreter's introspection is a valuable tool for exploring texts and their impact on readers.” Our field should not be afraid to admit that literary criticism is personal and experiential. However, the (mostly) rigid format of the text guarantees that many of the effects of the text will work “in a structurally similar way for other people” (Caracciolo 2014: 13). Therefore, while I can only employ my own readings to illustrate the effects of text, the static quality of text ensures a level of accessibility to a space shared by readers.

CHAPTER THREE

3. TEXTUAL TEMPORALITY

From Aristotle to Augustine to the Book of Ecclesiastes, time has been a prominent topic in philosophy, religion, sciences, and the arts. While phenomenology can offer an account of the temporality of the reading moment, analyzing textual time requires additional tools. Since my analysis is directed at the temporality of text, I will turn toward theories that seek to provide a system for studying textual time. As temporality is a pronounced feature of narratives, some of the necessary analytical tools can be found within narratology, specifically in the theories of Gérard Genette and Paul Ricœur. However, although narratology has somewhat engaged with temporality, there are still relatively few alternative strategies to approach the topic of time and barely any instruction on how to analyze narrative temporality within literary studies (see Heise 1997, Richardson 2002, Currie 2007). Perhaps the most recent development is Mark Currie's (2007) theory of tense-based narratology, which is largely informed by the metaphysics of time. Rather than a basis for a structured methodology, Currie's work will serve as an inspiration to examine whether a framework inspired by tensed and untensed views of time, that is, the A-theory and B-theory of time, can support the study of textual temporality. By introducing A- and B-theories of time to the discussion, I can introduce an alternative way of conceptualizing literary time and provide a different perspective for understanding how textual temporality is produced by readers.

Although the philosophical study of time has a rich history, my attention will be limited to the past century, specifically examining the debates concerning two conflicting perspectives on temporality – the dynamic, tensed approach and the static, tenseless approach.⁹³ I will discuss how A- and B-theories can be employed in the study of narrative temporality and whether this can provide additional insight into the process of reading. Integrating concepts from A- and B-theories, phenomenology, and narratology will enable me to formulate a strategy for discussing textual temporality. Although I will not engage with the two theories of time in a critical way, the concepts I borrow from the theories will provide a frame for an efferent reading of textual temporality.

⁹³ While contemporary metaphysics has named these two opposing views as A-theory and B-theory, in certain respects, these almost coincide with the pre-Socratic Heraclitan and Parmenidean perspectives. Parmenidean perspective considers reality to have “an unchanging, timeless unity” and time to be “a kind of idea in the mind, rather than a thing that can genuinely be attributed to nature” (Bardon 2013: 9). Heraclitean perspective, on the other hand, considers reality to be “characterized by unending change, with nothing constant in the world” (Bardon 2013: 9).

3.1 Theories of Time

To analyse time is not to follow out the consequences of a pre-established conception of subjectivity, it is to gain access, through time, to its concrete structure. If we succeed in understanding the subject, it will not be in its pure form, but by seeking it at the intersection of its dimensions. We need, therefore, to consider time itself.

(Merleau-Ponty 2002: 477)

In analytical philosophy, the division of temporal frameworks into A/B/(C)-series became a standard in the 20th century. The two opposing theories of time discussed here – generally known as A-theory and B-theory – were first introduced in John M.E. McTaggart’s essay “The Unreality of Time” (1908). Throughout the 20th century, many of the essays, articles, and books in English that deal with philosophy of time and temporality comment on, criticize or defend McTaggart and his arguments. Therefore, I will first briefly outline McTaggart’s main arguments and then discuss the development of A- and B-theories in the context of analytical philosophy. According to McTaggart’s definitions, the A-series is a dynamic model that uses the notions of past, present, and future. The B-series, on the other hand, only takes into account the notions of *earlier than* and *later than*, making it a static model for time. The C-series is also a static model in which events are simply ordered without an orientation in a certain direction. McTaggart considered both A- and B-series to be inherently contradictory.⁹⁴

McTaggart (1908: 459) argues that time is only real if it involves change. If events change, time is real. The only series that includes change is the A-series. McTaggart’s (1908: 460) A-series depicts time as a dynamic process, in which events pass from the future to the present and from the present to the past. The dynamic flow of time proceeds from an objective present moment, a now, moving towards the future and leaving the past behind. The past and the future have an ontological status. While the A-series can be considered descriptive of a common experience of time, McTaggart rejects it due to the inevitable paradox within it. A moment, in the A-series, according to McTaggart (1908: 458) exists either in the past, the present, or the future. A-theory also maintains that moments change

⁹⁴ While time theories based on the A-series and B-series quickly gained a following in the first half of the 20th century, C-theory has remained rather obscure. McTaggart is possibly the only true C-theorist. His C-series is almost identical to his B-series but, within the C-series, there is no directionality associated with the units of time. If there is no directionality, time also does not change. Based on this, McTaggart declared time to be unreal. Since McTaggart rejected temporality, he also did not find it necessary to explain temporal experience and why we feel the presence of earlier and later or past, present, and future. As C-series did not gain traction among other time philosophers, there is little to no criticism of McTaggart’s C-series. One exception is Turner’s (2007) dissertation which discusses some of the forgotten but valid aspects of McTaggart’s C-series. C-series is also mostly compatible with contemporary physics, perhaps even more so than the B-series (Turner 2007: 53).

as time passes, a future now becomes a present now, and a present now becomes a past now. McTaggart (1908: 467–471) considers the A-theory contradictory because these two assertions cannot be true at the same time. If the A-series involves constant change, then past and future moments as actual events cannot exist. As the A-theoretical premise lacks consistency, it cannot, according to McTaggart, represent the reality of time.

According to McTaggart (1908: 459–460), the B-series does not incorporate any dynamic or changing movement of time and moments have “permanent relations.” While moments in the B-series are fixed, with no distinguishing between the past, the present, or the future moments, they are still ordered through directionality. A moment can be earlier than or later than another moment. As the B-series moments involve no change, the contradictions afflicting the A-series do not occur. At the same time, since the B-series fails to account for change, which, according to McTaggart (1908: 462), is an essential feature of the reality of time, it is not representative of the reality of time.

Since the A-series is not functional due to its contradictory assumptions and the B-series without the concept of change, only C-series remains.⁹⁵ The C-series does not involve a temporal ordering of time, but a static ordering of moments. As it involves no change, there is no direction in the C-series and thus there is no difference whether moments are ordered in the direction of M, N, O, P or P, O, N, M (McTaggart 1908: 462). Since the C-series does not require conditions for change, and it lacks directionality, McTaggart considers it the only possible model for time as it represents time as timeless and unreal.⁹⁶

Both A- and B-theory have attracted a following among philosophers of time in the analytic tradition, who have expanded upon the theories and criticized McTaggart’s conclusions. A-theorists (e.g. Broad 1933, Prior 1967) believe that McTaggart was wrong in concluding that A-series is impossible. B-theorists (e.g. Mellor 1998, Thomson 2001, Corish 2005), on the other hand, challenge McTaggart’s disregard of the functionality of B-series. C-series and McTaggart’s own conclusion about the unreality of time has largely been disregarded, although some B-theoretical models utilize a directionless B-series.

I employ concepts from both A- and B-theories to complement Rosenblatt’s transactional theory. These concepts help further illustrate reading as a dynamic temporal process and text as a static container of potentialities. Although I will not participate in debates regarding theories of time, the paragraphs below will provide a broad overview of the progression of time theories to contextualize my discussion.

⁹⁵ As the C-series has mostly been ignored by 20th century and contemporary philosophers, I will also not discuss it any further.

⁹⁶ Although McTaggart rejected the B-series because it involved no change, the C-series involves no change either. McTaggart does not explain why directionality excludes B-series from describing the reality of time and only asserts that the C-series – as the only non-temporal and non-paradoxical description of time – reflects time.

3.1.1 B-Theories and Physical Time

As B-theories are often considered more compatible with contemporary views of time in physics, I will discuss them first. While B-theories have a lot of variation, they are more uniform than many of the A-theories.⁹⁷ B-theory represents a tenseless, static view of time. It is sometimes also referred to as block view, four-dimensionalism, and eternalism.⁹⁸ Although each of these frames B-theory slightly differently, time is always viewed as something already existing, completely static and always real. B-theory temporality does not include the notions of the past, the future, and the present, but the relations of earlier than 'moment', later than 'moment', or simultaneous with 'moment' (Paul 2012; Mellor 1998). These B-series relations exist statically at all times.

In B-theories temporality is often conceptualized through spatiality: "differences between past, present, and future are simply differences of perspective" (Dainton 2010: 7). Thus, time can be considered as one big block containing all moments and each slice of the block as one moment. These moments are earlier/later than their preceding or following moments. Moments as slices exist together in the universe in the same way that two locations exist in space (Mellor 2012: 164).⁹⁹ Most B-theories are consistent with contemporary understandings of spacetime and Einstein's relativity theories (Mellor 1998: 53, c.f. Meyer 2016).¹⁰⁰ Although Einstein's special theory of relativity does not provide an account of the nature of time, certain aspects of his theory, such as the absence of absolute time and the importance of an observer's frame of reference, are often incorporated into B-theories.

⁹⁷ As it is not relevant to the discussion, I will not try to establish which version of B-theories is more correct and will simply give a general overview of B-theory. Interestingly, the development of B-theories has largely relied on the rejection of many of the main principles of A-theories.

⁹⁸ According to the *block view*, time is like a block that contains all moments and each slice of the block can be considered as one moment. *Four-dimensionalism* considers time to be analogous to space. Objects, according to this view, are located at different temporal positions, much like locations in space. This means that all moments, people, and objects exist throughout the present, the past, and the future. Our three-dimensional experience, however, only allows parts of these objects and people to be perceived. This theory is probably closest to a Tralfamadorian understanding of time. *Eternalism* refers to the idea that all times are already in existence, that all times are equally real (as opposed to there being a special, privileged present-moment), and that moments "exist timelessly in an eternal, unchanging order" (Bardon 2013: 88).

⁹⁹ This reflects the concept of Minkowski's spacetime.

¹⁰⁰ According to the special relativity theory, "simultaneity is relative: there is no privileged reference frame /.../ and hence no privileged set of events is 'really' or 'absolutely' simultaneous" (Miller 2013: 352). Special relativity shows that, indeed, there is no absolute, universal time. Instead, "local systems have their own times" (Ehlers 1997: 200). This means that events can only be described through observers' frames of reference.

Both time and space can be represented in an “allocentric” manner as well as in an “egocentric” manner (Prosser 2016; Callender 2017).¹⁰¹ An egocentric representation divides space into ‘here’ and ‘there’, or ‘left’ and ‘right’, or ‘front’ and ‘behind’, being dependent on one’s frame of reference and the subject’s movement (Callender 2017: 206–207). Allocentric representation depicts space objectively from a perspective that is agreed upon by all subjects. For example, the exact location of Paris can be determined by its latitude and longitude. The distance between Paris and Berlin, for example, can be easily determined and will not be disputed by subjects who are either closer to Paris or closer to Berlin.¹⁰² Egocentric and allocentric distinctions can also be considered when discussing time. The temporal equivalent of the spatially egocentric here/there distinction is now/then; and the spatially allocentric metrical ordering of space is the equivalent of the temporally allocentric ordering of calendar time. Just like Paris and Berlin have a certain unchanging distance between them, so do June 26 and July 13. Terms such as ‘past’, ‘present’, ‘future’ can then be considered as temporally egocentric terms that have spatial analogues in ‘left’ and ‘right’ (Prosser 2016: 61).

Although interconnected, space and time have notable differences. Dainton (2010: 121, original emphasis) observes that “[t]here is a sense in which we are *captives* of time, but not of space” as we cannot move around in time (c.f. Mellor 1998: 50). While it is possible to “spatially decenter from our spatial perspective by simply turning our heads,” we cannot decenter from the now by turning around and walking into yesterday (Callender 2017: 257). Our experience of time – dynamic, directional, and asymmetrical – will prevent us from considering space and time as completely equivalent.

According to McTaggart’s description of the B-series, moments of time are fixed but ordered by earlier-later relations. While the earlier-later relation has been largely retained by later B-theorists, not everyone agrees that directionality has to be maintained. One such example is Thomas Gold’s (1962) article “The Arrow of Time” which suggests that the asymmetry of the physical arrows of time that point toward an expansion of the universe are arbitrary and, instead, a symmetrical universe that will have a decreasing entropy at the second half of its lifetime is more likely. Gold’s theory has been heavily criticized and is not widely accepted (see Wallace 2013: 262, Hemmo & Shenker 2016: 160). Although thermodynamic laws have properties in which particles are not always dependent on the single-directional arrow of time and reveal “time reversal symmetric,” this symmetry is not observable in any bigger systems and is thus considered to be

¹⁰¹ The same idea can be found in Mellor (1998) but with different terminology. Mellor refers to A- and B-places. B-times and B-places, according to Mellor (1998: 48), are allocentric in that they “are defined by fixed spatial and temporal relations between things and events.” A-place is the equivalent of egocentric representation of space and depends on the observer’s location.

¹⁰² This distance may, of course, change over time as cities grow or shrink. Nonetheless, distances between entities can be determined and fixed by an agreed-upon three-dimensional system of measurement.

less probable than temporal asymmetry (North 2011: 3, cf. Hemmo & Schenker 2016). Nevertheless, some proponents of B-theory have argued that the earlier-later distinction is comparable to the difference between left and right and hence could also be reversible (Mellor 1998; Bardon 2013; Prosser 2016).

Despite being the preferred theory of time in analytic philosophy and physics, B-theories often fail to account for our subjective experience of passing time and why our experience of time is bound to a 'now'.¹⁰³ B-theorists have noted that the debate between A- and B-theories is made more difficult by the use of tensed language, as it gives the tensed A-theory an unfair advantage. As language affects ways of thinking and conceptualizing the surrounding world, a tenseless theory is often considered more difficult to defend in tensed language.¹⁰⁴ More recent B-theories (e.g. Mellor 1998), however, utilize the concept of tense and take into account the "psychological significance" of tensed expressions (Prosser 2016: 63).

I use B-theory to develop the concept of discourse time. Discourse time concerns the spatial structure of literary texts and how temporality is presented within the narrative.¹⁰⁵ Discourse time, a static ordering of pre-scripted events within the narrative, allows me to map out the temporal progression of the novels. However, a singular focus on an untensed and static discourse time is incomplete without considering the reader's experience, as is B-theory without a consideration of the human experience of time. Therefore, I will approach the dynamic time of reading through A-theory.

3.1.2 A-theory and A-ish Experience

Since reality is not defined as graspable by the intelligence alone, no intellectual description could give an adequate expression of it. One must attempt to present it in its integrity, as it is disclosed in the living relation that is action and feeling before making itself thought.

(Beauvoir 2004: 275)

The A-series takes our experience of the seeming flow of time into account. Despite the many variations of dynamic time theories, they insist on the reality of the passage of time and focus on a moving now-moment (Dainton 2010: 7; Dieks 2016: 4).¹⁰⁶ Although phenomenology, analytic philosophy, and psychology operate in different frameworks, A-theory has a lot in common with Husserlian phenomenology and cognitive psychology. Husserl, like the A-theorists, emphasizes the

¹⁰³ Recently, however, more and more theorists have started to work with these issues (e.g. Prosser 2016; Callender 2017).

¹⁰⁴ More on language and temporality in Crystal 2002; McLure 2005; Dyke 2013; Perry 2013.

¹⁰⁵ A similar approach that makes use of B-theoretic narratology was first introduced by Currie (2007).

¹⁰⁶ E.g. presentism, the Growing Block Theory, or the Moving Spotlight theory.

passing of time and the point-like structure of our experience. Although few discuss the points of contact between phenomenology and A-theory, it has been suggested that certain parallels can be detected and that the two traditions could complement one another as both focus on the human experience of time (see McInerney 1991; McLure 2005; Schenk 2006; Turner 2007).

A-theory is often considered “the natural view” as it coincides with our everyday experience of dynamic time (Dainton 2010: 28). The flow of time is a commonly employed metaphor to describe time as a unidirectional, continuous, fluid motion that cannot be reversed or halted (McLure 2005: 119). Although challenged by critics, descriptive language is, indeed, often employed to describe the passage of time.¹⁰⁷ According to A-theory, a present-now is constantly shifting as moments once in the future become present and then recede into the past. Contrary to McTaggart’s assertions, A-theorists do not consider the existence of past, present, and future to be incompatible with the idea of change (Turner 2007: 27–28; Dainton 2010: 29).

Presentism, a popular interpretation of A-theory, maintains that reality is a continuous stream of successive now-moments (Dainton 2010: 87). The only existing moment is the now: everything else has either passed and therefore cannot exist anymore, or has not yet been experienced and therefore has not started existing yet. Since presentism denies the existence of a past and a future while maintaining the idea of change, it can counter McTaggart’s criticism of A-theory. However, our memory of the past challenges presentism.

Another A-theory, the growing block theory, can provide a solution. It is essentially something between presentism and eternalism, a dynamic theory that considers the past and the present to objectively exist but not the future. According to this theory, reality unfolds through a growing block. Most events, according to this theory, “except for those events that occur on the three-dimensional slice at the very end of the growing edge of the block,” exist in the past (Miller 2013: 348). As with presentism, the end slices in the growing block are being constantly replaced and only one last slice constitutes the present. Unlike presentism, the objective past is also constantly being created as every new now that is added to the block pushes previous nows to the past. The growing block theory confirms our experience of the now but can also account for our memories of the past (Dainton 2010: 69).

The moving spotlight theory is perhaps closest to McTaggart’s view of A-theory, as it involves change and confirms the simultaneous existence of the past, the present and the future. In this theory, all time is “equally real” but the present moment unfolds “like a spotlight that shines on one moment after another, ‘moving’ along the time line” (Prosser 2016: 3–4). The moving spotlight theory maintains that the past, present, and future exist objectively, but are fixed and predetermined. Time, however, is still dynamic, constantly moving along to illuminate a momentary now in the present.

¹⁰⁷ Callender (2017: 228) argues, however, that the idea of time’s actual passage is so silly that “few can speak sensibly about it” even if they “*know* that they experience it.”

All three dynamic theories assume that time is continuous, irreversible, and “confined to the present,” to an actual now-moment (Dainton 2010: 29).¹⁰⁸ Although according to theories of relativity, physical time lacks a universal present and, instead, consists of infinite nows that depend on the perspective of the observer, the lack of an objective now need not mean that we cannot discuss our experience of the present and of the now (Euler 1997: 160). The idea of a sequence of nows that keep updating in the present moment is centered on the view of the always enduring self that has faith in an objective and shared experience of time because the veracity of the present is confirmed by other enduring selves (Callender 2017: 230, 10, 221). Our shared understanding of time can be confirmed by our experience of the intersubjective world. As our knowledge of the world is based on our knowledge of self, we believe in the veracity of our own and others’ experience (Callender 2017: 247).¹⁰⁹ The enduring self creates a past through memory, a present through consistent narration of these memories, and a future through the imagination (Callender 2017; c.f. Sokolowski 2000; Keunen 2011).

The enduring self is produced by episodic memory, the system that stores individuals’ past experiences and allows individuals to access events that they have previously been involved in. Episodic memory is considered to be a “uniquely human” feature responsible for an individual’s awareness of self (Suddendorf & Corballis 1997: 134; Tulving 2002b: 5).¹¹⁰ Since episodic memory builds an awareness of self, it not only *informs* a person about their past but it also allows one “to consciously re-experience past experiences” (Tulving 2002b: 6). Research shows that the processes involved in remembering are also in operation during future-directed contemplation (Tulving 1993; Suddendorf & Corballis 1997; Suddendorf et al 2009).

While a major advantage of A-theory is that it can explain our experience time, the A-theoretical insistence that one’s experience discloses reality is also a considered one of its most significant shortcomings. As the brain can be tricked into producing illusions of temporal flow when presented with static images, our experience can trick us into believing A-properties to be real even if they are not (Callender 2017: 304; Paul 2012: 155; Prosser 2016: 53). Our state of mind and emotions, levels of attention, and even some drugs and medications can easily affect our perception of the passage of time (see Pöppel 1997; Kiverstein & Arstila 2013; Dyke & McLaurin 2013; Dieks 2016). Therefore, the reliance on transient properties of our temporal experience, and its failure to accommodate

¹⁰⁸ An extended description of the different A-theories can be found Dainton (2010), Bardon (2013), Miller (2013) and Prosser (2016). Most A-theories have been abandoned by now, as they are mostly not compatible with contemporary understandings of physical time.

¹⁰⁹ We can also expect evolutionary developments to have played a role in establishing an understanding of the reality of time (Callender 2017: 18–19, 218; Dyke & McLaurin 2013: 528, 532).

¹¹⁰ It is a complex system that develops at a late stage – sometime after the age of three–four – as suggested by Suddendorf & Corballis 1997; Tulving 1985; Tulving 2002b.

contemporary scientific views are considered as major limitations of the A-theory.¹¹¹

Currie (2007) suggests that both A-theory and B-theory become relevant in the process of reading as reading is a dynamic act while the material text is static. The central ideas of the two time theories can be adapted to describe the reader's relationship with narrative time and the book as a physical object. While B-theory describes the static quality of discourse time, I use A-theory to develop the idea of reading time. While reading, we are confined to the page that is open at present, in the reader's now moment. As the reader's wandering viewpoint moves through the pages, motivated by a "desire to see what happens next," the now of the reading moment will change constantly (Rosenblatt 1994: 54). The past, the present, and the future of the text exist objectively, as the pages in the book are in a certain order regardless of the reader's involvement. During the reading process, the reader moves through the predetermined text, illuminating each word, sentence, and page one after another. The reading process is irreversible and asymmetric. As the reader's position within the text changes, so do the relative locations of the past and the future. As we move forward, we leave behind a known past that we remember. A future, however, can only be vaguely anticipated by the reader. Reading time is the subjective, personal time of the reader during which the reader engages with the material text. However, the physical form of the novel becomes less significant when the reader foregrounds the fictive world of the text. The moving now and degrees of textual pastness and futurehood continue to affect the reading process but, as immaterial elements of the text come to the foreground, the reader's relationship with the text shifts.

Foregrounding the storyworld means that the reader will push their own reading time to the background and will focus their attention on fictive time. Thrown into the middle of the storyworld at the beginning of the reading process, the reader

will need first to envision a situation with potentialities for further events or further developments. As the text unfurls, he is able to move into the new actions, the new situations, and to feel them as related to what he has already participated in. This process is repeated from event to event as the reader builds up a sense of sequence and perhaps consequence of chronological or causal or other relationships. (Rosenblatt 1994: 91).

The reader's dynamic movement through a static text will produce a lived experience of a story. The series of ordered or disordered events presented through a narrative will push the reader to imagine the fictive time of the storyworld, as it unfolds for the characters. Creating a story time by reordering the static events of discourse time is a creative process, during which the

¹¹¹ Some contemporary proponents of the dynamic time theories (e.g. Maudlin 2007) have made compelling arguments for its compatibility with physics.

The reader not only responds to the textual cues by generating the characters, situations, actions, they signify; he also retains in his memory and attitudes the basis for interpreting the sequence of events as they unfold, and he provides the experiential ligatures between them that constitute plot. (Rosenblatt, 1994: 92).

As the reader actualizes the narrative, the sequence of events unfolding in the storyworld is organized to form an approximate fictional timeline.

3.2. Layers of Narrative Time

In this section, I will expand on the idea that the reader and the text are in a collaborative process to produce story time. I will introduce a model that will broaden the current understanding of the reader's experience of narrative temporality. My model will combine ideas from phenomenology, reading theories, time philosophy as well as narratology. An analysis of the experience of reading requires categories that can be used to differentiate between the different layers of narrative time. As the central concern of this dissertation is the study of narrative time, my primary objective of the rest of the chapter is to elaborate on the concepts of discourse time and story time.

Although A- and B-theories of time form the basis for discourse time, reading time, and the product of the two, story time, I also need a text-based analytical framework in order to develop the concepts into analytical tools. In the context of this dissertation, narratology seems to provide the most suitable tools for a discussion of the structure of textual temporality. As Genette's model of narrative time is so influential within literary studies, his work will provide the core of my toolset. To be clear, while discourse time and story time of novels can be studied through Genette's model, reading time, as the subjective time of reading, is not accessible through text-based analytical tools. Some methods based on cognitive neurosciences may illuminate reading time and, indeed, interviews, surveys and observational methods could be used to study how readers conceptualize their time of reading.¹¹² However, as I wish to focus on narrative time, I find text-based analytical tools better suited. Since it is not available to me through the tools I have chosen use, the concept of reading time will only be discussed in theory and will not be employed in my analyses of novels. Experientiality, however, will not disappear from this study. As the "reader's main purpose is to participate as fully as possible in the potentialities of the text," my study will focus on how textual potentialities influence the reader's experience of narrative time (Rosenblatt 1994: 69). Although I would like to explore all the different elements affecting our experience of narrative time, I can only access the potentialities of meaning

¹¹² However, our current empirical methods for studying the human experience are limited. Although rapidly evolving, biomedical and neuroimaging tools, for example, are still in early stages of development and can only provide rudimentary knowledge about our experience (Armstrong 2013).

that are informed by my own experience. Following Caracciolo (2014), this dissertation will not present an empirical study of the experience of reading time. Instead, I will employ “speculation as a heuristic tool” (Caracciolo 2014: 13).

Genette’s model of narrative time is based on terminology borrowed from German theorist Günther Müller.¹¹³ Müller’s original terms of *erzählte Zeit* and *Erzählzeit* are reinterpreted in *Narrative Discourse* (1983) into story time (*temps de l’histoire*) and discourse/narrative time (*temps du récit*), respectively. While both concepts feature in Genette’s work, his main focus is on discourse/narrative time (*Erzählzeit*). Although Genette (1983: 34, original emphasis) recognized that the text needs to be “actualized” by the reader “in a time that is obviously reading time,” most of his work focuses on discourse time and textual elements of discourse that are spatial in nature.¹¹⁴

Genette (1983: 27) defines ‘narrative’ as “the signifier, statement, discourse, or narrative text itself,” and ‘narrating’ as the act of “producing narrative action.” In his study of narrative temporality, these functions of narrative are combined and form the concept of *Erzählzeit*.¹¹⁵ Within Genette’s work, *Erzählzeit* refers to the fixed time of the text, which consists of textual elements that have a fixed order, duration, and frequency, and which appear on specific pages of the novel. In the English translation of Genette’s work, narrative time and discourse time are used interchangeably to refer to the concept of *temps du récit*. This has, unfortunately contributed to the subsequent incoherence in the use of Genette’s terminology. I will use the term narrative in a broader sense that not only conveys the genre of text but also the organizational activity that structures our experience (see Fludernik 2009).¹¹⁶ When referring to the measurable, perceivable arrangement of text, I will employ the term discourse time.

Genette’s model requires some modification for a study of the experience of reading time. Despite his framing of his work as “a study of the relationships between narrative and story, between narrative and narrating, and /.../ between

¹¹³ It has been suggested that the concepts can be traced back to an even earlier origin than Müller’s texts from 1947 and 1948 (Harweg 2011: 143).

¹¹⁴ Despite recognizing (see Genette 1983: 213, 255) the temporal and dynamic aspects of narrative, Genette does not elaborate on the concept of reading time. In a way, this is understandable, as it would require an empirical study of real readers. Since Genette’s is a text-based approach, he cannot be faulted for not discussing the time of reading that “varies according to particular circumstances” (Genette 1983: 86). See also Heise’s commentary on reading time (1992: 264–265, note 5)

¹¹⁵ While Genette himself introduces his model as two-fold, consisting of discourse time and story time, later scholars (as well as Genette himself within the same text) have identified his model to consist of three levels by separating *Erzählzeit* into time of narrative and time of narrating (see Ricoeur 1985; Fludernik 2009; Bal 2009; Scheffel et al 2014). Since Genette’s discourse time is used to refer to two different concepts – narrative time and narrating time, his theory is sometimes considered rather contradictory (see Heise 1992, 1997).

¹¹⁶ I understand that my definition of the term narrative remains vague. However, as I do not intend to use it as an analytical tool, I will continue employ it in its multiple meanings which are discernible from the context.

story and narrating,” Genette (1983: 29) glosses over story time. Genette (1983: 27) refers to the story as the “the signified or narrative content” and to story time as narrated time. His term *temps de l’histoire*, derived from *erzählte Zeit*, becomes fictional time represented by the content of narrative. However, in discussing story time, I do not consider it a mere rearrangement of narrative discourse or something narrated in the text.¹¹⁷ Certain elements of discourse refer to story time but it is formed only through the reader’s encounter with the text.

Although the focus of Genette’s analysis is on spatial elements of the text, the temporal dimension of reading time and story time are implied through the time of narrating and through narrated time. Time of narrating refers to the total reading duration of the text and can be measured by hours spent reading (e.g. 10 hours) while narrated time refers to the timespan of the story (e.g. 10 years). While the narratologist is able to demonstrate that the 10-year timespan of a story contains scenes that include dialogues, summaries of events, long atemporal descriptions, pauses, or omissions, without an empirical study of multiple readers, the narratologist will only have information about their own 10-hour reading activity. Despite this, the narratologist will be able to identify discrepancies between narrated time and the time of narrating, revealed through the fixed textual elements that form discourse time.

Genette’s work highlights the temporal deviation and discrepancies in the order, duration and frequency of events within discourse time. While every narrative contains anachronies, that is, chronological deviations that affect narrative structure, some narratives exhibit significant discrepancies between story time and discourse time. These deviations of time in the structure of narrative “can be used as a means for the realization of specific literary effects” (Bal 2009: 82). There are two main types of anachronies: prolepses and analepses.¹¹⁸ Prolepsis refers to “any narrative maneuver that consists of narrating or evoking in advance an event that will take place later,” and analepsis to “any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are at any given moment” (Genette 1983: 40). Depending on the frequency and order in which anachronies appear, prolepses and analepses may significantly complicate discourse time. Untangling narrative temporality requires a hypothetical “zero degree” which may act as a point of reference for measuring narrated time (Genette 1983: 35–36). Anything, then, that is a deviation of this specific point of reference is an anachrony. Some narratives even present elaborate secondary stories through narrative embedding, taking readers far from the initial point of

¹¹⁷ Some recent studies of narrative temporality recognize that it is not always possible “to retrieve or deduce a consistent story (fabula) from a text (syuzhet)” (Richardson 2002: 52). However, the unusual or impossible narratives that do not immediately reveal stories are still studied in terms of discourse (e.g. Richardson 2002; Alber 2016), rather than from the perspective of the reader’s actualization of the textual potentialities.

¹¹⁸ A significant part of Currie’s (2007) work is based on Genette’s concepts of prolepsis and analepsis.

reference and thus creating complex systems that need to be unraveled by readers (Genette 1983: 46, 49).¹¹⁹

Genette's work has inspired several influential theories, such as Chatman's (1978), Bal's (1985/2009), and Ricœur's (1984, 1985, 1988). Chatman's approach is very similar to Genette's as he also uses Müller's *Erzählzeit* and *erzählte Zeit* as the foundation for exploring the functions of discourse time and story time. Bal, however, operates with an entirely different terminology. While the categories and concepts she investigates are similar to Genette's and Chatman's, she differentiates between story and fabula, instead of story and discourse. As she does not use the concept of *sujet*, her terminology does not coincide with that of Russian formalists either. Fabula, in her application, refers to "the 'deep structure' of the narrative text" (Bal 2009: 181). Story, on the other hand, refers to the ordering of events (Bal 2009: 75–76). In Bal's definition, story is almost the same as discourse in Genette's work. Essentially, then, Bal has switched the meanings of story and discourse.

Ricœur mostly follows the model established by Genette but, according to Ricœur (1985: 77), a "three-tiered scheme" is necessary to account for "a time of narrative, a narrated time, and a fictive experience of time projected by the conjunction/disjunction between the time it takes to narrate and narrated time."¹²⁰ Ricœur employs *Erzählzeit* and *erzählte Zeit* in mostly the same way as Genette. Time of narration/narrating/narrative (*Erzählzeit*) signifies the structure of narrative, or, in Ricœur's (1985: 78) words, "the time taken to narrate."¹²¹ Ricœur's *Erzählzeit* also contains two layers of temporality, the time of discourse and the act of narrating, or in other words, the spatial structure of discourse and the time it takes to read the narrative. Ricœur (1985: 81), just like Genette, recognizes that the time of reading is identifiable, but not analyzable, so his work also emphasizes the measurable "spatial equivalent, which is counted by the number of pages and lines."

Besides *Erzählzeit* and *erzählte Zeit*, Ricœur (1985: 81–84) also identifies "the time of life" in Müller's *Morphologische Poetik*. Through the time of life, Ricœur discusses the fictive experience of time that readers can inhabit. This fictive time, according to Ricœur (1985: 100), "has an imaginary world for its horizon, one that remains the world of the text." With this in mind, Ricœur discusses the meaning of time that is presented within the storyworld. Although Ricœur (1985: 82–101) recognizes that different temporal "strategies" used within this space affect the reader in various ways, he does not describe the effects of the text on

¹¹⁹ Through elaborate narrative embeddings readers may experience stories within stories that may significantly complicate the temporal structure of a narrative, in some cases to the point of it becoming impossible to determine the true zero degree.

¹²⁰ Ricœur has different translations for Müller's terms. In French, *Erzählzeit* becomes *un temps du raconter*; *erzählte Zeit* becomes *un temps raconté* and his addition to the model is referred to as *une expérience fictive du temps* (Ricœur 1984: 114).

¹²¹ To demonstrate the disorganization of the English translation, I've included the different variations of *Erzählzeit* used in the translation.

the reader.¹²² Instead, Ricœur's (1985) sample analyses discuss the meaning of time for the characters of the storyworld, on the level of narrative content.

Finally, much like Genette's, Ricœur's narrated time (*erzählte Zeit*) refers to the time that is covered by the narrative. Ricœur's narrated time, however, while not an exact equivalent, bears more resemblance to my concept of story time. Unlike Genette, Ricœur (1985: 81) recognizes that narrated time is not something within the text, it "is not narrative but life."¹²³ That is, while narrated time is conveyed by the text, it is made temporal through the reader's subjective experience of time (Ricœur 1985: 79–80; c.f. Dowling 2011: 48–49). It is only through one's experience of both the static aspects of time (textual cues, e.g. calendar dates) and dynamic aspects (experiential ligatures informed by the passage of time, e.g. minutes, hours, days) that the reader is able to produce the time of the story. Although Ricœur recognizes story time as something outside the bounds of the text, portrayed through the narrative but actualized by the reader, his study and application of the concept is minimal.¹²⁴ Ricœur's own analysis of novels mostly remains within the fictional layer as he elaborates on fictive time as experienced by characters of the novels.

Terms such as 'narrative', 'narrating', 'narration', 'narrated', 'discourse', etc. have become rather vague through the different definitions, translations, interpretations, and applications (not to mention that the meaning behind original German, French, or English is never unambiguously transferable).¹²⁵ Choosing concepts that can represent the various layers of narrative temporality that I wish to examine is, therefore, rather challenging.¹²⁶ To discuss the spatial structuring of literary text, I will use the term **discourse time**. **Reading time**, through which discourse time is actualized, will be included as a theoretical concept. However, the main objective of this dissertation is to explore the concept of **story time**. While my approach can be regarded as rather typical in adhering to the binary distinction between story and discourse, my concept of story time as something created and not as something extracted from the text departs from the standard *fabula-syuzhet* / *story-discourse* dichotomy. While discourse is something created by the author of the text and remains fixed within the narrative, I consider story to be a dynamic concept, shaped by the experience of the reader. The formation

¹²² The nature of effect on the reader is mostly determined, according to Ricœur (1985: 92–99), by the type of narrative voice.

¹²³ Ricœur (1985: 81–83) is critical of Genette's interpretation of Müller's terminology as Ricœur does not believe that the categories are only text-based.

¹²⁴ Very few accounts actually approach the concept of story time (exceptions, of course, do exist, e.g. Harweg (1991/2011). Although Ricœur's (1985: 101–112) analysis of for example *Mrs. Dalloway* discusses how narrated time is conveyed in the text, he does not recognize that *erzählte Zeit* is produced through the reader's actualization of discourse time and fictive time.

¹²⁵ See also section 2.2.1 and my discussion on the various categorizations used to describe parts of narrative.

¹²⁶ Narrative temporality could be dismantled even further to study the experience of reading time. Numerous different aspects that are not discussed in my work (e.g. narrator's time) could offer additional perspectives on the topic.

of story time requires a transactional relationship between text and reader, that is, the reader will create story time out of the spatial elements presented within discourse time.

3.2.1 Discourse Time

My notion of discourse time is based on the B-theory of time and the Genettian concept of discourse. As I consider discourse a spatial and static dimension of the text, it is compatible with a B-theoretic model (Dainton 2010: 8). Currie (2007: 144) argues that “the world of written narrative /.../ presents a B-series of a more certain kind than is ever given in ‘lived experience’”. The structure of the material text cannot be illustrated through temporal terms but it can be described through spatial terms. Much like a landscape, the time sequence of events is always already laid out in a text and remains static. Every word and symbol is inscribed into the fabric of the narrative prior to the reader’s engagement with the novel. Regardless of whether the narrative advances chronologically or not, the structure of the material book, the events that unfold and the characters that appear are firmly established on the pages of the book by an author. In the world of written narrative, “the future lies to the right, awaiting its actualization by the reading” and the past lies to the left, having already been actualized by the reader (Currie 2007: 18).¹²⁷ Discourse time is already in existence prior to the reading process and presents a storyworld “in which the future has already taken place, and is not open” (Currie 2007: 18).

While discourse time is partly derived from B-theoretical block time, discourse time is not identical to block time. First, books consist of a beginning, a middle and an end. While block time can also be considered as having a beginning and an end, these borders are too far apart to be experienced as finite.¹²⁸ Narratives, however, are always confined within strict boundaries. Narratives begin and end between the covers of the book, which limits and shapes our experience of literature.¹²⁹ However, as narratives are not constrained by the limitations of temporal linearity, discourse time has “at its disposal all the temporal resources of narrative fiction” (Currie 2007: 89; c.f. Kermode 2000: 138). While humans are unable to explore all of the times present in the block of time, it is possible to open the book and experience the past, the present, and the future of the text in a manner not possible in our actual experience of time. Discourse time corresponds

¹²⁷ That is, when we read in e.g. English through Latin script.

¹²⁸ It should be noted at this point that there are also accounts of human temporality that determine the beginning and end of humanity. Some may consider the Big Bang at one side of the block, and some may consider the events of the book of Revelation at the other side of the block. Birth and death also restrict human experience. While human experience of time, then, does have borders, time itself, according to B-theory, does not.

¹²⁹ The existence of the borders that delimit narratives is “one of the great charms of books” (Kermode 2000: 23).

to block time in that there is a determined course for the act of reading. As long as a reader complies with the reading instructions, just like the experience of B-time, readers are constrained by the organization of discourse. So, while discourse time may not unfold in a linear manner, the materiality of the text only allows the reader to press forward slice-by-slice, page-by-page.

The spatial nature of discourse time becomes evident through the metaphors employed to describe narratives (Kemp 2012: 402). It has been argued that “narrative as a line is so commonplace as to have become a dead metaphor” (Kemp 2012: 393). However, story time “can rarely achieve a temporal shape that can meaningfully be called linear” (Currie 2007: 36). If discourse time were to unfold in an alignment with fictive time, the narrative line of story time and discourse time would be identical. However, in most narratives, discourse time is not chronological or linear, as “almost all texts shuffle the order of events in the recounting to some extent” (Kemp 2012: 394). With temporal distortions to narratives, the difference between the time of discourse and the time of the fictive world will become even more pronounced, complicating reader’s construction of story time.

The different spatial arrangements, caused by various textual elements distorting the narrative, have recently been explored by Marzia Beltrami (2021). Beltrami discusses the various spatial patterns that are revealed when disentangling narrative discourse. Beltrami’s case studies do not yield to the metaphorical narrative line but are unraveled in various geometrical patterns. In order to uncover the spatial patterns, the reader must actively shape the plot throughout the reading process (Beltrami 2021: 6). While Beltrami (2021: 8) identifies time as a necessary component of the reading process, the role of temporality is mostly secondary in her work.¹³⁰ However, it is important to note that Beltrami’s work shows that part of the reading experience includes the arrangement of complex plots into specific patterns in order to make sense of the narrative.

I believe that temporal stories emerge through a similar process of arranging and rearranging parts of discourse. During the reading process the reader’s actualization of the narrative involves a reorganization of the events presented into patterns that will form stories. The temporal patterns created by readers from discourse time reflect the reader’s experience of sequential temporality. While discourse time is mostly a spatial concept, reading gives it a temporal dimension.¹³¹ Discourse time refers to the static structuring of events and, therefore, cannot be considered temporal in itself. Temporality is always associated with the reader’s experience and not with the basic properties of the material text. As time within a narrative does not pass without the reader’s involvement, the dynamic reading act is always required for actualizing the narrative, and for moving the narrative from beginning to end.

¹³⁰ In a work aimed at exploring spatiality, this, of course, is to be expected and reasonable.

¹³¹ The temporal, argues Bill Richardson (2018: 71), “is a fundamental constituent of the spatial, an acknowledgment that there is no space – even an imaginary one – that is not time bound.”

Brian Richardson (2002) and Ursula Heise (1997) have extensively examined the temporalizing elements of postmodern novels. Richardson (2002: 48–51) lists six strategies of “temporal reconstruction” frequently used in postmodern novels: circular, contradictory, antinomic, differential, conflated, and dual/multiple. These strategies, according to Richardson (2002), are examples of “nonmimetic temporality in narrative.” I consider these strategies organizational techniques that are part of discourse time. Heise’s study of the temporality of postmodern novels discusses how the different organizational strategies of postmodernist literature affect the reading experience. Narrative coherence, according to her, “depends on the reader’s ability to connect the narrated events in a common temporal medium” (Heise 1997: 46). In postmodern literature, however, events may be narrated “in contradictory and mutually exclusive versions that do not allow the reader to infer a coherent story and reality” (Heise 1997: 53).

Heise (1997: 55) lists three major organizational categories that may obstruct temporal coherence – repetition, metalepsis (which she derives from Genette), and experimental typographies – and analyzes each category with examples from postmodern literature. As these three categories are easily transferable to my own case studies, I will summarize them here. First, repetition and a circular approach to event description will disrupt the reader’s understanding of causal relations between the episodes presented within the novel (Heise 1997: 57–59). For example, in Heller’s *Catch-22*, events and episodes are reused and recreated to represent an anomalous circular time. The constantly reoccurring events and reappearance of dead characters creates the illusory experience of a *déjà vu*. Heise’s (1997: 50) concept of metalepsis that contains “systematic violations of the boundary between frame narrative and embedded story” can be used to describe the destabilized narrative coherence of Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Without a clear boundary between Billy Pilgrim and the fictive author, readers are left to their own devices in evaluating whether Billy is truly a time traveler or a demented old man with post-traumatic stress disorder. Finally, while Heise’s examples of different typographical configurations are much more experimental than my own case study of *Time’s Arrow*, Martin Amis’s novel introduces two moving now-points that deliver contradictory messages. While all literature is open to interpretation, postmodern novels especially tend to encourage interpretive multiplicity that may potentially result in multiple story times by different readings.¹³² My aim is to analyze discourse time to find out which strategies favor the emergence of a coherent story time and which ones increase the likelihood of inconsistency in the process of creating a story time.

¹³² These different readings may be conducted by different readers but also by multiple readings of one reader.

3.2.2 Reading Time

While discourse time concerns the text, reading time refers to reader's experience of the text. Since the dynamic theory of time focuses on the subjective experience of time, in which the present unfolds through a moving now, it offers a suitable framework for the concept of reading time. In turn, as time is often considered aporetic in nature, approaching temporality through something that represents it, such as a narrative, may contribute to a deeper understanding of the lived experience of time (Ricoeur 1984: 3).¹³³ As the process of reading is inherently temporal, reading time represents the temporal experience of the reader. The concept of reading time concerns the reader's position during the reading moment and the reader's activity of temporalizing the static text. As discourse time may not present a linear narrative, the reader's task is to organize the story by solving the tensions between discourse time and fictive time.

Just as our experience of the present is marked by a now, reading time is defined by a reading now. During the reader's presence in the fictional world, they inhabit a now, no matter where the now is in comparison with previous nows. "A conventional construction of a novel," says Mieke Bal (2009: 82), begins "in medias res, which immerses the reader in the middle of the fabula." From this initial encounter with the storyworld, the narrative may move the fictional time forward in a linear manner, or, since anachrony "is the normal state of affairs" in a narrative text, it may introduce deviations in the order, duration, and frequency of the portrayed events (Uhlir 1985: 293). Despite the possible anachronies, reading "presentifies all temporal displacements" (Annas 2002: 326–327, my translation). This is because the reading now is not an actual present but a "quasi-present," which represents all times of the storyworld as-if unfolding in the present (Currie 2018: 34, c.f. Husserl 1991: 55).¹³⁴

In addition to the present, the act of reading also includes a past and a future, the pages and words already read or not yet read. This suggests that, similarly to human time, reading is an asymmetrical experience. There is, however, a notable difference between the asymmetry of A-time and the asymmetry of reading time. While the *content* of the future will always be unknown in our experience of time, the fictive future might be disclosed to the reader at any point in the material text. However, a narrative might be structured in a way that reveals information about fictive time at any given moment within discourse time. The pleasure of reading need not depend on keeping the future hidden from the reader. The future may very well be disclosed at the very beginning of narratives; yet, it does not reduce the pleasure of reading nor does it mean that the story is completely revealed. Much may still be hidden even with the knowledge of the future.¹³⁵

¹³³ Ricoeur dedicates his entire first volume of *Time and Narrative* to studying the aporias of time. The difficulty of understanding the nature of time is often also emphasized by analytic philosophers (see section 3.1)

¹³⁴ See section 2.2.2 and Currie (2018) on the concept of "as-if."

¹³⁵ See Grethlein (2009: 319–327) for a discussion on suspense without surprise.

The experience of reading the past also operates differently when compared to our everyday experience of the past. According to A-theory, the past comes into being at the passing of the present. As each present moment adds to the past, past moments accumulate and move further and further away from the present. The past is inaccessible but can be remembered through the present. During the reading process, however, the fictive past may be presented to the reader at any point. Both the fictive past and fictive future can appear anywhere within the material text. As the past-present-future of the discourse may be inconsistent with the past-present-future of the storyworld, reading time may conflict with our natural sense of temporality.

Our experience of reading is shaped by the forward movement of a changing now. As we read, the location of our present is dependent on the now with the pages ahead pointing towards a future and the preceding pages containing the past (Currie 2007: 17, 149). The things read and the things to be read do not have an equal status since we have knowledge of the events on the previous pages but cannot know for certain what is about to come. Just like in our natural perception of temporality, we have some anticipations concerning the coming pages, but the fictional future may contain surprises and unpredictable developments of events. While reading time refers to the subjective, personal time of reading in which the fictive world comes to the foreground of our conscious experience, it is also guided by the spatiotemporal reality operating in the background of the reader's conscious experience.

Reading time is a component of the aesthetic reading experience that produces meaningful literary works of art. Although a building block of our transactional relationship with the text that affects our experience of the material text and our creation of stories more than any other aspect, reading time is not something that we can access. Even my own reading experience of the three novels that I discuss has already passed and remains fixed in the past. My memory and the notes I have made through the course of my readings may help me speculate on my past reading experience, but they will not enable me to return to my reading time. As reading time refers to the transient, constantly moving experience of reading, I will not employ it as an analytical tool.

3.2.3 Story Time

Although it is often assumed that story time “emerges from the interplay of space, events, characters, and plot structure,” I argue that these elements of the text only function as a guide for the reader's construction of story time (Scheffel et al 2014: para 10). The construction of the storyworld from a static text is initiated by the reading act. In order to establish a consistent and coherent time of the storyworld, the reader must actively participate in the production of time. Engagement with long stretches of text involves intentional attention and a significant amount of creative work. While the text supplies the tangible components that the reader can interact with, story time is not inherently visible in the fabric of the narrative.

Instead, story time is woven, built, established, produced, shaped by the reader and their reading time.

As the fictional space of the story cannot contain the whole of its world, it is always incomplete, leaving much of its world outside of the text and requiring completion on the part of the reader (Annus 2002: 16, 80). And yet, even with minimal description of the setting, characters, and events, readers fill the gaps and empty spaces through their imagination and form a complete storyworld. Since story time is not a fixed aspect of the literary text, it requires the combination and integration of the fragmentary, reclusive, circular, and multilinear narrative strands that are presented in discourse time. This activity unfolds during reading time and produces a cohesive story time pattern. Texts that contain elements that resist story time creation may prove challenging and may present more than one probable arrangement of events. In such texts, individual readers' story times may diverge significantly.¹³⁶ Despite the arduous journey in the making of story time, readers will eventually piece together the isolated events, harmonize the tensions written into the narrative, and resolve the discrepancies within discourse time to the best of their ability.

The constructed timeline does not necessarily have to be chronological or linear, and while it may be correlated with the potential intentions of the author, it is never a representation of it.¹³⁷ It can take any shape in the reader's mind as each individual reader's interpretation of discourse time is different and affected by their personal past experience. The pattern created by the reader will constantly shift during the reading process as the reader gains more information about the storyworld and its inner logic. Story times may change in second or third readings, which means that all story times are correct story times.¹³⁸

Story time, in the context of this work, is an experiential process that produces a temporal pattern from the static time of discourse. As it is influenced by reading goals and reading time, that is, it is not a mere rearrangement of discourse time. Since story time is formed throughout the reading process, it is dynamic and ever-evolving. It continues to evolve and change after the reading process, as the memory of the elements that once guided us in its construction fades and becomes distorted.

Our experience of narrative temporality is multi-layered, as all novels, in one way or another, are about time (Currie 2007). While not all narratives discuss temporality as a topic, all narratives inherently contain temporal elements. A common way of portraying a series of events in a novel is to manipulate the narrative structure. The distorted time of disordered events create a distinctive discourse time, specific to every individual novel. However, neither linear and chronological

¹³⁶ I will demonstrate how a shared discourse time can produce multiple different story times in chapter 4. *Catch-22*.

¹³⁷ While story times can take any shape, as linearity is part of our common experience of time, story times will also often settle into a linear pattern

¹³⁸ This does not mean that every story time is a perfect representation of the author's intended timeline for the fictional world.

narratives, nor narratives that have a completely fragmented temporal structure, can be considered temporal. As novels are objects, the time of the novel is static and non-temporal. Novels contain times that represent the temporality of fictional events which readers can access and categorize in terms of past, present, and future. However, time does not pass in a novel, events and characters exist statically on the page as moments exist in the static block of time.

Reading as an activity, on the other hand, takes place in time. It is a dynamic, subjective process during which the reader engages with the text by backgrounding their own reality and foregrounding the storyworld. As the reader moves through the text, they are constantly interpreting and constructing the temporality of the novel. Through an interpretation of the novel's temporal logic, readers arrange and rearrange the events presented by the narrative, and assemble, shift, and mold the shape of stories. This process, shaped by the reader's immediate interactions with the text, their interpretation of the novel's temporal logic, as well as their prior knowledge, experience, and expectations, produces story time. The process may be challenging if the literary texts are structurally chaotic, non-linear, fragmentary, or with multiple levels of embedding. Events presented in a non-linear manner, however, will eventually be systematized according to the reader's interpretation of the text.

Why This? Notes on Methodology

The reader is engaged in a creative process at once intensely personal, since the poem is something lived-through, and intensely social, since the text, as a “control” can be shared with others

(Rosenblatt 1964: 126)

Each part of a book has a specific purpose: the covers protect the pages inside, the binding holds the pages together, the pages include marks that convey words, the illustrations suggest certain interpretations, and so on. Readers can hold the books, open them, flip the pages, and see a series of signs on paper. Although arranged in a specific manner to communicate with the reader, the material book is an object constructed of textual elements as its “[c]haracters, events, and emotions are simply configurations of marks on a page” (Eagleton 2012: 63). When the reader interacts with the formal elements of the text, they will strive to decipher the significance behind the series of signs and will embark on the process of transforming the communications into a meaningful experience. This process is fundamental to the aesthetic reading experience.

The material available for the construction of the story occupies a liminal space between existence and non-existence – on the one hand, its material existence on the pages of the book cannot be denied, on the other hand, its meaningful existence is contingent on the reading activity. As stories only exist in the re-presentational space, the events and objects portrayed in the text do not become available in the perceptual world. The re-presentational objects and events become experiential through the reader’s imagination. As the reading process is transactional, the relationship between reader and text is reciprocal and requires a constant dialogue (Rosenblatt 1994; cf. Hennion & Muecke 2016).

While the text is an object, with static symbols, literary meaning is not fixed or determined by the author or even a community of readers; instead, it is created through an individual reader’s evocation and interpretation of the meaning potentials of the text. A story is an experience created by an individual reader’s encounter with the text. This encounter is an “event in time /.../ an occurrence, a coming-together, a compenetration, of a reader and text” (Rosenblatt 1964: 126; c.f. Iser 1978b; Fish 1980; Eagleton 2012). However, when a reader’s primary goal of reading becomes the extraction and categorization of information, stories, too, can become objectified entities.

A story time is created through an aesthetic reading experience. A reader will organize discourse time into a pattern that corresponds to their interpretation of a novel’s fictive time. This process is shaped by the reader’s past experience as much as by the novel’s narrative structure. However, reading for the purpose of discovering a story time will objectify story time. The previous three chapters have constructed two layers of narrative temporality that can be used as analytical categories for discussing the experience of reading time. These layers, of course, “are only logical fictions, or better, categories for analysis *after* the text has been

read,” and “falsify” the actual experience of reading time (Rosenblatt 1994: 108, original emphasis). Yet, as I cannot access the experiential spatiotemporal dimension of reading, the objectified impressions of the text are the only resource available to me.

If the experience of reading is not available for analysis and my intention is to approach the text as an object, a reader might ask for a justification for spending the previous three chapters discussing experientiality. I will answer this by introducing my work of reading. While I consider the process of reading a subjective experience, texts include objective aspects. Formal elements structure the content of narrative, providing not only a story but a certain way to experience the narrative in the form of a discourse. Form exists in every literary and non-literary text; there is no literature without form as “even formlessness is in some special sense a case of form” (Rooney 2000: 33). Reading for form does not necessarily mean that the subjective is cast aside for the objective. Form is not objective in the sense that it provides accurate, impartial, and unbiased access to the text; but it functions objectively in the sense that the textual elements are a shared resource. Subject to interpretation in much the same way as narrative content, form does not only provide the principles of arrangement for literary texts, it is “both the enabling condition and the product of reading” (Rooney 2000: 18; Rosenblatt 1994: 55–56). A reader who evokes a poem out of a playful note left on the fridge by their partner is guided to do so based on their prior experience of the form of poetry. In contrast, a reader who interprets the words of William Carlos Williams’s “This Is Just to Say” as a flippant acknowledgment of an offence and not as an imagist poem, may understand the message conveyed in the text but miss the aesthetic impact of the poem. The reader’s response not only conditions the content of text but, through the prism of their prior knowledge, immediate experience, and intention, can affect “the very structure of the work” (Rosenblatt 1994: 65).

While literary studies have, since New Criticism, insisted that our field is objective, the only methodological contribution we are able to provide is reading (Moi 2017: 193). Literary criticism lacks what “we can plausibly call competing methods, at least not in the sense widely used in the sciences and social sciences: a set of explicit – and repeatable – strategies for how to generate new knowledge” (Moi 2017: 178). The reading debates have, to a great extent, fixated on this very question of method. Yet, the methods developed, criticized, abandoned, and resurrected over the past century have been theories in disguise. Close reading, as the closest thing we have to a method, is not a method but, rather, describes the attention afforded to the text (Moi 2017: 192; c.f. Smith 2016). The same is true for distant reading, surface reading, symptomatic reading, and postcritical reading, if we follow Moi’s reasoning.

We should recognize and admit that the theories we use to conceptualize and justify our readings are “simply names for the knowledge and the thematic, formal, political, and ethical interests that critics bring to texts” (Moi 2017: 192–193). Performing a reading, sharing our observations, and reflecting on our engagement with the text is a form of attention and an expression of experience (Moi

2017: 195). My theoretical framework that is inspired by phenomenology, reading theories, narratology and philosophy of time does not provide a method for studying the experience of time. However, it has allowed me to discuss that our experience of the text is inherently subjective and that literary meaning is created through the process of reading. While the theoretical framework will be less visible in the next three chapters, it defines my attunement, directs my attention, and guides my reading.

In the following three chapters, I read three novels – Joseph Heller’s *Catch-22* (1961), Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), and Martin Amis’s *Time’s Arrow* (1991). Choosing to respond to what Moi (2017: 191) would call my “own interests and purposes,” I read the three novels as structured to confront natural temporality. Reading for the form of these novels will offer “a rich vocabulary for apprehending the mutually constituting, performative relationship readers and texts create together” (Ioanes 2017: 68). As I read, I am invited to ask, “why this:” why this form, why this time, and “what work this feature does in the text (Moi 2017: 203, original emphasis). My questions and readings attend to the textual presentation of time and the readerly production of time. I will discuss two types of temporality, discourse time and story time. Attention to discourse time provides a reading of textual linearity, the ways in which the events of the presented on the page, and a reading of the order, duration, and frequency of events. Attention to story time produces a reading of textual elements that contribute to story time production. The elements I attend to are a product of my transactions with the text but I also lift them out of their usual context to provide new patterns for understanding the texts (see Auyoung 2020).

As most novels reveal their stories gradually, readers’ production of the story is in process throughout the entirety of the narrative. While stories created by readers have a dynamic quality, elements of the story exist statically within novels and readers have to assemble the potential meanings dispersed into the texts they read. The amount of work the reader must perform in producing stories is text-dependent and determined by the patterns each reader is seeking. If a reader is trying to follow character development, their work of reading will be directed at elements that inform of character development or if a reader intends to focus on the plot, their reading will focus on making sense of the plot. As the focus of this analysis is on temporality, my work of reading is directed at the temporal elements of text, both in terms of form as well as content.

I read for various temporal markers and expressions that create a sense of temporal progression of events within the text. While I will not be discussing my aesthetic stance, my private feelings and sensations, the elements I attend to reflect my experience of the texts and are informed by my own sense of temporal logic and activity of filling the blanks and gaps of the storyworld. While seeking to unravel the text’s potentialities of meaning, I will attend to elements that affect the reader’s experience of narrative temporality.

As I move to the study of texts, I will not provide any definitive story times for the texts I analyze. I will not even provide my own story time as I cannot access the aesthetic experience that produced my story time. However, as I have

access to fixed elements of the text, I can provide an efferent reading of story time. While the texts and elements I have chosen to analyze are informed by my own reading and reading goals, the static, spatial quality of the text makes them shared resources and, therefore, enables readers to exchange their experiences of reading. Although our experiences will be distinct, another reader may recognize the effect of these elements on their own reading, enabling readers to connect on common terms. While I cannot know whether and to what extent these elements influence the story time creation of other readers, I can assume that the elements have intended effects as literary texts are designed with intention.

Although literary criticism is not typically regarded as a type of auto-ethnographic study, self-reflection is a fundamental part of critical reading. The language I use to discuss the texts, mostly impersonal, as is typical of an academic dissertation, will still contain my subjective impressions, recollections, and evocations. As I read to untangle the distorted and fragmented time, I become an active participant in constructing the temporal timelines of the novels but I also make “my own responses exemplary (not representative)” and “invite [other readers] to respond” (Moi 2017: 193).

CHAPTER FOUR

4. CATCH-22

While a reader might not fall in love with Yossarian at first sight, Joseph Heller's novel *Catch-22* provides ample material for fascination. The novel follows Captain Yossarian of the 256th Squadron, a B-25 bombardier in the U.S. Army Air Force. Set on the fictionalized island of Pianosa, off the coast of Italy, the narrative revolves around Yossarian's attempts to be dismissed from service. Disillusioned with the war effort and determined to avoid combat duty, Yossarian confronts the complacent bystanders, ambitious and corrupt higher officers, and the profit-seeking military-industrial complex, all of which have trapped him in a nightmarish loop of absurdity, paradox, and regulatory contradiction.

At the time of its original publication in 1961, the novel was criticized because of its chaotic structure, ambiguity, as well as its formlessness; and yet, it reached a cult following in the same decade (Aldridge 1986: para. 3). In his review for *The Nation*, Nelson Algren's proclaimed *Catch-22* not only "the best American novel to come out of World War II" but "the best American novel that has come out of anywhere in years" (Algren 2008: 11). The rest of the first reviewers either hated or loved the novel but the reasons for praise or disapproval often coincided (Aldridge 1986: para. 1). The novel's form, for example, was either considered its biggest advantage or its biggest disadvantage. In his 1961 review in the *New Republic*, Robert Brustein (2008: 6, 8) argues that the novel is "as formless as any picaresque epic" and yet, believes that the novel's "free, rebellious spirit" makes it an "explosive, bitter, subversive, brilliant book." For Richard Stern (1961: para 1), however, the formlessness makes the novel "too long," too "repetitive and monotonous and also "too short because none of its many interesting characters and actions is given enough play to become a controlling interest." Stern (1961: para. 1) sees the novel as a "portrait gallery, a collection of anecdotes," an assessment which leads him to the conclusion that the "book is no novel."

Yet, neither the high praise nor the critical remarks seemed to attract attention for the novel in its first year, as the sales for the hardcover edition were rather moderate. With the escalation of the Vietnam war, however, "history had at last caught up with the book," with contemporary readers drawing more parallels to the ongoing conflict rather than associating the mindless warfare with the previous world war (Aldridge 1986: para. 7). Once the paperback version was made available, its popularity skyrocketed, ensuring the novel a place among bestsellers for years to come (Aldridge 1986: para. 15). The novel's experimental and ambiguous form was embraced by the readers of the Vietnam Generation who "must have sensed that beneath the comic surfaces Mr. Heller was saying something outrageous, unforgivably outrageous, not just about the idiocy of war but about our whole way of life and the system of false values on which it is based" (Aldridge 1986: para. 7).

Despite its eventual popularity and status as a cult novel, *Catch-22* has received limited attention from literary scholars. Many of the first reviews and criticism have been published in Bloom's *Modern Critical Interpretations* series, which has featured Heller's *Catch-22* twice. The first edition was published in 2001 and includes twelve articles written over the years on the themes and structure of the novel. The updated edition (2008) contains five of the articles that were published in 2001 and additional articles on the language, structure, and themes of the novel. The newer edition also features several of the early reviews of the novel as well as commentary on the novel by Heller himself. None of the articles written for either edition were original articles composed for the collection and only contain previously published material. The collections are especially unusual due to the editor's introduction. Despite the status of the novel by the 2000s and the many positive articles included in the very collection he is introducing, Harold Bloom's almost identical introductions show a disdain for the novel. Bloom (2008: 1) predicts the novel to be soon forgotten as a "Period Piece, a work not for all time, but for the 1960s and 1970s." In a similar vein to Stern's scathing initial review, Bloom (2008: 1–2) considers the novel not as a "masterpiece, but a tendentious burlesque" since "nothing in *Catch-22* is lucid." Regardless of Bloom's personal dislike, the series on *Catch-22* has gathered some of the most significant articles on the novel. When it comes to discussions of the structure of the novel, for example, only a handful of articles exist that did not make it into either collection. Interestingly, although Bloom predicted a growing indifference for the novel, academic interest in the novel has been on the rise (see, e.g. Neziri 2013; Cocu 2016; Templeton 2016; Couder 2017; Azad & Abbasi 2018; Chirobocea 2018; Liu 2018; Rogers 2021).

Despite the commitment to my own work of reading throughout this dissertation, I would also like to address three previous readings of the novel. The organization of the novel's form inspired discussion in the late 1960s until mid-1980s (Solomon 1967; McDonald 1968; Gaukroger 1970; Nelson 1971; Burhans 1973; Richter 1974; Craig 1986; Merrill 1986). While early readers of the novel might have considered the chaotic structure of the novel evidence of its formlessness, literary scholars working with *Catch-22* have discovered several structuring devices in Heller's writing. Many consider the form of the novel to be hidden within the repetitive cycles of going through the same events again and again (e.g. Nelson 1971; Richter 1974; Craig 1986; Merrill 1986) while some believe the form to be governed by the psychological time of characters (e.g. Solomon 1967). There are also critics who suspect that the confusing temporality is maintained by the progression of the "narrative present" (McDonald 1968; Burhans 1973). Among the secondary literature on *Catch-22*, I am especially interested in three detailed, but notably different, timelines created by Solomon (1967), Gaukroger (1970) and Burhans (1973). The story times of the three scholars will be discussed in section 4.3 Readers' Times.

The narrative of *Catch-22* is presented to the reader through a meticulously crafted third-person narrator with the character Yossarian serving as the primary focalizer. While there are episodes in which Yossarian is absent (e.g. when the

chaplain is the focalized character), the narrator's controlled point of view is still aimed at topics that have a direct impact on Yossarian. The narrative presents rapidly evolving episodes describing warfare through air combat, generalized descriptions of war and the self-serving profiteering surrounding it, and intricate scenes with convoluted and absurd dialogue, all of which are presented through fragments ignoring chronology and causality. There is a sense of restrained narrative distance as the third-person narrator stays far from the portrayed events and outside the storyworld. Besides Yossarian and the chaplain, little insight is provided by the narrator into the thoughts and feelings of the large cast of characters. Instead, it is through dialogue that characters other than Yossarian receive a voice in the narrative.

The novel's presentation of action and dialogue distorts the potential emergence of a story. The constant repetitions of presented events in the novel almost keep the narrative still. The effect of stillness induced by repetition shows a present "trapped in its own mutations, without any possibility of linkage to past or future, and with at best a promise of meaning that is never fulfilled" (Heise 1997: 58). Yossarian is trapped in a perpetual repetition of mission-related episodes and in a devastating cycle of reliving the deaths of his co-combatants. The constant replay of the gruesome details of warfare forces the reader into a seemingly endless rereading of the disturbing events that Yossarian suffers. The reader is also put into the position of experiencing the dehumanization of combatants by the army and the absurd cruelty of people in power through the futile and circular dialogues between the army higher-ups and Yossarian or the chaplain. The satirizing of American culture through Milo's profiteering encapsulates the post-war United States – the glorification of wealth and power, and the infuriating disregard of concern for the individual.

Reading the novel through a present-day perspective adds an extra layer of unease because of the objectification of women. While most of the events described in the novel are rather upsetting to Yossarian, he remains remarkably indifferent about the treatment of women. The casual manner of describing the rape and abuse of women in the then-impoverished city of Rome, while probably not uncommon for the period, is unsettling, to say the least. The novel also does not spare the reader from harrowing details when describing the deaths of characters. However, contrasting the presented content with the narrative style creates a startling effect. The semi-humorous tone of description almost seems like a compensation for portraying the horrific events. The altered perspective and the adding and removing of details when replaying events will occasionally produce amusing segments but more often, the result of the repetition is just a different shade of disturbing. Although the novel's tone is often regarded as humorous, as the novel progresses and readers develop a better understanding of the reality surrounding the presented events, the humorous tone becomes "sick and savage" (Burhans 1973: 242). This forms an interesting juxtaposition between the reader's expectation for such a text and its reality – while satire ought to have a cushioning effect, as soon as the readers become more aware of what is being narrated

(e.g. Kid Sampson being sliced in half by McWatt's plane), a layer of surreal revulsion becomes part of the reading experience.

Although acknowledged, the novel is not often discussed as a piece of postmodernist fiction. While the temporal indeterminacy of the novel and its structural inconstancy has long been the subject of debate, literary devices driving this organizational turbulence are rarely analyzed. For example, *Catch-22* is mentioned in McHale's *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987) with regard to its narrative inconsistency but its various other potentially postmodernist literary devices are not explored. My reading of *Catch-22* will focus on the narrative strategies that either disrupt or help in the creation of story time. The most prominent of these strategies is repetition. Borrowing Ursula Heise's (1997: 59) idea that postmodernist forms of repetition "disrupt the causality that was traditionally associated with temporal sequence in the novel" and leave behind "contingency and dispersion," I will analyze how the repeating events and episodes of *Catch-22* affect the reading of the novel's temporality, and will discuss the impact of generalizations and temporal expressions.

The following analysis of *Catch-22* will be carried out through readings of discourse time and story time. My (re-)readings of the temporality in *Catch-22* unfolded over several years and produced hundreds of pages of notes and several Excel-tables. While my readings of the other two novels were mostly inspired by the playful experimentations with narrative temporality, my readings of *Catch-22* were genuinely motivated by confusion and endless questions of "why this?" (see Moi 2017: 193). Even in multiple rereadings, I could not fully understand the causal and temporal connections between the novel's events. So, to visualize textual temporality, I arranged the raw data of discourse time into an Excel table. Then I made another table, in which I reorganized the events of the first table to create a timeline for the fictional unfolding of time. This helped me identify which events are singular, which events reoccur, and which events could be seen as contradictory in story time. I distinguish between story past and discourse past, story present and discourse present, and story future and discourse future.¹³⁹ Story times refer to the unfolding of the fictive events and discourse times refer to the structure of the narrative. The following is a representation of my quest to understand the story time of the novel and an illustrative example of my work of reading.

¹³⁹ As the novel does not contain prolepsis in the sense of describing future events ahead of the story present, I only use the notion of story future in instances in which the unfolding story present refers back to earlier events in the textual past that are still considered as unfolding story present. For example, chapter 17 refers back to the events in chapter 1 but both chapters contain events that unfold in the story present. While reading chapter 17, the events of chapter 1 are in the textual past, and, therefore, the events in chapter 17, in comparison to the events of chapter 1 are in the story future.

4.1 Discourse Time

The temporality of *Catch-22* is complicated, to say the least. The novel is organized into 42 chapters, several of which do not present a linear ordering of events.¹⁴⁰ Instead, events are revisited time and time again, sometimes presenting almost identical descriptions, and at other times introducing new details. Many of the events are also inserted into the narrative in the middle of unfinished descriptions of other events. The isolated fragments tend to be disconnected from preceding and following episodes. This makes the narrative seem fragmentary and chaotic, as if the novel were formless. *Catch-22*, however, has a very specific structure that revolves around repetition. In this section, I will discuss discourse time of the novel to discover the spatial patterns of the text.

The unsettling pattern of irregular, disordered, and repeating events governs the layer of discourse time but is also representative of the experience of characters in the storyworld. In her book *Forms*, Caroline Levine (2015: 10) argues that “[e]very literary form /.../ generates its own, separate logic” and one common result of reading for form “involves binding literary forms to their contents, seeking out the ways that each reflects the other.” The confusing form of *Catch-22* is organized to reflect the content of the novel, the experience of characters who are tormented by the chaotic and absurd reality of war. The reading experience of the novel is deliberately unsettled through form to recreate the irrational and confusing experience of war. Readers are offered a glimpse into the disorienting reality of war through fragments that give the impression of constant anachrony. These fragments include descriptions of events that move forward, those that emerge as analepses, and descriptions of episodes that are constantly reemerging throughout the narrative. The effect on the reader is delivered through both content and form.

The unfolding of events in *Catch-22* is also governed by certain rhythms and hierarchies.¹⁴¹ Many of the major and minor events of the novel are repeated with varying levels of information added with each repetition. Each event, however, receives a different degree of attention. While the repeated description of certain events is narrated in a more-or-less linear manner and in length (e.g. The Big Siege of Bologna), other events are may be conveyed through brief passages (e.g. Avignon mission). The regular repetition produces a circular effect. The constant going back to already presented events means that it is often difficult to distinguish where and when events begin and end. For example, one of the repeating events is Yossarian’s constant fleeing to the hospital after traumatic missions or

¹⁴⁰ I am using a very loose definition of *event*. By event, I refer to a narrated “change of state” (Hühn 2009; Köppe 2014). So, I consider *event* to be any narrated happening that occurs within a temporal storyworld, e.g. a mission is an event and Yossarian thinking about the deaths of his friends is also an event. I will not distinguish between different types of events, nor will I establish criteria that comprise eventfulness.

¹⁴¹ Here, I’m borrowing Levine’s (2015) categories of *hierarchy* and *rhythm* to describe aesthetic forms.

deaths of other characters. While the novel begins and ends with Yossarian staying in the hospital, the references to Yossarian's hospital stays are often so ambiguous that it is difficult to determine which specific visit has been brought up. Most of the dialogues occurring in the novel also tend to be fairly repetitive. Conversations between characters often include repeating phrases that turn dialogues into absurd nonsense that goes around in circles (e.g. Heller 2004: 158–160). The circular rhythm reinforces the messages of war time chaos and shapes the experience of reading.

Based on the number of pages allocated to certain events and their location within the book, a hierarchy of the events emerges. To borrow from Levine (2015: 82), hierarchies “arrange bodies, things, and ideas according to levels of power or importance. Hierarchies rank – organizing experience into asymmetrical, discriminatory, often deeply unjust arrangements.” While the novel describes several missions (Yossarian eventually flies 71 combat missions), only some are significant enough to be constantly repeated. By the end of the novel, several events are afforded large amounts of space, while others are mentioned in a couple of passages. This suggests a hierarchy of events – those afforded more page space rank higher and those that are only mentioned in passing rank lower. The ranking of events grants a certain asymmetry to the novel. There are considerable differences in the page distribution and varieties of description of events. This, in turn, affects the reading experience as the readers' sympathies are formed based on the information received from the narrative.

As the novel's episodic structure has already been somewhat discussed in academic literature (e.g. Burhans 1973; Craig 1986; Merrill 1986), I will not establish new categories for organizing the novel. Following Nelson (1971), I will distinguish between three cycles, the first beginning with chapter 1, the second with chapter 17, and the third with chapter 34. Each consists of similar themes and recurring motifs. The cycles all begin and end in the hospital (chapters 1, 17, 34). Prior to the hospital visit that begins a cycle, a visit to Rome is described (16, 33).¹⁴² In addition, all cycles feature at least one chapter that focuses on the activities of Milo (7, 22, 24, 35), the higher officers (8, 9, 21, 28, 37), and the chaplain (19, 20, 25, 36).¹⁴³ Each of the cycles include chapters that mainly consist of dialogues (8, 27, 36).

It is rather difficult to distinguish which of the events are in the story past and story present as many of the past events tend to intrude into the unfolding narrative. Roughly, *Catch-22* consists of events that only occur in the story present, reoccurring events that take place both in the story present and the story past, as well as major and minor events that only occur in the story past. All events presented are significant from the point of view of Yossarian and arranged by

¹⁴² As the Rome visits also refer to the end of the cycle, the Rome visit in chapter 39, while not in the very end of the cycle could be seen as referring to the beginning of the end of the final cycle.

¹⁴³ The first cycle, however, does not include a full chapter on the chaplain and mostly features the chaplain in passing.

their impact on Yossarian. However, the death of a closer friend might not necessarily be described in more detail, especially towards the novel's end. Earlier deaths tend to act as catalysts for other events, and, therefore, are expanded upon in greater detail. Past events as well as unfolding events mostly feature Yossarian; therefore, from the very beginning until the very end, Yossarian is at the center of the narrative. I consider the story present to start unfolding while Yossarian is staying in the hospital, having completed 38 combat missions at a time when 45 missions were required for the completion of combat duty (chapters 1, 17). Events chronologically following this hospital stay are discussed as events in the unfolding story present. Events that chronologically precede this hospital stay occur as disruptions of the unfolding story and I consider these events to be in the story past, relative to the first chapter.

The story present is not immediately discernible. While I consider the hospital stay in the beginning of the novel as the zero degree of the unfolding story present, it is rather difficult to determine a suitable place on the timeline of the story for this event. The only way to distinguish between hospital stays is to trace the number of missions that Yossarian has completed and compare it with the constantly increasing number of missions that would allow him and other pilots to retire. In chapter seventeen, two hospital visits are recounted: one after Yossarian had completed 32 missions (40 are required) and the other ten days later, after Yossarian completes six more missions (the required number has been raised to 45 and then to 50 while Yossarian is staying in the hospital) (Heller 2004: 190). In chapter one, Yossarian witnesses the death of the soldier in white. Chapter seventeen mentions this death from the perspective of story future: "in the hospital that last time there had been the soldier in white" (Heller 2004: 192). By chapter seventeen, the story present had progressed to 55 required missions and since no other hospital visits are mentioned between 45–55 required missions, "that last time" must refer to the events of chapter one. The first chapter also mentions Yossarian's meeting with the chaplain during this hospital stay. After the Avignon mission, during Snowden's funeral, the chaplain had not yet met Yossarian (Heller 2004: 235, 312, 328). Since the 32-mission hospital stay occurs after Yossarian returns from a visit to Rome and Snowden is still alive (Heller 2004: 188), it would not be possible to place Yossarian's first meeting with the chaplain after he had finished 32 missions. Therefore, I consider the zero degree of the unfolding story present to begin after Yossarian had flown six missions more than the previous 32 and when 45 missions were required (Heller 2004: 190).

Following this hospital stay, events branch into several directions. The story present continues with references to a growing number of required missions and is interrupted with narration of events in the story past. It is not easy to distinguish which of the events occur in the story present relative to the first chapter and which in the story past. However, clues, such as references to the number of missions flown by Yossarian, the number of required missions, the names of missions, as well as mentions of characters' deaths, may help in distinguishing between past events and unfolding events. By the time Yossarian flees to the hospital at 38 missions flown, most of the biggest missions have become past events. I consider

three missions, Ferrara, The Big Siege of Bologna, and Avignon, to be past major events that constantly interrupt the story present. There are a few minor events that only occur in the past (for example the Glorious Loyalty Oath Crusade). There are also several thematically connected major recurring events in both in the story past and in the unfolding story, such as the many different hospital stays, visits to Rome, disappearances and deaths of characters, and Milo Minderbinder’s efforts at building his syndicate. While I will mostly discuss major events, minor reoccurring events are significant for both the form and content of the novel. Minor reoccurring events include minor missions, squabbles among higher officers, fist fights at the officers’ club, Yossarian’s visits to people with authority to get out of combat duty, attempts on Yossarian’s life, Yossarian’s contemplations on death, as well as the questioning of Yossarian’s sanity. The unfolding narrative mostly consists of major and minor reoccurring events. There is only one major event that does not occur in the story past and takes place entirely in the story present.¹⁴⁴ This event, or rather cluster of events, concerns the squadron chaplain, R.O. Shipman, and his attempts at trying to help Yossarian.¹⁴⁵

The novel’s forty-two chapters are extensively detailed. A summary of all the chapters would take up too much space in this section. The following figure lists the major and minor events that make up the bulk of the novel.

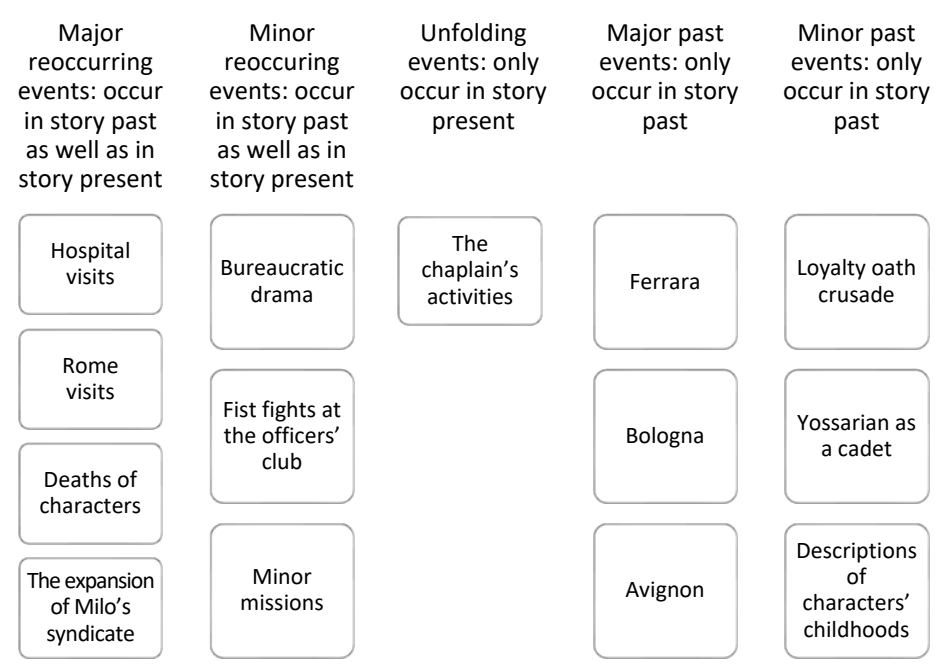


Figure 1: List of major and minor events in Catch-22

¹⁴⁴ While the chaplain does reminisce about the story past (about Snowden’s funeral), all of the scenes and descriptions featuring him unfold in the story present.

¹⁴⁵ In some editions of the novel, the chaplain’s name is A.T. Tappman

In the beginning of the novel, the story of *Catch-22* barely seems to progress as the past and present are almost indistinguishable. The first cycle, consisting of chapters 1–16, presents events as fragments, most of which feature major and minor past events. As readers are unfamiliar with most of the events at the beginning of the novel, development of a coherent story time is rather challenging. Since fragments of past events are woven into short descriptions within the story present, it becomes difficult to differentiate the story present from the story past. Interweaving events contribute to the effect of stillness and timelessness.

The unfolding story present follows Yossarian after his release from the hospital. The first third of the novel features few combat missions that occur in the story present. Instead, the story present focuses on Yossarian's struggle to become eligible for discharge from duty and the dismissal of his requests by those in power. Past events include those that occurred immediately before Yossarian's first hospital visit (e.g. the Avignon mission) as well as those that reach farther into the past (e.g. Yossarian's cadet days, the childhood of a minor character). In addition, many of the chapters in the first third of the novel begin with a generalized description of a major or a minor character (chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13). Since the characters are numerous, keeping track of them and their relationship to Yossarian can be complicated.

The first third of the novel becomes more linear with rising action related to a major past event – the Great Big Siege of Bologna. While the mission is briefly alluded to throughout the first cycle, references to the Bologna mission become more frequent starting from chapter 10, with chapters 12, 14, and 15 focusing almost entirely on the Bologna mission. The linearity governing the description of the Bologna mission marks a remarkable change in the narrative. Contrasting the constant temporal dislocation of most of the chapters within the novel's first third, the continuity and consistency of the Bologna narrative leaves the impression that the Bologna mission marks the culmination of the first cycle. After the long description of the Great Big Siege of Bologna, few of the ensuing chapters mention the mission. Most of the references to Bologna remain within the first third of the novel. After the events of Bologna and Yossarian's ensuing emergency leave to Rome, Yossarian returns to the hospital, indicating the launch of a new cycle.

The second cycle, consisting of chapters 17–33, forms another cohesive unit that begins in the hospital and ends with a visit to Rome. While chapters 1–16 frequently switch between story past and story present, chapters 17–33 are less fragmented and mostly unfold in the story present. While the beginning of the second cycle still features plenty of fragments from the story past, most of the narrative becomes linear starting from chapter 27. Unlike the first cycle of chapters, the story present progresses rapidly in the second cycle as the chapters feature mostly linear, sequential events that have been temporalized through references to months and seasons. Many of the past and reoccurring events presented as short fragments in the first cycle are fleshed out in the second cycle (e.g. events immediately before and after the Avignon mission, Milo's bombing of the squadron).

Milo's activities in story past come into focus as a central theme of the second cycle. Another prominent storyline concerns the chaplain's (mostly failed) attempts to help Yossarian and the squadron

As the events presented in the second cycle are considerably more linear, the pacing of the novel becomes progressively more rapid. The pace of the novel is also accelerated by descriptions of combat missions in the story present. While the first third of the novel features past missions, which are mostly described from the point of view of the story present, the second cycle includes descriptions of missions and other incidents in progress. Although the pacing of chapters 17–33 differs from chapters 1–16, the two units share thematic similarities. Character expositions, generalizations, messy dialogues, and analepses into near past and far past are presented in both cycles. While linearity and added detail in descriptions somewhat helps in determining the order of events, it is still not easy to piece together the novel's story time based on the first two thirds of the novel. The differences between past and present events are also more clearly indicated in the second cycle. The linear description of incidents in the story past or the story present renders the events more immediate. Instead of ambiguous references to past incidents that have left lasting trauma on Yossarian, incidents in the story present and their effect on Yossarian are immediately described. This allows readers to synthesize information about events in the story alongside the unfolding of textual present as the linearity creates a correlation between the unfolding of the discourse present and the story present.

Although the final cycle is only half as long as the previous two, all the previously established patterns are still present. The hospital is again used as a framing device for the last 8 chapters of the novel and the now-familiar chapters on certain themes also resurface: there is a chapter on Milo's activities, a chapter in Rome, a chapter on the chaplain, a chapter that mostly consists of dialogue, as well as a chapter on the higher officers. The pacing of the last eight chapters increases in intensity as events unfold over a short period of narration. Most of the final third of the novel unfolds in the story present. However, the last cycle also includes quite a bit of generalization as well as a long analepsis into the story past. The past event unfolding at the very end of the novel details the core conflict and primary motivation for most of Yossarian's activity in the novel – Yossarian's witnessing of Snowden's death. The successive passing of Yossarian's friends determines the heightened pacing of the novel's final third. Instead of vague mentions of character deaths with little to no accompanying detail that was usual for the first cycle, character deaths are described immediately and often in generous detail in the final cycle. Most of the events narrated in these chapters are linear and with few interruptions.

As the discourse time of *Catch-22* is so fragmented in the first half of the novel, constructing a coherent story time is challenging. At the beginning of the novel, readers are bombarded with names of characters and names of missions with little indication to the significance of the characters within the story and barely any mention of the period in which the missions occurred. Reading the novel becomes easier in the second half, when linearity becomes more apparent.

However, at a first reading, arranging the events of the novel into a linear order is still challenging. Even with the mostly linear description of events in the novel's second half, keeping track of the story present is complicated due to the constant oscillation between story past and present that occurs with little to no warning.

4.2 Story Time

Catch-22 is structured in a way that interferes with the reader's production of story time. The simultaneous unfolding of events in the story present and the interruption of the story past contributes to the complex temporality of the novel. The reader might easily feel ungrounded within discourse time for the majority of the novel. Gradually, however, supporting elements begin to emerge, helping the reader gain a better understanding of the narrative. As mentioned above, the temporality of *Catch-22* consists of the unfolding story present, reoccurring events, major past events, and minor past events, with the past events constantly intruding into the story present. Despite the interruptions, once the story present is established, hints within past events can help establish a story time for the novel. Since the narrative of *Catch-22* is fragmented, constructing a story time pattern requires rigorous attention to elements that help determine the timeframe of the storyworld.

In this section, my focus is mostly on elements of text that 1) help the reader establish a story time pattern, and 2) prevent or delay the formation of story time. In *Catch-22*, mission names, mission numbers, references to specific places and settings, as well as character deaths help in the development of story time. Many of these elements are connected to the content of the novel. In contrast, textual strategies within the form of the novel, such as constant anachronies, generalizations, and the circular quality of many of the events, interrupt the creation of story time. Some of the elements discussed can simultaneously help the process of story production and obstruct it. Temporal expressions, which ground the narrative in a specific month or season, will help in the organization of events. Yet, some temporal expressions, such as "the last time they had seen each other," refer to incidents that have no other point of reference (Heller 2004: 18). With no way to identify the period referred to, readers will have a difficult time establishing a story time chronology. In the sections below, I will first comment on the formal elements that help or hinder the creation of story time and then I will examine how these elements function within the narrative by looking into some of the events presented in the novel.

Déjà Vu, Presque Vu, Jamais Vu

The constant return to certain events frames the reading experience of *Catch-22*. In some cases, the repetition of events and phrases helps establish the temporal order of the story as it anchors the presented fragments into a larger framework.

Yet, the circular arrangement of discourse time also disrupts the causal coherence of the narrative as the repeating information breaks up the progression of the story present. The recurring sensation of having already lived through the events described affects the characters as well as the readers. Some of the organizing principles of the novel are explained in what can be seen as metacommentary within the chaplain's contemplation on seeing a naked man in a tree during a funeral:

For a few precarious seconds, the chaplain tingled with a weird, occult sensation of having experienced the identical situation before in some prior time or existence. He endeavored to trap and nourish the impression in order to predict, and perhaps even control, what incident would occur next, but the afatus melted away unproductively, as he had known beforehand it would. *Déjà vu*. The subtle, recurring confusion between illusion and reality that was characteristic of paramnesia fascinated the chaplain, and he knew a number of things about it. He knew, for example, that it was called paramnesia, and he was interested as well in such corollary optical phenomena as *jamais vu*, never seen, and *presque vu*, almost seen. There were terrifying, sudden moments when objects, concepts and even people that the chaplain had lived with almost all his life inexplicably took on an unfamiliar and irregular aspect that he had never seen before and which made them totally strange: *jamais vu*. And there were other moments when he almost saw absolute truth in brilliant flashes of clarity that almost came to him: *presque vu*. The episode of the naked man in the tree at Snowden's funeral mystified him thoroughly. It was not *déjà vu* for at the time he had experienced no sensation of ever having seen a naked man in a tree at Snowden's funeral before. It was not *jamais vu*, since the apparition was not of someone, or something, familiar appearing to him in an unfamiliar guise. And it was certainly not *presque vu*, for the chaplain did see him. (Heller 2004: 235).

The same unease can seize the reader as they read through episodes already described previously that seem familiar and recognizable but also foreign and strange. Feelings of unusual recognition affect events that have been described repeatedly but may also appear when reading about events that only take place once as many of the situations start to mirror one another.

Chapter thirty-nine provides a condensed example of the constant *déjà vu* that occurs throughout the novel. In this chapter, Yossarian's position reflects that of the reader throughout the novel – he becomes a witness to events that he can almost recognize but which remain singular. Yossarian's excursion through Rome is narrated in two long paragraphs, spanning six pages. While drifting through the city, Yossarian witnesses injustice and violence in situations that progressively become crueler. As he wanders through the poverty-stricken, crime-infested Rome, Yossarian, in a distressed state of mind cannot help but notice the parallels between the incidents he sees on his walk. They mostly appear in pairs – Yossarian observes a disturbing scene and then immediately spots a more severe situation. The first pair concerns young poor children: Yossarian first sees a young poor boy in tattered clothes, bare feet and a “sickly face [that] was pale and sad,” only to soon observe an even younger and poorer child, “an infant in black rags” in the

arms of his mother (Heller 2004: 472). Walking along “in lonely torture” and still reflecting on the poor children, Yossarian witnesses “an Allied soldier having convulsions on the ground,” with soldiers around him “striving to help him and hold him still” (Heller 2004: 473–474). Yet, soon two military policemen appear to announce that the soldier having a seizure is under arrest. Walking away from the situation, Yossarian hears “an unhappy female voice pleading ‘Please don’t. Please don’t’” from a window above him; on the next block, a woman on the street, surrounded by a large group of soldiers, is begging “Pleeshe don’t” (Heller 2004: 474). After hurrying past the situation, Yossarian encounters another pair: a whimpering dog on a rope being beaten by a man followed by a man “beating a small boy brutally in the midst of an immobile crowd of adult spectators who made no effort to intervene” on the next corner (Heller 2004: 475). As these last two incidents are so close, Yossarian comes to a realization:

Yossarian recoiled with sickening recognition. He was certain he had witnessed that same horrible scene sometime before. *Déjà vu*? The sinister coincidence shook him and filled him with doubt and dread. It was the same scene he had witnessed a block before, although everything in it seemed quite different. (Heller 2004: 475).

The reference to *déjà vu* will direct the reader’s attention back to the chaplain’s meditation on his experiences. Mirroring the chaplain as well as the reader’s position, the events witnessed by Yossarian represent the uncanny feeling of experiencing something that is neither *déjà vu*, *jamais vu*, nor *presque vu*, events that are familiar but somehow also different.

Repeating events and phrases may help or hinder the formation of story time. On the one hand, as events are recounted or at least hinted at in various contexts, readers may be able to position the events within a larger framework of story time. Missions that are described frequently, for example, will eventually be positioned in relation to one another. I will demonstrate this through the three major missions – Ferrara, the Big Siege of Bologna, and Avignon – below. It is especially helpful if two or more missions are mentioned in close proximity. For example, when Yossarian stays in the hospital after having finished 38 missions, he mentions that “[b]eing at the hospital was better than being over Bologna or flying over Avignon.” This informs the reader that these events are in the story past, relative to the hospital stay that establishes the story present (Heller 2004: 190). Even if the hints are brief, the context in which events are mentioned will help situate them. For example, Colonel Cathcart’s listing of “Feathers in My Cap!!! !!” and “Black Eyes!!!!” helps establish that each of the listed events has occurred in the story past (Heller 2004: 244).

However, other repetitions obstruct the formation of story time. Similar events, such as frequent hospital visits, may interfere with the development of story time as the reader can never be certain whether the events are distinct or connected. Several of these, such as visits to the officers’ club or Yossarian’s frequent hospital visits, are not only difficult to place because they reoccur but because other added elements (e.g. temporal markers, generalizations) generate clutter and prevent

compartmentalization. For example, determining how many distinct visits to the officers' club are narrated is not only difficult because of the frequent reoccurrence of the event but also because of the use of ambiguous temporal phrases – “that night,” “the evening before,” “just a few weeks before,” “every night again” – that are not grounded in any specific time (Heller 2004: 218, 310). Repetition itself, depending on the context, may or may not distort story time but repetition combined with other elements, such as temporal markers with no reference points might seriously obstruct story time creation.

Generalizations

Generalizations are an often-used narrative technique within *Catch-22* that add to the indeterminacy of temporal development as they describe a state with no temporal scope. There are two types of atemporal generalization: 1) character exposition and 2) generalization of frequent events. Chapters in the first third of the novel include descriptions of characters, which often contain descriptions of events in which the characters participated but no temporalization of these events within the larger framework of the novel. Since the novel also has a large cast of characters, generalized descriptions of characters that have not been properly introduced impede the reading of the passages. Generalizations of frequent events are usually vague and either refer to several events or to no specific event. Since many of the events and occurrences are repeated in the narrative, generalization often replaces repetition. For example, the reader finds out in the second chapter that Major Major “went jumping out of the window of his office each time Yossarian bullied his way past Sergeant Towser to speak to him” (Heller 2004: 25). The passage implies that this occurrence is frequent and yet, only one instance of Yossarian trying to visit Major Major is narrated (Heller 2004: 116–119).

While some repetition may help the development of story time in certain cases, generalizations almost always hinder the formation of story time. Generalization creates a sense of simultaneity that tends to complicate the compartmentalization of story past and story present. When events are presented in a generalized manner, it may seem that they are happening throughout the novel. However, while reading the novel, the reader has no way of knowing how often the generalized events actually occur and which individual events coincide with generalized events. The use of generalization is one of the foremost reasons why a large part of the novel's temporality feels stagnant.

Generalization produces major difficulties especially in the beginning of the novel as it takes some time for the reader to determine the story present and to isolate events from the story past. Generalizations in the first part of the novel can become particularly confusing if specific events precede or follow the generalized descriptions as the specific events are barely contextualized within the first third of the novel. The complexity created by generalizations often results from the asymmetry between story time and discourse time. While many of the events generalized have already occurred during the story present, readers have not yet

reached the description of these events in textual chronology and will thus be unable to locate them immediately within story time.

Almost Like the Morning Seven Months Later After the Night

Temporal expressions and demonstratives are another category that influences the reader's story production. By temporal expressions, I mean references to a specific or ambiguous period, such as "last time," "early August afternoon," "earlier that evening," "in the blazing summertime," etc. Temporal expressions may refer to historical dates, months and seasons, and duration (e.g. 10 days).¹⁴⁶ In *Catch-22*, temporal expressions appear regularly throughout the novel and may help or hinder the reader's understanding of story time, depending on the context. Even though no specific historical dates are presented in the novel, general knowledge about the period might still help in constructing a timeline for the novel. As the novel is set during the Second World War, readers could rely on historical facts, like the arrival of the Allied troops in Rome on June 5, 1944. Therefore, it can be assumed that the day of the parade during which Major – de Coverley was injured is in early June and that the apartments are rented in Rome around the same time. This dating is confirmed by the fact that the war in Europe in the fall of 1944 is almost over according to the characters themselves (Heller 2004: 367, 460). Since some months are explicitly mentioned, it can be assumed that most of the novel covers the time between spring to late autumn of 1944.¹⁴⁷ Since Yossarian spends two Thanksgivings in the US as a cadet, it can be assumed that this was during 1942 and 1943, as the United States joins the war in December 1941 (Heller 2004: 208). Therefore, Yossarian probably joins the squadron in Pianosa sometime in late 1943 or early 1944. While historical dates can be correlated with story time, this does not establish the foundation of story time nor does it provide any verification for the events. Readers may rely on their knowledge of history, but when encountered in fiction, historical events are fictionalized.¹⁴⁸ A reading of the novel through historical dates can, however, provide potential story times.

The complexity of the novel's temporality stems from the frequent appearance of vague and indeterminate temporal expressions. Mostly, once a link between a temporal expression and a specific event is established, further information will strengthen the associations between events, helping the reader solidify their story time. However, many of the temporal expressions do not have any points of

¹⁴⁶ I will not conduct an analysis of verb tenses or other grammatical categories of temporality. While references to dates and times influence the reading of the story, grammatical verb tense operates on the level of syntax, which I will not analyze here.

¹⁴⁷ However, some passages reach back further, e.g. to Major Major's, Chief White Halfcoat's, and Nately's childhoods.

¹⁴⁸ Heller was, most likely, being deliberately ambiguous, as evidenced by him setting the novel on the island of Pianosa. While the island exists, Heller notes that it is too small to accommodate the events of the novel.

reference; therefore, contextualizing events may be difficult and in some cases may even undermine the reader's developing story time. Temporal expressions that refer to events not narrated predominantly convolute story time. These start appearing from the very first chapter. "The day before" the chaplain and Yossarian first meet, a fire breaks out in the kitchen but the fire is never mentioned again and so, the chaplain's visit to Yossarian could have taken place at any time during the "less than ten days" Yossarian spends in the hospital (Heller 2004: 11–12).¹⁴⁹

Passages that refer to several events within just a few sentences also significantly complicate story time. At the beginning of the novel, with very little information about any of the events, the readers are faced with the following:

Late one night, Havermeyer fired a shot at a mouse that brought Hungry Joe bolting out at him barefoot, ranting at the top of his screechy voice and emptying his own .45 into Havermeyer's tent as he came charging down one side of the ditch and up the other and vanished all at once inside one of the slit trenches that had appeared like magic beside every tent the morning after Milo Minderbinder had bombed the squadron. It was just before dawn during the Great Big Siege of Bologna, when tongueless dead men peopled the night hours like living ghosts and Hungry Joe was half out of his mind because he had finished his missions again and was not scheduled to fly. Hungry Joe was babbling incoherently when they fished him out from the dank bottom of the slit trench, babbling of snakes, rats and spiders. (Heller 2004: 35)

While Havermeyer, Hungry Joe, and Milo have been briefly introduced, the reader has little information about them and their relationship to Yossarian and to each other. The Great Big Siege of Bologna has also been mentioned but little else is known about it by chapter three. This is also the first time that Milo's bombing of the squadron is mentioned. However, what makes the passage especially complicated is not just the number of incidents mentioned but the fact that none of these are associated with one another. It is also not clear whether the phrase "It was just before dawn during the Great Big Siege of Bologna" refers to Havermeyer shooting a mouse or Milo's bombing of the squadron or something else. From the information provided in the passage, the readers will learn that the trenches appeared after Milo bombed the squadron. Hungry Joe falls into the trench after an altercation with Havermeyer "[l]ate one night" and "babbles incoherently when" he is helped out of the trench. But does this occur at the same time as when Hungry Joe is "half out of his mind" right before the Bologna mission?

If this were the only paragraph that includes information about Milo's bombing of the squadron, it would be easy to conclude that Milo bombed the squadron right before the Bologna mission. However, as Milo's is forgiven for bombing

¹⁴⁹ This fire could be associated with Milo's bombing of the squadron but as Milo specifically tells his crew to spare "the landing strip and the mess halls so that they could land safely when their work was done and enjoy a hot snack before retiring," so it is likely that the fire in the kitchen is not related to the bombing (Heller 2004: 11–12, 295).

the squadron because of the huge profit he made for the syndicate, the bombing could not have happened before the dawn of the Great Big Siege of Bologna. During the incidents delaying the Bologna mission, Milo is unable to sell the Egyptian cotton he bought, leading to the near-collapse of his syndicate (Heller 2004: 140). The situation with cotton persists during Snowden's funeral, after the Bologna mission (Heller 2004: 302–306). Milo mentions not wanting to see his syndicate die during Snowden's funeral, suggesting that he has not yet seen the profit from the bombing (Heller 2004: 303). Establishing the context for Milo's bombing of the squadron does not help the passage in chapter three, which remains temporally ambiguous.¹⁵⁰ While the complex unfolding of many separate sets of events in one passage, as in the passage above, is not common within the novel, it occurs often enough to confuse readers.¹⁵¹

Commentary on months, seasons, and weather, on the other hand, is helpful in assessing story time. The spring and the “blazing summertime” are in the story past while the unfolding story and discourse present concludes in late fall, when “[i]t's very cold out” (Heller 2004: 190–191, 498). Much of the story present unfolds from August to late fall, with Yossarian's hospital visit in chapter one presumably taking place in mid-to-late July or early August. As the story present continues to unfold, the chaplain goes to visit Colonel Cathcart about the high number of required missions in late August (Heller 2004: 228). Scheisskopf arrives at the squadron some time in early fall when the “summer offensive has petered out” (Heller 2004: 368). When the weather turns cold, after the deaths of Kid Sampson and McWatt, Yossarian is warm in his tent thanks to the stove built by Orr (Heller 2004: 398). The fall also brings “stinging rain and dull, chilling fog” as “the blind, cold, gusty October nights” start to weigh heavy in Yossarian's mind, reminding him of all the friends he lost in the summer months (Heller 2004: 397). As Yossarian spends Thanksgiving Day (presumably in 1944) in his tent and near mess halls, and the following day in the hospital visiting Nately, the La Spezia mission, during which Nately and Dobbs are killed, presumably takes place in late November (Heller 2004: 413, 431–432). Thus, Yossarian's last visit to Rome probably takes place in late November or early December (Heller 2004: 465).

The references to weather can also help situate the chaplain in the story time. The chaplain meets Yossarian in the hospital and “almost two weeks later” Yossarian visits him “to ask to be taken off combat duty” (Heller 2004: 307–308). A few weeks after meeting Yossarian, he is also asked to join Yossarian and his friends at the officers' club (Heller 2004: 218). The chaplain visits Colonel Cathcart after the issuing of the 60-mission requirement but does not succeed in convincing higher officers of the immorality of the act. His failure prompts him to visit Major Major the same afternoon, again fruitlessly, as the two characters narrowly miss each another (Heller 2004: 314–318). While the visit to Colonel

¹⁵⁰ However, it can help in other ways. For example, as Milo is still burdened by his Egyptian cotton after Snowden's funeral, it helps confirm that Avignon occurs after Bologna.

¹⁵¹ Other examples of this can be found in e.g. Heller 2004: 122, 218

Cathcart is supposed to have occurred under the “late August morning sun,” the failed meeting with Major Major is stated to have occurred in the “early August afternoon” (Heller 2004: 228, 317). This seems to introduce a serious temporal paradox but inconsistency could be resolved if one interprets ‘late’ in “late August morning sun” as occurring late in the month of August, and ‘early’ in “early August afternoon” as referring to the afternoon and not the month.

The Colonel Wants Fifty Missions

The primary point of reference for readers in their creation of story is the reporting of mission numbers, as these can be tracked without significant effort. The Twenty-seventh Air Force Headquarters requires the men to fly forty combat missions and yet, the novel’s events end at eighty required missions (Heller 2004: 66, 431). The number of required missions is first mentioned at the end of chapter two. After leaving the hospital in the story present, Yossarian goes to see Doc Daneeka to persuade the Doc to remove him from combat duty and send him home. Yossarian is told that flying fifty missions is necessary for being released from duty. While other characters, such as Hungry Joe, are able to reach the required number of missions, Yossarian always falls short, this time, having only completed 44 out of the now-required 50 missions (Heller 2004: 24). However, even completing 50 missions would probably not make Yossarian eligible for discharge, as there were plenty of “men who had finished their fifty missions. There were more of them now when Yossarian had gone into the hospital, and they were still waiting. /.../ They were in a race and knew it, because they knew from bitter experience that Colonel Cathcart might raise the number of missions again at any time” (Heller 2004: 30–31). Although the required number of missions has no effect on the fate of the characters, it does not stop the characters from rushing to finish their missions in the hopes of being sent home.

The number of required missions throughout the first five chapters of the novel remains at 50. It is only in chapter six, after having hinted at and even described several significant past events (Ferrara, Bologna, Orvieto, Milo bombing the squadron, capture of Rome, Avignon) that a lower number of required missions is mentioned. As the narrative delves into a longer analepsis, the narrator introduces Hungry Joe and explains that in Yossarian’s eyes, Hungry Joe is “the biggest hero the Air Force had /.../ for he had flown more combat tours of duty than any other hero the Air Force had. He had flown six combat tours of duty. Hungry Joe had finished flying his first combat tour of duty when twenty-five missions were all that were necessary” (Heller 2004: 60). As Hungry Joe finished his first combat tour of duty, “Yossarian was laid up in the hospital with a burst of clap” and yet, he was still almost able to catch up to Hungry Joe by “flying six missions in six days” (Heller 2004: 60). During Yossarian’s twenty-third mission to Arezzo, “Colonel Nevers was killed and that was as close as he had ever been able to come to going home” because the next day, the new Colonel, Cathcart, raised “the number of missions required from twenty-five to thirty” (Heller 2004: 60).

After chapter six, the required number of missions keeps fluctuating as the narrative switches between story present and story past. The first milestone of twenty-five missions is mentioned once more during an argument between Yossarian and Clevinger in chapter 17, when Clevinger argues that Yossarian could have finished his twenty-five missions and gone home had he not “been laid up in the hospital with venereal disease for ten days back there in Africa” (Heller 2004: 197). After the number of missions is raised to thirty, it is not clear how much time passes until the required number of missions is raised to thirty-five. The Orvieto mission, in which Mudd dies, is reported to have taken place during the thirty-five-mission requirement (Heller 2004: 124). The next milestone of forty missions is assigned after Bologna and Yossarian finds out about it when he returns from Rome (Heller 2004: 189). After this disclosure, Yossarian runs “right into the hospital” as he was on track to finish thirty-five missions but is discouraged by the higher requirement (Heller 2004: 189). Upon his return, the number of missions is raised to forty-five, which prompts Yossarian to run right back to the hospital after flying six missions (Heller 2004: 190). Soon after, Yossarian again returns from the hospital, completes missions until he reaches forty-eight missions (which are mostly not narrated) and finds out that fifty and then fifty-five missions are suddenly required to return home (Heller 2004: 66–67).

Although there are few hints that connect mission names to mission numbers, several important missions need to fit between the required twenty-five missions during the Arezzo mission in the story past, and the required fifty missions, which came into effect after Yossarian’s hospital visit in the first chapter in the story present. While the Orvieto mission has been explicitly mentioned to have taken place while thirty-five missions were required, the Ferrara mission, the Great Big Siege of Bologna and the Avignon mission also need to be placed somewhere between twenty-five and forty-five required missions as they take place in the story past.¹⁵² None of the missions are associated with a specific number but there are some clues that may help in creating an order for the three big events of the novel.

The Ferrara missions, where Yossarian flew ten missions in seven days, must have preceded the others. Except for the fact that ten missions were flown in seven days, there are no other factors associating the Ferrara mission with the required number of missions and therefore it is impossible to situate it on a definitive timeline.¹⁵³ However, situating the Bologna mission can help to determine

¹⁵² While the first few chapters mention fifty required missions, chapter 17 mentions that Yossarian’s first chapter hospital visit takes place after the requirement of forty-five missions (Heller 2004: 190). Therefore, the missions mentioned need to have taken place between 25 and 45 required missions.

¹⁵³ Certain authors assume that Yossarian flew all ten Ferrara missions. However, there is no indication that this is the case. It is known that Yossarian flew on the tenth mission as this is when he destroys the bridge. However, there is no reason to assume that Yossarian flew all of the previous ones as well. Since many of Yossarian’s missions remain unnarrated, it is not possible to determine how many of the Ferrara missions Yossarian participated in.

when Ferrara occurred. Since Colonel Cathcart is the one who volunteered the squadron for the Ferrara mission, it is certain that the Ferrara mission took place sometime between thirty and forty-five required missions. During the Ferrara mission, Corporal Snark poisons the squadron (Heller 2004: 22, 72). During the Bologna missions, Milo had not heard of Corporal Snark's shenanigans with food and it can, therefore, be assumed that the Ferrara missions took place before the Great Big Siege of Bologna. Since Milo was not yet the mess officer during the Ferrara mission, it can also be assumed that he joined the squadron sometime after the requirement of the thirty missions. As Yossarian's mistake of going over the target twice happened during the Ferrara mission, it must have occurred before Bologna because "[b]y the time of the mission to Bologna, Yossarian was brave enough not to go around over the target even once" (Heller 2004: 62, 161).

At the end of the Great Big Siege of Bologna, the number of required missions must have still been at 35 as Yossarian's hears of the raising of the missions to 40 after returning from Rome (Heller 2004: 175–176, 189–190). Therefore, as with Ferrara, Bologna can be placed between the requirement of 30 and 35 missions, with the number of missions being raised only after Bologna. After the raising of the number of missions to 40 after Bologna, Yossarian has completed 32 missions, goes to the hospital, returns from the hospital, and flies six more missions. This information is reported only in a couple of sentences in chapter seventeen (Heller 2004: 190). This means that the Avignon mission, Snowden's funeral, and Yossarian receiving a medal for Ferrara could have taken place during the six missions between the required 40 and 45 missions. Due to the shock of Snowden's death, Yossarian probably did not fly missions between Avignon and his hospital visit in chapter one. Indeed, it was the aftermath of the Avignon mission that probably drove Yossarian to the hospital again (Heller 2004: 190, 298–299). Therefore, the Avignon mission could be narrowed down to have been Yossarian's 38th mission (Heller 2004: 189–190).

Another reason the Avignon mission can be confidently placed between Bologna and the zero degree of story present is because Snowden is alive during Bologna but his funeral occurs before Yossarian first meets the chaplain. Snowden's funeral is conducted by the chaplain, who, does not recognize naked Yossarian sitting on a tree and instead, interprets him as an apparition (Heller 2004: 235, 312). There are also formal markers to indicate that the Avignon mission could not have taken place in the story present. Unfolding events are presented in a fairly linear manner and once the story present is narrated, there is no return to it in the form of analepses.¹⁵⁴ The analepses that disrupt the story present mostly concern past events that happen before the hospital visit in the first chapter. Since the Avignon mission is constantly returned to in discourse time, it is a good indication that the Avignon mission took place during story past and not during story present.

¹⁵⁴ While there are some references (e.g. Yossarian thinks of the deaths of friends who died in the story present) to previously narrated story present, there is no further narration of it.

Most of the narrated story past occurs between thirty and forty-five missions. However, the three most momentous events, Ferrara, Bologna, and Avignon, can be difficult to place on a story timeline. As the passages describing Ferrara, Bologna, and Avignon are often isolated in the narrative, it would be rather difficult to organize the events without compiling comprehensive tables of the events. The proposed chronological story time is only one interpretation that can be challenged by a different explanation for the fragments.

While past events are difficult to organize into a linear chronology, the unfolding events are presented in a fairly ordered manner, allowing for a sequential story present. Starting from the forty-five required missions, the story present develops in a continuous manner, interrupted only for the purpose of describing and dwelling on the story past. There are very few interruptions within the story present that refer back to a previously narrated unfolding event.¹⁵⁵ A reader may speculate that the underlying reason for starting the story present with the requirement of 45 missions is related to the requirement of 40 missions for a completed tour of duty by the Twenty-seventh Air Force Headquarters, with anything beyond mandated by the recently-appointed Colonel of the 256th Squadron. If only forty missions were required, there would be no unfolding present as all the events of the novel would be in the past. The increase of the number of missions to forty-five initiates Yossarian's desperate crusade to be dismissed from service. After his return from the hospital, Yossarian starts to visit Doc Daneeka, Major Major, and ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen to be released from combat duty. After flying six (unnarrated) missions to reach forty-four, he finds out that the Colonel has raised the number of required missions to 50 (Heller 2004: 24). Subsequent visits to Doc Daneeka are futile even after Yossarian completes more unnarrated missions (Heller 2004: 51, 60). The subsequent visits to Doc Daneeka on Pianosa and ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen in Rome are presented in a blend of the two interactions. Both confirm to Yossarian, who has now completed 48 missions, that he needs to complete 55 missions (Heller 2004: 66–67). Yossarian flies three more unnarrated missions until he reaches 51 and decides to visit Major Major, who, like everyone else, will not help Yossarian (Heller 2004: 118).

The chaplain decides to help Yossarian after the required number of missions is raised to 60. The chaplain's resolve is described in long, linear chapters, in which he manages to discuss the high number of required missions with Colonel Cathcart, Colonel Korn but misses his opportunity to discuss it with Major Major (Heller 2004: 226–228, 239, 318). Despite Yossarian's crusade against authority and to delay missions, Colonel Cathcart is confident in his power to raise the number of missions to as high as he wishes (Heller 2004: 240, 246, 249). The required number of missions is also indicated by "rows of tiny bombs" on the attire of CID men that pop up in the narrative (Heller 2004: 107–108, 233). The sixty required missions is in effect during a weekly milk run to Parma in which Yossarian is injured and ends up in the hospital (Heller 2004: 331–335). While

¹⁵⁵ One of the few analepses detailing a past story present occurs in chapter seventeen, when Yossarian's first chapter hospital stay is revisited.

Yossarian is in the hospital, Hungry Joe finishes another combat tour by flying all sixty missions and Yossarian is presented with a plot to murder Cathcart for the second time (Heller 2004: 342, 344–345). Although Yossarian is able to convince a psychiatrist of his poor mental state during his hospital stay, a case of mixed identities prevents Yossarian from being released from duty (Heller 2004: 337–350). During the sixty required missions, another mission to Avignon takes place, which Yossarian is able to avoid as he is in the hospital (Heller 2004: 352). After returning from the hospital Yossarian decides to go along with the murder plot, but as the plotter Dobbs had finished his own 60 missions, he is reluctant to jeopardize the potential opportunity to return home (Heller 2004: 351–352). Yossarian is thus unable to avoid another “rumored mission to Bologna,” which ends with his roommate, Orr, going missing (Heller 2004: 359, 363–364).

The sixty-mission period culminates in chapter thirty where McWatt accidentally kills Kid Sampson and the tragedy prompts Cathcart to raise the number of missions to sixty-five (Heller 2004: 388–390). After finding out that Doc Daneeka was on McWatt’s flight logs and is, therefore, presumed to have died on paper, Cathcart again raises the number of required missions by five (Heller 2004: 391). The unfolding events in the sixty-mission period in the story present are some of the longest and most extensive in the novel. The sixty-mission span is given a lot of space to develop and the events that are narrated during this duration are mostly presented in a linear, non-fragmented manner with fewer jumps in time than in previous periods of unfolding events. Due to the space given, it also seems to last a lot longer than other periods that can be measured with the required number of missions.

The seventy-mission period is not very long in discourse time. During this stage, Yossarian, who now lives alone in his tent, is forced to accommodate new roommates who are not afraid of flying the seventy missions or getting rid of the belongings of a dead man (Heller 2004: 398, 400, 402). At this stage, Chief White Halfcoat fulfills his prediction of getting pneumonia and dies in the hospital (Heller 2004: 400–401, 422). The seventy-mission period contains another trip to Rome during which Natelly is courting the woman he loves (Heller 2004: 404–409). When the number of required missions is raised to 80 due to Milo’s meddling, a difficult mission to La Spezia results in the deaths of Natelly and Dobbs, as well as 10 other unnamed men (Heller 2004: 430–432). The novel ends with 80 missions required for a completed tour of duty, which Yossarian refuses to fly after having completed 71 missions (Heller 2004: 459).

Major Major Major Major Missions

As the three major missions – the Ferrara mission, the Great Big Siege of Bologna, and the Avignon mission – interrupt the narrative often and cause a lot of temporal confusion, I will follow how these missions suspend the story present and examine the effect that the suspensions have on the reading experience. The incidents around the three missions are often repeated within the narrative with

various amounts of detail. Mentions of the Great Big Siege of Bologna and the Ferrara mission mostly remain within the first half of the novel while the Avignon mission echoes throughout the novel.

While the first few chapters mainly consist of the story present, the narrative interruptions by past major events already begin in chapter two. In a discussion with Clevinger at the officers' club in the story past, Yossarian mentions food poisonings during the Ferrara and Bologna missions (Heller 2004: 22). After the initial reference of the two missions, past events start to suspend the story present with increasing regularity as each interruption offers more and more information about one of the past events, eventually reaching a culmination during which the event is explored in detail. Each major past event dominates a different part of the novel during which the narrative mostly shifts between the story present and the past major event. The three missions discussed below, Ferrara, Big Bologna, and Avignon occur chronologically in close proximity within the story time. However, within discourse time, the missions are narrated over extensive textual space and are subject to varying levels of attention.

Although the Ferrara mission occurs earlier within story time, in discourse time, the Great Big Siege of Bologna is fully explored first. The significance of the Great Big Siege of Bologna can already be recognized in its name. In addition to the mission itself, I consider the episodes occurring around the time of the mission as parts of the larger event. In chapter three, an ominous reference is made to the dawn of the Great Big Siege of Bologna, "when tongueless dead men peopled the night hours like living ghosts" (Heller 2004: 35). Since discourse time has not yet reached the explanation of the siege, this early reference seems to foreshadow it. Yet, from the perspective of story present, the mention is actually an analepsis. From chapter ten onwards, the Big Siege of Bologna begins to dominate the narrative, with chapters 10, 12, 14, and 15 mostly focusing on the mission and the episodes surrounding it.

Since the Big Siege of Bologna is constantly delayed due to weather and other circumstances, the chapters discussing the mission are filled with descriptions of those circumstances where fear affects the characters who are supposed to fly the mission: "all was contaminated with death in the very next week during the Great Big Siege of Bologna when the moldy odor of mortality hung wet in the air with the sulphurous fog and every man scheduled to fly was already tainted" (Heller 2004: 125). Just like the mission is delayed due to various incidents in the story-world, the depiction of the Bologna mission is delayed for the readers within discourse time. While chapter ten reports on the prevailing mood of the characters before the mission, chapter eleven takes a detour to an even earlier event and so, proper description of the mission and surrounding episodes is delayed until chapter twelve, titled "Bologna." However, another delay comes in chapter 13, and descriptions of Bologna return in chapters 14 and 15. These two later chapters, outlining everything related to the mission and repeating a lot of the information previously hinted at, present the Big Siege of Bologna in a mostly linear manner.

The Bologna narrative begins by explaining why the mission was so revered: a "cruel series of postponements" stretched its length and the anticipation created

a vicious circle where, on the one hand, characters wish the mission to be over and, on the other, wish to not fly it yet (Heller 2004: 136). The circularity of this logic applies to the structure of the chapter as well – while the readers are made aware of the delay early on, reporting on the reasons is postponed. The first pages of chapter 12 include a summary of the episodes surrounding the mission – “during the first six days,” the rain delays missions, and then, “inexplicable phenomena like the epidemic of diarrhea or the bomb line that moved” occur – but these incidents are not described in detail (Heller 2004: 136, 137). Instead, this description appears later in the chapter, suspending resolution for the reader as well as the characters. In addition, the postponements are described in a reversed order – in discourse time, Yossarian’s tampering with the bomb line is described first, then his poisoning of the food and finally, a visit to the officers’ club the evening before it stops raining unfolds through dialogue. After the diarrhea epidemic, which resulted from the food poisoning, and the moving of the bomb line, the anticipation of the mission has reached its second week for the characters (Heller 2004: 143). By this time, rumors started spreading “about the destruction awaiting them at Bologna” (Heller 2004: 143). Immediately after locating this moment in time as “the middle of the second week,” a fight in the officers’ club between Yossarian and Colonel Korn is narrated (Heller 2004: 143). After the fight, Yossarian and his friends steal Captain Black’s car, crash it and then notice that the rain had stopped. Then Yossarian and his friends witness a fist fight between Hungry Joe and Huple’s cat. The transition to the night of the fight creates the impression that it occurs in the middle of the second week and yet the beginning of chapter 12 states that the rain stops falling “[t]he morning after Hungry Joe’s fist fight with Huple’s cat” (Heller 2004: 137). The depiction of that evening gives chapter 12 a circular quality – the chapter begins and ends with describing how rain is holding off the mission. Circularity of this kind makes the novel difficult to temporalize – it is very easy to miss repetitions and consider them as separate episodes.

The following chapter (13) briefly resumes the Bologna narrative from this point onwards but then branches into several directions while referring to events that precede and follow the Big Siege of Bologna. Chapter 14, however, develops the Bologna narrative from the day the group is finally forced to fly the mission. This chapter does not mention any other events and narration of Yossarian’s actions during the mission is linear. Since Yossarian is too afraid to fly the mission, he unplugs his headset and pretends that his intercom does not work to turn his plane around. As it only features one event, the pace of this chapter differs considerably from those of previous chapters. Instead of jumping from one event to another, from the story present to the past and back to the present, the chapter focuses on a couple of hours in one day. This slows down the narrative, giving it a heavy, sluggish quality. The chapter describes the surroundings of the squadron and the descriptions match the tempo of the adjective-heavy chapter. After Yossarian makes his plane turn back, he encounters “heavy, mesmerizing quiet blanketing mountains, sea and forests” (Heller 2004: 163). The “gentle, warm wind” provides a “haunting tranquility that hung like a drug over the vacated tents”

(Heller 20014: 163). After each member of his crew wanders “apart in a noiseless eddy of motion and [is] sucked away into the cloying yellow stillness,” Yossarian is left “alone in a ponderous, primeval lull” (Heller 2004: 164). Tired and exhausted, Yossarian wanders to the deserted beach where “[t]he only sounds were hushed ones, the bloated gurgle of the stream, the respirating hum of the tall grass and shrubs behind him, the apathetic moaning of the dumb, translucent waves” (Heller 2004: 165). The calm stillness of the chapter ends with the successful return of all planes in formation, which is a sign to Yossarian that the mission is still to be flown. The first flight to Bologna had been a “milk run,” a mission with minimal danger (Heller 2004: 166).

Chapter 15 also only reports on the Bologna mission. However, this time the pacing switches into a higher gear to again reflect the content of the chapter. After Yossarian is publicly reprimanded for turning back from the mission, it is revealed that Colonel Cathcart “got permission” for the group to go back to Bologna (Heller 2004: 167–168). This time, however, heavy flak results in the deaths of unnamed pilots (Heller 2004: 173). The chapter also zooms in on a couple of hours during which the mission is flown. However, the heaviness of the chapter differs from that of the previous chapter. Instead, the tone of the chapter is shaped by loud ‘boom-boom-boom-booms’ of flak and “the sharp, piercing crack!” of shells exploding all around Yossarian (Heller 2004: 168). The brutality of war surrounds Yossarian inside and outside of the plane. Yossarian is at the same time trying to escape the counter-measures of enemies on the ground and Aarfy’s terrorization inside the plane. The fast-paced description switches between paragraphs detailing the inside and outside dangers: while trying to direct his pilot, McWatt, out of the flak by yelling “*Climb, you bastard! Climb, climb, climb, climb!*” he is simultaneously forced to endure the provocations of Aarfy, who is blocking Yossarian’s only path of escape (Heller 2004: 169–172). The chapter ends when the mission ends and the Bologna narrative is replaced by a recurring episode, one of Yossarian’s visits to Rome. After the two linear chapters detailing the mission, it is only mentioned again in passing and holds little significance in further chapters.

Another frequently reappearing past event is the Ferrara mission. Just like the Big Siege of Bologna, the Ferrara mission is first mentioned in chapter two, when Yossarian mentions how his food had been poisoned (Heller 2004: 22). While the Bologna mission is prominent in discourse time for several chapters, information about the Ferrara mission is only revealed through short passages that are dispersed mostly within the first half of the novel. Unlike the Bologna mission, which becomes gradually more detailed, information about the Ferrara mission is repeated over and over again, with little added detail.

The Ferrara mission is first described in chapter six when the character Kraft was

dumped unceremoniously into doom over Ferrara by an exploding engine after Yossarian took his flight of six planes in over the target a second time. The group had missed the bridge at Ferrara again for the seventh straight day with the bombsight that could put bombs into a pickle barrel at forty thousand feet, and one whole week had already passed since Colonel Cathcart had volunteered to have

his men destroy the bridge in twenty-four hours. /.../ [Kraft] had lived innocuously for a little while and then had gone down in flame over Ferrara on the seventh day, while God was resting, when McWatt turned and Yossarian guided him in over the target on a second bomb run because Aarfy was confused and Yossarian had been unable to drop his bombs the first time. (Heller 2004: 62)

In addition to the information that 1) the food was poisoned during the mission; 2) Kraft died; 3) Yossarian went over the target a second time; 4) they had missed the bridge for seven days; 5) the Colonel volunteered the group to destroy the bridge in twenty-four hours, and 6) Aarfy got lost during the mission, readers find out in chapter nine 7) that Yossarian received a medal for his bravery in the Ferrara mission. While the poisoning of the squadron is mentioned only once more, as is the fact that Aarfy got lost during the last run to Ferrara, the rest of the information about Ferrara is repeatedly reiterated in passages throughout the novel (Heller 2004: 72; 122, 157–158, 240–241, 246, 331, 462, 458, 484). Only chapter thirteen, which breaks the linearity of the Bologna narrative, includes additional information about Ferrara. A conversation reveals that Yossarian received a medal not for bravery but because of confusion over whether Yossarian's actions were punishable or commendable. Since the bridge was eventually destroyed on Yossarian's second bomb run, the colonels opted for the strategy of acting "boastfully about something we ought to be ashamed of" as "[t]hat's a trick that never seems to fail" (Heller 2004: 160). Spanning three pages, the dialogue is the longest account of the Ferrara mission, although little new detail is provided in those three pages.

The Ferrara mission is also significant due to its connection to the Avignon mission. Yossarian only received the medal for bravery after the Avignon mission. (Heller 2004: 244). The mission, also located in the past in relation to the first chapter, casts a looming shadow over the entire story. The chapters containing detailed information about the Bologna and Ferrara missions are located relatively close to the chapters in which the missions are first referred to. After detailed descriptions of Ferrara and Bologna, the missions move out of focus. Information about the Avignon mission, on the other hand, is repeated until the very end of the novel. References to it first appear in chapter four, where the narrator explains that "Snowden had been killed over Avignon when Dobbs went crazy in mid-air and seized the controls away from Huple" (Heller 2004: 39). Throughout the novel, this information is constantly repeated, receiving increasingly more detail until mid-novel. Since the final third of the novel is mostly concerned with the unfolding timeline, Avignon is barely mentioned until chapter forty-one, where Snowden's death and Yossarian's actions during the Avignon mission are meticulously described.

Besides Dobbs going crazy mid-air and Snowden dying over Avignon, the event includes episodes just before and immediately after the mission. The briefing of the mission is interrupted when General Dreedle and his nurse step inside the briefing room and Yossarian decides to fall in love with the nurse. Moved by his fear of the nearing mission, Yossarian "throbbed and ached with

sorrow, fear and desire” and “in deep despair” moans a loud “Ooooooooooooooh,” which unleashes a collective moaning insurrection (Heller 2004: 252–254). The mission is followed by another insurrection as Yossarian undresses after Snowden bleeds all over him and remains naked due to the shock (Heller 2004: 250, 298). Yossarian is naked when Snowden is buried and when he is finally given a medal for his bravery in the Ferrara mission (Heller 2004: 115, 240, 250, 299). It is not clear when Yossarian decides to start wearing clothes again. Since the Avignon mission is the last major combat mission before the events of the first chapter, it seems that this decision was made at some point between the Avignon mission and Yossarian’s visit to the hospital.

Snowden’s funeral is another episode within the larger Avignon event. The episode is mostly mentioned in connection with the chaplain who saw Yossarian for the first time there, identifying him as the “naked man sitting in a tree at the cemetery” (Heller 2004: 309). The image is often recalled and given a mystical meaning by the chaplain, who mostly features within the mid-parts of the novel (Heller 2004: 235, 309, 312, 328). The funeral is also described through a dialogue between Milo and Yossarian. Remarks about the funeral proceedings are mixed with Milo’s lamentations about his business failings, creating an interesting juxtaposition that illuminates the motivations of the two characters and makes the grim situation somewhat farcical:

‘Look at that!’ he exclaimed in alarm. ‘Look at that! That’s a funeral going on down there. That looks like the cemetery. Isn’t it?’

Yossarian answered him slowly in a level voice. ‘They’re burying that kid who got killed in my plane over Avignon the other day. Snowden.’

‘What happened to him?’ Milo asked in a voice deadened with awe. ‘He got killed.’

‘That’s terrible,’ Milo grieved, and his large brown eyes filled with tears. ‘That poor kid. It really terrible.’ He bit his trembling lip hard, and his voice rose with emotion when he continued. ‘And it will get even worse if the mess halls don’t agree to buy my cotton. Yossarian, what’s the matter with them? Don’t they realize it’s their syndicate? Don’t they know they’ve all got a share?’ /.../

‘I can’t watch it,’ he cried, turning away in anguish. ‘I just can’t sit here and watch while those mess halls let my syndicate die.’ He gnashed his teeth and shook his head with bitter woe and resentment. ‘If they had any loyalty, they would buy my cotton till it hurts so that they can keep right on buying my cotton till it hurts them some more. They would build fires and burn up their underwear and summer uniforms just to create bigger demand. But they won’t do a thing. Yossarian, try eating the rest of this chocolate-covered cotton for me. Maybe it will taste delicious now.’ (Heller 2004: 302, 303).

While the majority of the novel has a similar tone of absurdity, the Avignon mission proper is mostly addressed in a serious manner. In the early and middle parts of the novel, “the mess on the mission to Avignon” (Heller 2004: 55, 56) is only explained by repeated descriptions of Dobbs going crazy because he had “no confidence” in his young pilot Huple (Heller 2004: 258). Dobbs assumes control of the plane and plunges it into a “heart-stopping, ear-splitting, indescribably

petrifying fatal dive that tore Yossarian's earphones free from their connection and hung him helplessly to the roof of the nose by the top of his head" (Heller 2004: 258). The messiness of the mission is metaphorical. Dobbs loses his composure in the middle of a mission and as a result, Yossarian, in the bomb bay, loses his means of communication with the rest of the plane until Huple regains control of the plane (Heller 2004: 381). Yossarian, then, is able to restore communication only to hear a horrifying cry for help, first from Dobbs, then from Snowden (Heller 2004: 258, 381). Since this is before Yossarian himself loses his nerve on missions, he attempts to treat Snowden (Heller 2004: 258, 381). It is in the descriptions of Snowden's injuries that the mess of the mission shifts from figurative to physical. Yossarian encounters

the yawning, raw, melon-shaped hole as big as a football in the outside of his thigh, the unsevered, blood-soaked muscle fibers inside pulsating weirdly like blind things with lives of their own, the oval, naked wound that was almost a foot long and made Yossarian moan in shock and sympathy the instant he spied it and nearly made him vomit (Heller 2004: 381).

Despite the initial revulsion, Yossarian is able to fix up the injury (Heller 2004: 500–501). Yet, the repeated pleadings of Snowden, "I'm cold. I'm cold," do not diminish (Heller 2004: 191, 259, 381, 501–504). When Yossarian discovers another wound, the back of the plane becomes even messier:

Yossarian bent forward to peer and saw a strangely colored stain seeping through the coveralls just above the armhole of Snowden's flak suit. Yossarian felt his heart stop, then pound so violently he found it difficult to breathe. Snowden was wounded inside his flak suit. Yossarian ripped open the snaps of Snowden's flak suit and heard himself scream wildly as Snowden's insides slithered down to the floor in a soggy pile and just kept dripping out. A chunk of flak more than three inches big had shot into his other side just underneath the arm and blasted all the way through, drawing whole mottled quarts of Snowden along with it through the gigantic hole in his ribs it made as it blasted out. /.../ Here was God's plenty, all right, he thought bitterly as he stared – liver, lungs, kidneys, ribs, stomach and bits of the stewed tomatoes Snowden had eaten that day for lunch. Yossarian hated stewed tomatoes and turned away dizzily and began to vomit, clutching his burning throat (Heller 2004: 503–504)

Snowden's guts reveal a secret that looms over the entire novel: "[m]an was matter /.../ Drop him out a window and he'll fall. Set fire to him and he'll burn. Bury him and he'll rot, like other kinds of garbage. The spirit gone, man is garbage." (Heller 2004: 504). Fifteen pages before the end, the novel's central problem is finally revealed. The revelation towers above the whole narrative, affecting major and minor events, both in the unfolding present and within the episodes remaining in the past. After Snowden's death, Yossarian carries Snowden with him while thinking of death (Heller 2004: 190–191, 464, 500). When Yossarian is injured in the story present, McWatt's tending to Yossarian evokes

the tragedy of Snowden's death (Heller 2004: 332–333). The two events become linked through a “weird, occult sensation,” triggered by the similarity of the injury, morphine, and the solace of having a friend nearby (Heller 2004: 235). Snowden's death becomes linked to Yossarian's physical and mental well-being. Any mention of cold, for example, brings readers back to Snowden's whimpers “Please help me. I'm cold. I'm cold” (Heller 2004: 214, 333, 381, 454, 500). The “eternal, immutable secret” that Snowden is hiding thus keeps lingering throughout the novel, weaving together the past and the present (Heller 2004: 397).

And Everybody Has a Share

Milo's story line is perhaps one of the most contested aspects of the novel as many of the perceived contradictions within the novel's temporality are linked to events surrounding him and his syndicate (c.f. Solomon 1967; Gaukroger 1970; Burhans 1973). Milo appears in story past as well as in the story present. By the time of the first chapter, however, most of the significant events involving Milo have already taken place. While descriptions of Milo's syndicate and business are often presented through generalizations, there are (almost) enough temporalized references to place the development of his syndicate within a story time. However, I should note that even after compiling multiple tables that set out to organize the events into a linear order, events surrounding Milo did not want to settle into a pattern. Other proposed story times also leave me conflicted, as something always seems off about the interpretation of Milo's activities. Each time I read my notes about Milo, I arrive at a different conclusion. The following is only one of the timelines I have compiled for events involving Milo Minderbinder and his syndicate.

Milo first becomes a mess officer after promising fresh eggs and butter to Major – de Coverley (Heller 2004: 154–156). The deal takes place while Yossarian is in the hospital at an unknown time (Heller 2004: 69). Yossarian and Milo meet when Yossarian returns from the hospital and Milo finds out that Yossarian is entitled to fruit and fruit juice thanks to a letter from Doc Daneeka. While Milo wants to go into business with Yossarian, Yossarian decides to keep his distance. Despite Yossarian's reluctance, Milo confides in Yossarian, sharing all his secrets except for where he keeps his money (Heller 2004: 69–71). Milo also finds out during this meeting that his first chef once poisoned the squadron by putting soap in the food (Heller 2004: 72–73).

As Milo's reputation and the greed of the generals grows, Milo is able to expand his operations by asking more planes and pilots and by being put in charge of several mess halls (Heller 2004: 156–157, 289). Eventually, he gains control over most of the business in the region, even drawing contracts with the enemy, turning his business into a cartel (Heller 2004: 290–291). During the period of 35 required missions, Milo organizes the Orvieto mission by having arrangements with both the Americans and the Germans (Heller 2004: 292–293). Sometime before the Bologna events, Milo arranges a trip around the Mediterranean,

employing Orr as his pilot and Yossarian as a companion, becoming fascinated by a stock ticker he sees in Cairo, prompting him to buy the world's supply of Egyptian cotton and almost ruining himself (Heller 2004: 140, 143, 262–274, 293–295). This sorry state lasts through the Bologna narrative and until after Snowden's funeral (Heller 2004: 140, 300–306). Things get so desperate that Milo even resorts to stealing morphine from the first-aid kits on the planes, leaving Snowden without pain relief (Heller 2004: 500–501). At some point, however, Milo is contracted by the Germans to bomb his own squadron and while this is initially criticized, the profit from the attack excuses him from any consequences (Heller 2004: 35, 245, 297).

It is difficult to determine whether Yossarian experienced the bombing of the squadron or not. While Egyptian cotton almost drove Milo's syndicate to a bankruptcy, it was saved by Milo's contract with the Germans to bomb his own squadron (Heller 2004: 295). When Yossarian returns from the hospital in chapter two, Milo is reported to have been away in Smyrna "for the fig harvest" (Heller 2004: 23). There is no indication of Milo's syndicate being on the verge of collapse in the story present. Therefore, Milo's bombing of the squadron might have also taken place during the period between forty and forty-five required missions. It is not completely obvious whether Milo's bombing of the squadron happens before or after Yossarian goes to the hospital after completing his 38 missions. Unlike most of the events in the novel, there is no mention of Yossarian's presence during this event and it is not narrated with Yossarian as the focalized character (Heller 2004: 122, 245, 295–298, 425). Therefore, it would be possible to interpret Milo's bombing as having taken place while Yossarian is in the hospital.¹⁵⁶ On the other hand, during the chaos of Thanksgiving Day, 1945, when someone plays a prank with a machine gun, Yossarian fears that Milo is "attacking the squadron again, and he rolled off his cot to the floor and lay underneath in a trembling, praying ball, his heart thumping like a drop forge, his body bathed in a cold sweat" (Heller 2004: 414). Therefore, Yossarian must have had at least some kind of experience of the event of Milo's bombing of the squadron.

In the story present, after Yossarian returns from the hospital, Milo is away in Smyrna. After Milo's return, Yossarian informs Milo of the raised number of missions but Milo is only concerned about a C.I.D. man who lurks around in the squadron (Heller 2004: 72–73). By the time the chaplain visits Colonel Cathcart, Milo is shopping for every group in the area (Heller 2004: 221). During one of Orr's emergency landings, it is revealed that Milo has also stolen "carbon-dioxide cylinders from the inflating chambers [of life jackets] to make the strawberry and crushed-pineapple ice-cream sodas he served in the officers' mess hall" (Heller 2004: 352–353). On Thanksgiving Day, riots break out because of the "bottles of cheap whiskey [Milo] handed out unsparingly to every man who asked" (Heller

¹⁵⁶ The fire in the mess halls that sets fire to a kitchen, which happens the day before Yossarian meets the chaplain is not caused by Milo's bombing because it is explicitly mentioned that Milo avoids bombing the mess halls so the men attacking their own squadron could have a nice meal after the attack (Heller 2004: 11, 295)

2004: 413). By the end of the novel, a dialogue reveals that Milo has been overseas for eleven months (Heller 2004: 424). As this is soon after Thanksgiving, Milo must have joined the squadron in January 1944. The final appearance of Milo occurs when he flies Yossarian to Rome (Heller 2004: 464–471). In the very last chapter, Milo seems to have betrayed Yossarian completely (Heller 2004: 513–514).

I've Got a Slight Pain in My Liver

The reader first encounters Yossarian when he “was in the hospital with a pain in his liver that fell just short of being jaundice” (Heller 2004: 7). Yossarian’s stay in the hospital in the first chapter functions as a pivot for the novel’s temporality – events occurring before this hospital stay are past events and events that follow are unfolding events. The hospital is the first and the most prevalent setting in the novel. The hospital is where the novel begins and where it ends, and where Yossarian spends a considerable amount of time. It functions as a framing device for the novel but for Yossarian, it is a place of refuge.

While most hospital episodes are specifically either in the past or in the future relative to the first chapter, some hospital stays are non-temporal. Already in the first chapter, the narrator explains that Yossarian “was comfortable in the hospital, and it was easy to stay on because he always ran a temperature of 101” (Heller 2004: 8). Chapter four lists conditions with which enlisted men can go to the hospital but Yossarian is said to be able to ignore these rules (Heller 2004: 36–37). In chapter seventeen, the narrator once more explains that “Yossarian could run into the hospital whenever he wanted to because of his liver and because of his eyes” and that Yossarian “could relax in the hospital, since no one there expected him to do anything. All he was expected to do in the hospital was die or get better, and since he was perfectly all right to begin with, getting better was easy” (Heller 2004: 190).

Another reason that Yossarian enjoys the hospital is because

[t]here was a much lower death rate inside the hospital than outside the hospital, and a much healthier death rate. Few people died unnecessarily. People knew a lot more about dying inside the hospital and made a much neater, more orderly job of it. They couldn’t dominate Death inside the hospital, but they certainly made her behave. They had taught her manners. They couldn’t keep Death out, but while she was in she had to act like a lady. People gave up the ghost with delicacy and taste inside the hospital. There was none of that crude, ugly ostentation about dying that was so common outside the hospital. (Heller 2004: 190–191)

It is not completely clear who “they” are, although it may refer to the doctors who are able to make dying into a more comfortable experience. The next few sentences – “[t]hey did not blow up in mid-air like Kraft or the dead man in Yossarian’s tent, or freeze to death in the blazing summertime the way Snowden had frozen to death after spilling his secret to Yossarian in the back of the plane” – suggest that perhaps it is the patients, after all, who are able to control their deaths

(Heller 2004: 191). Unlike the deaths that Yossarian witnesses in combat, most hospital deaths do not linger within the narrative. Hospital, then, for Yossarian acts as a safe space from that “crude, ugly,” and messy death and threat of one’s own death as Yossarian usually goes to the hospital in good health.

Besides functioning as the zero degree of the novel, the first hospital visit establishes several important plot points. First, Yossarian’s resolve to get dismissed from service is established when he decides to “[make] up his mind to spend the rest of the war in the hospital” (Heller 2004: 8). Yossarian also has a job – he is required to censor the letters of patients (Heller 2004: 8). As the job “required that each censored letter bear the censoring officer’s name,” Yossarian decision to sign the letters as Washington Irving will later have negative consequences for the chaplain. Besides Yossarian and his friend Dunbar, the readers are introduced to two other patients – a patriotic, talkative Texan and a soldier in white – and the chaplain. While the first sentences of the novel declares that “Yossarian fell madly in love” with the chaplain the first time they meet, the first pages do not describe the chaplain or his first meeting with Yossarian. It is only on page five that the meeting unfolds. The readers will have to wait for several pages until they are able to contextualize the first sentence of the novel and even then, the meeting unfolds through a very brief conversation establishing that Yossarian is a captain of the 256th squadron, that the chaplain needs to visit “with every member of the group who is in the hospital,” and that the chaplain is an Anabaptist (Heller 2004: 13, 15). The chapter ends with visit Yossarian and others in the ward becoming so annoyed with the talkative Texan that the ward is cleared. Even Yossarian, who is rather comfortable in the hospital tells “the doctors that the pain in his liver had gone away” (Heller 2004: 17). All of these plot points will soon start playing out in the story past and in the unfolding narrative.

While the hospital stay in chapter one is the first hospital stay in discourse time, Yossarian is in the hospital for the first time within story time when he is a private at the cadet school in Lowery Field, Colorado. Chapter 18 explains that “Yossarian owed his good health to exercise, fresh air, teamwork and good sportsmanship; it was to get away from them all that he had first discovered the hospital” (Heller 2004: 203). Pretending to have a pain on his right side, Yossarian is admitted to the hospital and kept under observation for a few days until he is advised to complain about the liver in the future, in order to “fool [the doctors] for weeks” as the liver “is a large, ugly mystery [to them]” (Heller 2004: 203). Although he was first supposed to stay for only five days, the new liver complaint extends his hospital stay for ten days, at the end of which, a group of doctors eventually come “to Yossarian with bad news; he was in perfect health and had to get out” (Heller 2004: 204).

However, when the soldier who saw everything twice sends the whole ward into quarantine for two weeks, Yossarian spends his Thanksgiving Day in the hospital and takes “a sacred oath to spend every future Thanksgiving Day in the cloistered shelter of a hospital” (Heller 2004: 205). At the end of the quarantine, Yossarian is found to be in good health and told to “get out and go to war” (Heller

2004: 208). Instead, Yossarian declares that he too sees everything twice and follows the other soldier's lead until the latter dies. Since the family of the soldier arrived just after his death, Yossarian pretends to be the dying soldier so that the family could say goodbye (Heller 2004: 210). Despite the absurdity of the situation, the unfolding scene reveals Yossarian's deep fear of death.

As with many past events, this past episode is told in a manner that takes into account previous information already revealed to the reader so that there is continuity between earlier and later events, regardless of the order in which they are revealed in discourse time. At the end of the dying soldier's family's visit, the mother tells Yossarian to "Dress warm," and the narrator adds, "said the mother, who seemed to know" (Heller 2004: 214). The narrator does not say what the mother knows. However, the previous chapter includes a first description of Snowden's death. Snowden is said to have frozen "to death in the blazing summertime /.../ after spilling his secret to Yossarian in the back of the plane. 'I'm cold,' Snowden had whimpered. 'I'm cold'" (Heller 2003: 191). It is this secret that the mother of the dying soldier seems to refer to – that dying is cold – linking the two distinct events. Although in story time, the narrator's reference to the coldness of dying alludes to the story future, to the time in which Yossarian had already flown combat missions and had seen friends dying in the air, in discourse time, the mother's knowledge of the coldness of dying invokes the description of Snowden's death in the preceding chapter. Therefore, the reference works in two directions at the same time, pointing both forward and backward in time. These connections become increasingly regular as the novel progresses. As the novel is narrated in simple past tense on the level of syntax, the narrative perspective places all events in the past. While the narrator constantly hints at the connecting patterns, readers remain, at first, mostly ignorant of the connections between the events.

Between Yossarian's first hospital stay and the events of the first chapter, at least two more past hospital visits occur. After having flown 17 missions out of the required 25, Yossarian catches clap in Marrakech (Heller 2004: 60). This forces Yossarian to spend the next ten days at a hospital and to miss the chance of completing his twenty-five missions before more were required (Heller 2004: 60, 197). Another visit to the hospital is mentioned in connection with Milo entering the narrative. On his second week at the squadron, Milo brings fresh eggs to Major – de Coverley and promises to supply the squadron with fresh eggs and butter and is thus promoted to mess officer (Heller 2004: 154–156). This takes place while Yossarian was "in the hospital this last time" (Heller 2004: 69) but is difficult to place into the chronological timeline of the story. Since the "last time" is mentioned in the chapter following the Marrakech episode, it is possible that the narrator refers to this episode. However, since there are some problems with the timeline of Milo's story within the narrative, it could also be a separate visit to the hospital that is simply not discussed further.

The final hospital visit in the story past occurs after the Bologna mission when Yossarian takes an emergency rest leave and flies to Rome (Heller 2004: 175). On his return, Yossarian finds out that the required number of missions has been

raised to forty. This prompts Yossarian to seek refuge in the hospital, “determined to remain there forever rather than fly one mission more than the thirty-two missions he had” (Heller 2004: 190). After mentioning the two hospital stays, the narrator continues to discuss generalized hospital stays in chapter seventeen, until settling into an extended description of the soldier in white again, connecting chapter seventeen with the first chapter. A rare temporal rupture occurs in this chapter that suddenly gives Yossarian some temporal agency:

Now that Yossarian *looked back*, it seemed that Nurse Cramer, rather than the talkative Texan, had murdered the soldier in white; if she had not read the thermometer and reported what she had found, the soldier in white might still be lying there alive exactly as he had been lying there all along, encased from head to toe in plaster and gauze with both strange, rigid legs elevated from the hips and both strange arms strung up perpendicularly, all four bulky limbs in casts, all four strange, useless limbs hoisted up in the air by taut wire cables and fantastically long lead weights suspended darkly above him. Lying there that way might not have been much of a life, but it was all the life he had, and the decision to terminate it, Yossarian felt, should hardly have been Nurse Cramer’s. (Heller 2003: 192 – my emphasis).

While there are other instances during which Yossarian remembers past events, on no other occasion does he look back from a ‘now’-point. The narrator does not reveal Yossarian’s actual temporal position; Yossarian could be looking back from the unfolding timeline or from another past position. The fragment is made significant by Yossarian’s perspective, which rests above the event, as the rest of the episode is described with Yossarian inside of the events described. Within the same chapter, the narrator reveals additional information about the soldier in white. Once the soldier in white is discovered to be dead, another conversation between the patients unfolds, this time on the unfairness of circumstance. The rest of the chapter makes several jumps in time and ends in the unfolding story present.

Relative to the first chapter, other hospital visits occur in story present. Unlike the fixed ten-day periods of past visits, there are no indications of the length of these unfolding hospital episodes. Yossarian’s next stay at the hospital in story present is a result of having been injured during a milk run to Parma, narrated in chapter twenty-seven through linear description and dialogue. The hospital visit at the beginning of the third cycle in chapter thirty-four mimics the events of chapters one and seventeen, and parallels Yossarian’s very first hospital visit by occurring around Thanksgiving. After accidentally breaking his friend Nately’s nose, Yossarian goes to the hospital as a visitor. Mirroring the events of chapters one and seventeen, this visit results in him meeting the chaplain, the Texan and the soldier in white once again. This time, the roles are reversed and it is the chaplain who is pretending to have an illness to stay in the hospital. While the Texan is the same talkative Texan, the soldier in white “had lost a few inches and added some weight” (Heller 2004: 419).

Yossarian’s final hospital visit is recounted in the last two chapters. After a knife-attack by Nately’s girlfriend, Yossarian once more ends up in the hospital

as a patient. Again, the episode is narrated through linear description and dialogue with the only interruption at the end of chapter forty-one dedicated to a detailed description of Snowden's death. During the final hospital visit, Yossarian is again visited by the chaplain as well as by a Major Danby. Upon hearing that one of his friends, Orr, who was presumed dead, is actually alive, Yossarian's story is given closure. Mixed with some meta-commentary about the ending ("It's such negative move. It's escapist.") as well as about the structure of the novel in general ("You know, I have a queer feeling that I've been through this exact conversation before with someone") the final conversation between the three characters reveals that Yossarian's plan is to escape the war by going absent without leave (Heller 2004: 511, 516). The novel ends with Yossarian leaving the hospital for the last time. From the first to the last chapter, the hospital episodes function as a framing device for the events of the novel. The hospital setting serves as a foundation for many of the structuring elements used in the novel's organization as the hospital episodes help contextualize many of the other events.

Dear Mrs., Mr., Miss, or Mr. and Mrs.: Words cannot express the deep personal grief I experienced when your husband, son, father or brother was killed, wounded or reported missing in action

The deaths and disappearances of characters occupy a substantial part of the novel. A brief mention of deaths is often inserted into accounts of past events and into the unfolding narrative. Past deaths are mostly ambiguous until they become more detailed through repetition or until something instigates an intrusion into the unfolding story present and the past death is extensively described at once. Deaths in the story present often receive a thorough exposition, proper rising action and even falling action, while the climax, the event of the death itself, is described in a two-sentence summary. The most significant deaths in the narrative are, unsurprisingly, those that are most often referred to and repeated, which is why past deaths dominate the narrative more than deaths in the story present. A growing list of past deaths is repeated every time Yossarian thinks about death or when another one of his friends dies. Many of the deaths also contain functional or thematic similarities and can be categorized based on the effect the deaths have on discourse time or story time. The first death can be attributed to two nameless soldiers. The death of the soldier in white occurs in the first chapter as the very first death of discourse time while the death of the soldier who saw everything twice can be considered as the first death in story time.

Within the story, perhaps the least significant deaths are those of higher officers – Colonel Nevers, Major Duluth and Lieutenant Coombs – who die during combat duty (Heller 2004: 60, 65, 122, 129, 197). These deaths do not influence the narrative directly. However, they have indirect effects as the officers need to be replaced: Colonel Nevers by Colonel Cathcart who makes men fly more missions; Major Duluth by Major Major who is responsible for the escalating Washington Irving affair; and Lieutenant Coombs by Chief White Halfcoat who

becomes Yossarian's friend. These deaths, then, result in the introduction and promotion of other characters who have a direct effect on the storyworld.

Due to the many interruptions of the unfolding narrative, the pacing in the first part of the novel is rather slow. Since many new and unfamiliar past events are introduced to the reader before the unfolding narrative is entirely established, the unfolding narrative does not begin to properly progress until some major past events (e.g. the Great Big Siege of Bologna) are fully recounted. However, once the tempo of the unfolding narrative picks up, there are events that intensify its pace. One of these accelerator-events is McWatt's accidental killing of Kid Sampson. Most of the tension in the chapter is created by a description of a scene in which Yossarian, fed up with McWatt's constant dangerous flying, threatens to strangle McWatt unless he stops (Heller 2004: 381–383). However, the narrative does not continue to build on this foundation. Instead, sandwiched between two specific episodes of McWatt making the same mistake is a generalized chronicle of Yossarian's relationship with Nurse Duckett and his time of leisure on the beach (Heller 2004: 381–387). The first episode of McWatt's error does not cause any lasting damage (Heller 2004: 381). In the second episode, however, McWatt's tragic miscalculation becomes cataclysmic for the narrative as the generalized account of a day at the beach turns into a particularly gruesome incident:

Yossarian had once stood on a jetty at dawn and watched a tufted round log that was drifting toward him on the tide turn unexpectedly into the bloated face of a drowned man; it was the first dead person he had ever seen. He thirsted for life and reached out ravenously to grasp and hold Nurse Duckett's flesh. He studied every floating object fearfully for some gruesome sign of Clevinger and Orr, prepared for any morbid shock but the shock McWatt gave him one day with the plane that came blasting suddenly into sight out of the distant stillness and hurtled mercilessly along the shore line with a great growling, clattering roar over the bobbing raft on which blond, pale Kid Sampson, his naked sides scrawny even from so far away, leaped clownishly up to touch it at the exact moment some arbitrary gust of wind or minor miscalculation of McWatt's senses dropped the speeding plane down just low enough for a propeller to slice him half away. Even people who were not there remembered vividly exactly what happened next. There was the briefest, softest *tsst!* filtering audibly through the shattering, overwhelming howl of the plane's engines, and then there were just Kid Sampson's two pale, skinny legs, still joined by strings somehow at the bloody truncated hips, standing stock-still on the raft for what seemed a full minute or two before they toppled over backward into the water finally with a faint, echoing splash and turned completely upside down so that only the grotesque toes and the plaster-white soles of Kid Sampson's feet remained in view. (Heller 2004: 388).

Yossarian seeing a dead man in the water seems to be yet another setup for the most important episode of the chapter. The narration is building tension by creating one omen after another to lead into the horrendous death of Kid Sampson. The deaths of Yossarian's other friends often only receive a sentence or two and there is usually little rising action to lead into the episode of the death. Yet, this episode contains a proper exposition with McWatt's low-flying

established as the principal problem, rising action featuring the conflict between Yossarian and McWatt, climax in the death of Kid Sampson, and falling action and resolution in McWatt's suicide (Heller 2004: 388–390). The accident becomes a turning point as it is one of the most thorough descriptions of deaths within the story present. The accident also significantly affects the pacing of the rest of the narrative. While the story present first gains momentum after the descriptions of the Great Big Siege of Bologna and its surrounding events, many of the mid-novel chapters are still filled with numerous descriptions of past events. The accident leads to an even more linear story present as past events are suddenly rarely revisited in the chapters following the deaths of Kid Sampson and McWatt.

While the deaths of Yossarian's other three friends – Chief White Halfcoat, Dobbs, and Hungry Joe – affect Yossarian emotionally, they appear almost as footnotes in the narrative. Each character is significant within the narrative and appears often during past events and story present, but their deaths in the unfolding present are glossed over due to the quick pace of the events in the final third of the novel. Each death occurs at the very end of the novel: Chief White Halfcoat dies of pneumonia in the hospital; Dobbs, who had finished his required combat missions, dies during the La Spezia mission; and Hungry Joe dies in his sleep while having a nightmare about being suffocated by a cat on his face, to be discovered with a cat on his face (Heller 2004: 49, 422, 432, 499). Each of these deaths is foreshadowed and is, in a way, anticipated by the characters: Chief White Halfcoat decides to die of pneumonia as a joke, Hungry Joe often dreams about being suffocated in his sleep by a cat, and Dobbs is sure that the number of required missions is going to get him killed (Heller 2004: 31, 49, 63, 65, 147, 149, 259, 262, 344). While these characters often discuss their potential future deaths, their actual deaths are only mentioned once in the narrative (in chapter thirty-five and forty-one, respectively).

Surprisingly, Nately's death in a mission over La Spezia is only summarized in a sentence: "And Nately, in the other plane, was killed too" (Heller 2004: 432). Yet, after his death, Nately is brought up much more in the unfolding narrative than other characters. It is Nately, whose "death almost killed the chaplain," Nately's death seems to have prompted Yossarian's protest against flying more missions and inspires Yossarian to go absent without leave to Rome (Heller 2004: 433, 450, 465). Despite the brief mention, Nately's death is among the most significant deaths of the novel and is perhaps the most consequential death in the last five chapters of the novel as it directly motivates Yossarian's actions.

Nately's death can also be compared to the disappearance of Dunbar as both are directly related to the machinations of higher officers. After completing his required 70 missions, Nately is reluctant to go home without his Italian girlfriend (Heller 2004: 422). Since Milo is aware of Nately's dilemma, he conspires with Colonel Cathcart to raise the number of required missions and Nately's death occurs on the very next mission (Heller 2003: 429, 431–432). Dunbar is present in the narrative from chapter one onwards and mostly appears in the hospital setting, in Rome, or in the officers' club. By the second half of the novel's story

present, Yossarian starts noticing that the war is destroying Dunbar's mental health (Heller 2004: 379). Dunbar becomes an inconvenience to the higher officers when he refuses to bomb a tiny Italian village filled with civilians (Heller 2004: 373–376, 379, 395). Dunbar is soon put under surveillance and after the reappearance of the soldier in white, Dunbar panics and claims that “[t]hey’ve stolen him away,” directly predicting Dunbar’s own disappearance at the turn of the page (Heller 2004: 419–421).

Dunbar’s disappearance connects him to Major Major and Major – de Coverley, who also disappear from the storyworld with little explanation, and to the disappearance of Orr and Clevinger. While the circumstances surrounding the disappearances of Orr and Clevinger are thoroughly explained, very little is actually known about what happened to either of them. Both characters occupy a position of being neither dead nor alive. As Orr is Yossarian’s roommate, Orr’s disappearance is difficult for Yossarian. Like Yossarian, Orr is plotting to escape the war. After failing to be dismissed from duty as a result of a concussion Orr starts practicing emergency landings (Heller 2004: 28, 263). After a final rehearsal, Orr’s plane is knocked down during another mission to Bologna and Orr never returns (Heller 2004: 352–354, 363–364). Orr’s name comes up every time Yossarian thinks of death and lists his dead friends. Although believed to be dead, Orr turns out to be alive at the very end of the novel. Elated, Yossarian realizes that Orr “*planned* it that way! He went to Sweden deliberately” (Heller 2004: 514). This realization inspires Yossarian to go AWOL. The notification of Orr’s death also somewhat functions as an accelerator for the narrative. While the chapter separating the events of Orr’s disappearance and Kid Sampson’s death is much slower-paced, Orr’s disappearance triggers the events of chapter 30: had Orr not disappeared, Colonel Cathcart would not have been able to requisition a replacement crew whom McWatt was training when he accidentally killed Kid Sampson (Heller 2004: 381, 389).

Despite his disappearance during Yossarian’s hospital visit in chapter one, Clevinger is kept alive in discourse time through his many conversations with Yossarian. Clevinger constantly returns to the narrative through dialogue until chapter 17, when the narrative returns to the events of the first chapter. Clevinger is alive during most of the major past events and even spends time with Yossarian at the cadet school before the war (Heller 2004: 18–19, 21–22, 43–44, 81, 86–93). Although Clevinger’s disappearance is already mentioned in chapter 2, it is properly described in chapter 10:

Clevinger was dead. That was the basic flaw in his philosophy. Eighteen planes had let down through a beaming white cloud off the coast of Elba one afternoon on the way back from the weekly milk run to Parma; seventeen came out. No trace was ever found of the other, not in the air or on the smooth surface of the jade waters below. There was no debris. Helicopters circled the white cloud till sunset. During the night the cloud blew away, and in the morning there was no more Clevinger (Heller 2004: 120)

And yet, even after this description, Clevinger continues to appear in the narrative through his many arguments with Yossarian (Heller 2003: 137, 141–143, 146–147, 191, 197). His final appearance as a living character occurs in chapter 17, when he scolds Yossarian for always escaping to the hospital (Heller 2004: 197). After the narrative circles back to the events of the first chapter in chapter 17, however, Clevinger's appearances as a living character cease and from then on, only his disappearance is mentioned (Heller 2004: 260, 387, 388, 397, 499, 514). Both Orr and Clevinger, then, are at the same time dead and alive, one within story time and the other within discourse time.

Doc Daneeka is also placed between life and death. As a favor, Yossarian convinces McWatt to enter Doc Daneeka's name on the flight logs for his training flights. Although Doc Daneeka wants his flight pay, he is not fond of flying (Heller 2004: 37–38). On McWatt's final tragic training flight, Doc Daneeka's name figures in the flight logs. Since Doc Daneeka is following the events from the ground, he is, obviously not able to get out of the plane, meaning that the officers on the ground are forced to declare Doc Daneeka dead (Heller 2004: 390, 391–392). Once the paperwork about his death is started, "[r]ecords attesting to his death were pullulating like insect eggs and verifying each other beyond all contention" (Heller 2004: 394–395). Although he is alive, all papers are saying that he is dead, and therefore, "[n]ot even the chaplain could bring Doc Daneeka back to life under the circumstances" (Heller 2004: 395). Doc Daneeka's "death" in story time is mirrored in discourse time. While Doc Daneeka appears often during past events and in the unfolding present, his final appearance occurs in chapter 32, after explaining that he is "not allowed to practice medicine any more" (Heller 2004: 402).

The deaths of Kraft, Mudd, and Snowden probably have the biggest effects on the narrative. They occur in the past, stay in the past, and are repeatedly revisited. The three are briefly alive (Heller 2004: 122, 124, 153, 189), but most of the time, they have already died. Kraft dies during the Ferrara mission and while his death is carefully examined after the first mention, the description of his death is repeated again and again throughout the novel. Mudd, or the dead man in Yossarian's tent, is also dead from the very beginning of the novel. The circumstances surrounding of Mudd's death make him an ever-present ghost in Yossarian's life through the belongings that were left in Yossarian's tent after Mudd's passing.

Snowden's death is the most significant in the novel as it constantly interrupts the narration of past events as well as the unfolding narrative (Heller 2004: 39, 56–57, 190–191, 198, 258–259, 298, 380–381, 397, 500–504). Unlike most deaths, Snowden's is described in detail each time it is recounted. Snowden's death is the most frequently repeated event in the novel as it is mentioned in twelve chapters. Although Snowden's death occurs somewhere in the middle of story time, its haunting effect is central to the novel's story and discourse.

4.3 Readers' Times

The creation of a coherent story time of *Catch-22* is a long process that requires more than a single reading. But even with multiple readings, notes, and tables, inconsistencies emerge that threaten to thwart the whole process. Repetitions, generalizations, and ambiguous temporal expressions create a convoluted narrative that does not want to fit together. Reflecting on his own reading, as well as describing the experience of many *Catch-22* readers, Burhans writes,

Inevitably, there comes a time when, looking around at accumulations of notes, charts, and commentaries, you suddenly bust out laughing at yourself in an unexpected illumination of your own absurdity in taking the thing so seriously. In that strange flash of disorientation, you feel like one of Heller's characters, like maybe a bookkeeper for Milo Minderbinder. (Burhans 1973: 239).

Despite the difficulty, many readers have tried to figure out the story time of *Catch-22*. In this section, I will explore how readers have used the elements discussed above in the construction of their own *Catch-22* story times. Solomon (1967), Gaukroger (1970) and Burhans (1973) have proposed story times that are similar but have some notable differences. Each of the three story times is valid as the formation of story time is part of the creative realm of reading and the story time of each reader is compelling and imaginative.

Jan Solomon (1967: 47) believes that the novel's chronology is composed of "a careful system of time-sequences involving two distinct and mutually contradictory chronologies." These two time-sequences are "structurally expressed through the confrontation of the psychological time in which Yossarian's history is told and the chronological time in which Milo Minderbinder's history is told" (Solomon 1967: 53–54). While my analysis above presents several elements recognized by Solomon, he also makes certain claims that lack textual confirmation.

Solomon (1967: 47, 53) identifies the first-chapter hospital visit, during which 45 missions are required, as a "pivotal point" through which the past and the present are accessed. He also observes that hospital scenes frame the three cyclical parts of the novel. Solomon (1967: 48) recognizes repetitions and missions as primary elements organizing the structure of the novel, as well as the strategy of events being introduced gradually until they are explored in full through "fairly extended direct narration." However, Solomon attributes the repetitive and cyclical nature of the novel to the representation of Yossarian's psychological time. Solomon (1967: 47) compares Yossarian to Leopold Bloom and believes him to live "in a world dominated not by chronological but by psychological time." This is an original comparison as the sense of interior time is not elsewhere considered in relation to *Catch-22*. However, since the narrator provides little insight into Yossarian's relationship with temporality, it is hard to agree that the back-and-forth of story present and story past reflects Yossarian's psychological time.

Among other surprising readings, Solomon considers Milo's temporality to be chronological. Solomon (1967: 47) argues that "Milo Minderbinder moves directly

forward from one success to the next” and that each occurs in the story present. According to Solomon’s interpretation, Milo first meets Yossarian in the story present, after his release from the hospital in chapter one. Solomon seems to consider the reference to “this last time” Yossarian was in the hospital during which Milo became mess officer as the first chapter hospital visit (Heller 2004: 69). Although I do not believe that the text supports it, this interpretation is certainly plausible. However, such an interpretation negates many of the other references to Milo’s activities that clearly must have occurred in story past. Solomon (1967: 54) himself admits that certain past events that involve Milo are rather contradictory but instead of considering that Milo’s activities could have also extended to story past, he believes that Heller is confusing “the two chronologies.” While I agree that certain aspects of Milo’s story are contradictory, the text contradicts the assertion that Milo’s presence in the novel only consist of story present appearances, especially since Milo is explicitly stated to have been present in Pianosa for 11 months (Heller 2004: 424).

Doug Gaukroger (1970: 71) disagrees with Solomon’s assertion that Yossarian and Milo exist in separate temporalities and that these are juxtaposed. Gaukroger finds Solomon’s understanding of Milo’s appearance only in story present implausible as the two characters constantly interact in story past. Nearly half of Gaukroger’s article, then, is focused on disproving Solomon’s interpretation. In the second half of the article, Gaukroger attempts to rebuild the chronology of the story. While he considers most of the novel to be free from paradoxes, Gaukroger (1970: 76–79–80) finds inconsistencies in some of Milo’s activities, Ferrara missions, Yossarian’s hospital visits, as well as in Major Major’s transformation into a recluse. Most of Gaukroger’s (1970: 76–84) analysis of the story’s temporal order coincides with many of the points made in the above study. Besides some odd typos in the text, perhaps the most significant deviation is his reading of Orvieto occurring after Milo’s trip to Cairo with Orr and Yossarian.¹⁵⁷ This reading probably emerges from a discussion between Yossarian and Milo in chapter 24 and a short passage in chapter 10. In the dialogue between the two characters in chapter 24, Yossarian accuses Milo of working with the enemy during the Orvieto mission and Milo is worried that the Egyptian cotton has “sucked away” the “profits from the Orvieto mission” (Heller 2004: 294–295). This prompts Gaukroger (1970: 81) to also assume that Orvieto took place sometime between the Bologna events. I do not follow this line of reasoning, as events during the Bologna mission are numerous and temporally ambiguous. If Gaukroger considers Orvieto to have occurred a week before the flight to Bologna, then it is plausible to interpret Orvieto as occurring during the wider Bologna events (based on Heller 2004: 124–125). However, if “the Great Big Siege of Bologna” mentioned in a passage in chapter 10 is interpreted as a larger event containing several episodes, then Orvieto would precede all of the events associated with Bologna (Heller 2004: 124–125).

¹⁵⁷ The mistakes and typos include, as associating Mudd with Avignon, spelling Yossarian as “Yassarrian” at one point and Luciana as “Lucianna” (Gaukroger 1970: 75, 81).

Clinton Burhans's (1973: 239) story time chronology is based on his understanding of the novel's various "multi-level structural patterns and a variety of unifying devices." While my own study is based on a different set of temporalizing elements, of the three readers, Burhans provides the most insightful analysis of literary devices and narrative strategies that affect the temporality of the novel. Burhans visualizes the novel's structure through a narrative tree,

with the trunk comprised primarily of the main plot, (Yossarian's efforts to get off flying status either by achieving the required number of missions or by having himself declared insane) and two sub-plots (the struggle between Peckem and Dreedle for command of the Wing, and Milo's syndicate) (Burhans 1973: 240)

The rest of the novel, according to Burhans, circles around the trunk and the branches. I find Burhans's metaphor of the narrative tree convincing as his method of dividing elements of the novel into "simple references," "detailed episodes," and "expository flashbacks made once for informational purposes or repeated for thematic effect" helps compartmentalize the different components that make up the novel.

Like the other two readers, Burhans (1973: 243) constructs his story time by mostly relying on the number of required missions. Therefore, he considers the novel's events to be in a "generally consistent chronological relationship" (Burhans 1973: 248). However, while both Solomon and Gaukroger considered the novel to be deliberately temporally vague, Burhans has decided to date each of the events presented in the novel. While I agree that some dates can be ascribed to the events based on historical data, I find Burhans's insistence on the certainty of dates slightly questionable.

Although the US formally enters WWII in December 1941, Burhans speculates that Yossarian enters cadet training in 1941. He presumes that Yossarian spends the years between 1941 and 1943 in cadet training, in Colorado and California. Thus, Burhans (1973: 245) situates Yossarian's first stay in the hospital at Lowery Field, Colorado during Thanksgiving in 1941, his courting of Mrs. Scheisskopf during Thanksgiving in 1942 and his first flight overseas sometime in 1943. If the novel is interpreted as following historical dates and the United States formally enters the war in December 1941, Yossarian would have had no reason to be avoiding his training by staying at the hospital for a prolonged period of time.

Burhans's (1973: 245) other unique assumption is placing Yossarian's 23rd mission to Arezzo in September 1943. This leads to the premise that the next event is Milo's entry into the novel and founding of the syndicate in April 1944. While Burhans notices the inconsistency this causes for the novel's number of missions, he considers this to be an error in Heller's "computation" and not his own.¹⁵⁸ While Burhans's positioning of the establishment of Milo's syndicate in

¹⁵⁸ He believes that Cathcart must have increased "the required number of missions only by ten in the seven or eight months between September, 1943, and May, 1944" (Burhans 1973: 247)

April is understandable as a passage at the beginning of chapter 24 can support this interpretation, the dating of Arezzo to September 1943 is not based on evidence from within the text. Situating Milo's founding of the syndicate in April 1944 leads to Burhans (1973: 245–246) considering Ferrara as occurring after Milo's arrival to Pianosa. This causes another shift in Burhans's story time as it leads to the remarkable assumption that Milo's trip to Cairo with Yossarian and Orr occurred after his bombing of the squadron. Burhans's account starts aligning with mine at Yossarian's hospital visit in the first chapter.

Regardless, I find Burhans's commentary that is quoted at the beginning of this section about the absurdity of the experience of analyzing the novel's temporality strangely comforting as it accurately captures the essence of not only working on *Catch-22* but also the general crux of studying literature, no matter how satisfying or frustrating the process may be. Out of the three novels analyzed in this dissertation, the structure of *Catch-22* is the most taxing on the reader. Although I have been critical, I do not consider any of the three story times incorrect. These are the story times of Burhans, Gaukroger, and Solomon. They may not entirely coincide with my own story time but our readings contain points of overlap. We have all experienced that many parts of the novel refuse to settle into a chronology, remaining suspended in vague spots all over the created story times. While these elements are frustrating, they also offer us endless opportunities to play around with time, to test out alternative story times, and to reach a variety of conclusions with every reading.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE

Slaughterhouse-Five or The Children's Crusade, A Duty-dance with Death, A Fourth-generation German-American Now Living in Easy Circumstances on Cape Cod (And Smoking Too Much), Who, as an American Infantry Scout Hors de Combat, As a Prisoner of War, Witnessed the Fire Bombing of Dresden, Germany, "The Florence of the Elbe," A Long Time Ago, And Survived to Tell the Tale. This is a Novel Somewhat in the Telegraphic Schizophrenic Manner of Tales Of the Planet Tralfamadore, Where the Flying Saucers Come From. Peace (1969) is a classic example of postmodern metafiction. The title functions as a representation of the fragmented structure of the novel as well as a summary of its content as it discusses Billy Pilgrim and the Tralfamadorians, time and memory, the war, the experience of being a prisoner of war, the destruction of Dresden, the "first fancy city" Vonnegut had ever seen, and death, and so it goes (Vonnegut 2019: 207).¹⁵⁹

The anti-war time-travel novel has simultaneously gathered a cult following among readers and critical attention from literary theorists (although less than the cult status of the novel would presuppose). The novel mostly follows the life of young man, Billy Pilgrim who is captured as a prisoner of war during World War II. While most of the novel is concerned with Billy's experience in the war, the narration also presents fragments of Billy's life before and after the war. The novel is structured to culminate in the bombing of Dresden, with threads of Billy's life before and after the war being tied to the bombing. In the words of the novel's narrator, the structure of *Slaughterhouse-Five* "is so short and jumbled and jangled /.../ because there is nothing intelligent to say about a massacre" (Vonnegut 2019: 16).

The Tralfamadorians are the alien creatures who kidnap Billy Pilgrim and exhibit him in their planet's zoo. The creatures are small, green and "shaped like plumber's friends. Their suction cups were on the ground, and their shafts, which were extremely flexible, usually pointed to the sky. At the top of each shaft was a little hand with a green eye in its palm" (Vonnegut 2019: 21). The Tralfamadorians have "no voice boxes" and instead communicate "telepathically" (Vonnegut 2019: 62). The Tralfamadorian experience of time is highly unusual as they have the ability to experience the world four-dimensionally. This gives them the ability to see time in its entirety:

¹⁵⁹ This quote is from an interview with Kurt Vonnegut, the author. The interview is included in the 2019 paperback version of the novel.

All moments, past, present, and future, always have existed, always will exist. The Tralfamadorians can look at all the different moments just the way we can look at a stretch of the Rocky Mountains, for instance. They can see how permanent all the moments are, and they can look at any moment that interests them (Vonnegut 2019: 22).

For the Tralfamadorians, “All time is all time. It does not change. It does not lend itself to warnings or explanations. It simply *is*” (Vonnegut 2019: 70, original emphasis). Considering these statements, the Tralfamadorians experience static and fixed time, where all moments are always existing and equally real. This strongly resembles the B-theoretical four-dimensional portrayal of the universe.

The books the Tralfamadorians read contain “brief clumps of symbols separated by stars” (Vonnegut 2019: 72). Each of these clumps

is a brief, urgent message – describing a situation, a scene. We Tralfamadorians read the clumps all at once, not one after the other. There isn’t any particular relationship between all the messages, except that the author has chosen them carefully, so that, when seen all at once, they produce an image of life that is beautiful and surprising and deep. There is no beginning, no middle, no end, no suspense, no moral, no causes, no effects. What we love in our books are the depths of many marvelous moments seen all at one time. (Vonnegut 2019: 72).

Although Kurt Vonnegut Jr.’s *Slaughterhouse-Five* has a beginning and an end, causes and effects, morals and suspense, the novel is structured to reflect the Tralfamadorian experience of time and to create a juxtaposition between Tralfamadorian time and the human experience of reading. In the following study of the temporality of the novel, I focus on whether the form of Vonnegut’s novel can represent Tralfamadorian time. While my work of reading included several readings of the novel and countless notes, the story time of *Slaughterhouse-Five* was noticeably easier to follow than that of *Catch-22*. In part, this is because Vonnegut’s novel is shorter and has fewer events and fewer characters. However, the discourse time of *Slaughterhouse-Five* is also considerably more linear. In the following study, my reading of discourse time will focus on the “jumbled and jangled” elements of discourse as well as the textual chronology of the novel. In my reading of story time, I will examine how the form of the novel affects the reader’s construction of story time.

5.1 Discourse Time

Vonnegut’s novel consists of ten chapters, with the first and last chapter providing a frame to the story inside chapters two to nine. The novel is narrated by two narrators – the first appears in the frame and the second in the embedded narrative. The first narrator is a focalized first-person protagonist of the frame narrative, a character-bound narrator, or, in Genette’s terms, a homodiegetic narrator. In the first chapter, the frame narrative focuses on the first narrator’s experience of the

war and circles around his attempts at writing about the Dresden bombing. Structurally, the frame narrative is indeed “jumbled and jangled” (Vonnegut 2019: 16). The subject matter concerns how the first narrator came to write the war novel, the story within the story – how he outlined the novel, what his own experiences of war consisted of, his life after the war, his visit to an old war-buddy Bernard O’Hare and his visit to Dresden with Bernard. None of this, however, is written in a linear manner. The narrator is fluidly moving between his past experiences and creating a connection between his war experiences and his present endeavors. The connecting element is memory: the narrator recounts his attempts at remembering the war and how he arrived at a finished story. Thus, the narrator’s introspective contemplation centralizes the process of writing – the past of the narrator is observed through the lens his present. The writing process, however, turns out to be more difficult than anticipated: “I would hate to tell you what this lousy little book cost me in money and anxiety and time” (Vonnegut 2019: 2).

While the first narrator is the author of the embedded narrative, he is not the narrator of the inner story. Instead, the inner story works like a fictional wayback machine for the first narrator: “‘Listen–’ I said, ‘I’m writing this book about Dresden. I’d like some help remembering stuff’” (Vonnegut 2019: 4). In the frame narrative, these words are spoken to Bernard O’Hare but “Listen” also appears as first word of chapter two (Vonnegut 2019: 19). The function of the inner story is to help the first narrator remember his war experience. The temptation of writing about such a big subject was overcome even though “the Dresden part” of the narrator’s memory has been quite “useless” because “not many words about Dresden came from my mind then – not enough of them to make a book, anyway” (Vonnegut 2019: 2). “Listen” acts as an invocation to memory – to “remember the war,” to remember more of it than just Russian clock-looters (Vonnegut 2019: 11, 12). But “Listen” also acts as an intrusion into the inner story by the frame narrator. The first narrator’s intrusions are quite common and provide the inner story with metanarrative commentary.¹⁶⁰

The second narrator narrates the embedded story in third person. The second narrator could also be considered as the first narrator, who simply distances himself from the inner story. However, I would differentiate between the two because of the difference in tone between the frame story and the inner story, as well as the intrusions of the first narrator within the embedded narrative. The frame narrator also claims to be the implied author of the inner story and since the implied author and the narrator operate on different levels of communication, I do not consider the frame narrator and the inner narrator identical.¹⁶¹ While the narrator and focalizer overlap in the frame story, the embedded story features external narration in which the focalized character is Billy Pilgrim. This narrative situation lasts from chapters two to nine. The final chapter contains mixed focalization. The last specific event in the first chapter is about the first narrator flying to see Dresden again. The narrator returns to this event in the final chapter

¹⁶⁰ The metanarrative aspects of the novel will be discussed further below.

¹⁶¹ See Chatman 1978; Schmid 2010 on narrative levels of communication.

but most of the narrative still focuses on Billy's last moments in the war. In the last chapter, the first narrator once again intrudes into Billy's story, repeating that the first-person narrator was there, in Dresden, with O'Hare – as they returned after the war and in 1945 with Billy – creating a continuation between the frame story and the inner story and completing the act of remembering (Vonnegut 2019: 175).

Unstuckness of Time

Billy Pilgrim is introduced as a time-traveling character. Billy's narrative begins as a 21-year-old "preposterous"-looking American soldier, about to be captured as a prisoner of war and ends with the end of the Second World War in Europe (Vonnegut 2019: 26). An entire lifetime is inserted in discourse time into the time Billy spends as a prisoner of war. Billy's whole life fits between this short period because "Billy Pilgrim has come unstuck in time" (Vonnegut 2019: 19). While chapter two begins with a chronological summary of Billy's life, the unfolding of events in discourse time does not follow the outline presented in the chapter (Vonnegut 2019: 19–21). Instead, the outline is followed by an event in Billy's story future, in which Billy argues with his adult daughter about what he had said on the radio about what he believes to be the true nature of time. After this argument, discourse time transports the reader and Billy to the events of World War II. The structure of the inner story of *Slaughterhouse-Five* is heavily fragmented, with Billy's time travel providing an excuse for the jumbled discourse time.

The events of the embedded narrative are summarized in eight blocks over roughly the first four pages of chapter two, with most of the unfolding events of the entire inner story falling under one of the eight blocks of information (Vonnegut 2019: 17–22).¹⁶² The few exceptions to this are some generalizations, such as descriptions of other characters and summaries of Kilgore Trout's novels. The chronological summary of Billy's life also does not include his death, which is described in the middle of the novel. The rest of the events, however, can all be placed under one of the blocks summarizing Billy's life at the beginning of chapter two. The blocks summarize the following:

¹⁶² There are five blocks with thirteen paragraphs among them but I have separated two blocks as the blocks cover uneven periods.

Block 1

- Billy's Birth, childhood and brief adulthood before being drafted

Block 2

- Billy's service in the military during the Second World War, experience as a prisoner of war

Block 3

- Billy's enrollment in the Ilium School of Optometry, engagement, and "mild nervous collapse"

Block 4

- Billy's booming business, the life of his children, and his kidnapping

Block 5

- Billy's plane crash in 1968 and survival

Block 6

- Billy's treatment in a Vermont hospital, the death of his wife

Block 7

- Billy's return home after the plane crash, his visit to a radio station in NYC to discuss the meaning of time and his kidnapping by aliens back in 1967

Block 8

- Billy being brought home from NYC by his daughter's family, Billy's mission to reveal the truth about time and the Tralfamadorians through letters published in a local newspaper

Figure 2: Billy Pilgrim's life

The novel does not unfold in the order of the presented blocks and the material space afforded to the events is not equal within discourse time. Almost two-thirds of the embedded narrative is dedicated to block 2 and specifically to Billy's experience as a prisoner of war. Almost one third of the embedded narrative focuses on block 4 – Billy's life as an optometrist and his kidnapping by the Tralfamadorians. The rest of the events appear in brief passages all over the embedded narrative and make up a rather small part of the novel. Below, I will go over the main events described in the novel in the order they are presented.

Billy first comes unstuck in time in 1944 during the Second World War, right after he is forced behind enemy lines and before he is captured by German troops but then Billy blinks and travels in time, as the narrator explains (Vonnegut 2019: 37). Billy cannot help but travel, as he is not in control of the moments he travels to and from. His first experience of unstuckness takes him "through the full arc of his life, passing into death," then into "pre-birth" and then into a childhood event during which his father is teaching him how to swim, and then to 1965, when he visits his dying mother from which he travels to 1958, to a party of his

son's baseball team, from which he goes to a New Year's Eve party and finds himself cheating on his wife and from which he ends back in 1944, "behind the German lines," leaning against a tree and being shaken awake by another soon-to-be prisoner of war, Roland Weary (Vonnegut 2019: 35–38). Billy blinks again in 1944 and finds himself in 1957, giving a speech as the president of the Lions Club (Vonnegut 2019: 40). After returning to 1944, he is captured by German troops in a snowy Luxembourg forest. Billy blinks once more and finds himself in 1967 at work but is soon taken back to his capture in 1944.

Billy is able to simultaneously inhabit 1967 and 1944 and can choose to drop one time in favor of another. When he is captured, he chooses to drop Germany and go to 1967, to a time when he is driving around in an air-conditioned Cadillac in a "hot August" (Vonnegut 2019: 48). Following the drive, Billy goes to a Lions Club meeting, to listen to a Major speak about the bombing of North Vietnam (Vonnegut 2019: 49). After his return home, Billy goes to bed, closes his eyes and finds himself back in 1944, marching with the other prisoners of war (Vonnegut 2019: 51–52). Soon Billy and the other prisoners are put on a train to somewhere in Germany during Christmastime in 1944 but when Billy falls asleep on the train, he wakes up in 1967, on "the night he was kidnapped by a flying saucer from Tralfamadore" (Vonnegut 2019: 58). After leaving earth, Billy finds himself back in the war, on a train "moving about two miles an hour" with other prisoners (Vonnegut 2019: 63). Soon after his arrival to a prison camp, Billy "zoomed back in time to his infancy. He was a baby who had just been bathed by his mother" until he is suddenly "a middle-aged optometrist again, playing hacker's golf this time – on a blazing summer Sunday morning" (Vonnegut 2019: 69). Another trip in time takes Billy to a flying saucer until Billy is "flung back into his childhood," visiting the Grand Canyon with his parents (Vonnegut 2019: 70, 72). A short trip "of only ten days, so he was still twelve" takes him further on his family trip to the West after which he soon finds himself back at the prison camp (Vonnegut 2019: 73). From the prison camp, Billy travels in time to his stay in a psychiatric hospital in 1948, "in a ward for nonviolent mental patients in a veterans' hospital near Lake Placid, New York" (Vonnegut 2019: 81). After falling asleep, he wakes up at the prison camp's hospital and then goes back to the psychiatric hospital in 1948 (Vonnegut 2019: 86, 87).

After a visit from his fiancée in the hospital in 1948, Billy travels in time once more. Now forty-four years old, he travels to Tralfamadore, where he is an exhibit in a Tralfamadorian zoo (Vonnegut 2019: 91). After this Billy travels to his wedding night, which takes place six months after leaving the psychiatric hospital (Vonnegut 2019: 96). From the honeymoon, Billy is thrown back to the prison hospital in 1944, is confused about "where he had come from, and where should he go now" and soon finds "himself honeymooning again" (Vonnegut 2019: 101–103). Falling asleep on his honeymoon takes Billy to 1944, this time "to his father's funeral in Ilium" before Billy had been sent to the war in Europe (Vonnegut 2019: 103). Billy is then thrown back to the night he spends in the hospital prison and after falling asleep once more wakes up "as a widower in his empty home in Ilium" in 1968 (Vonnegut 2019: 107). After an argument with his

daughter, Billy travels to Tralfamadore to meet a mate that “had just been brought to him from Earth” (Vonnegut 2019: 108). After the passing of an earthling week on Tralfamadore, Billy travels back to the day of his argument with his daughter in 1968 and goes to work (Vonnegut 2019: 110). Discourse time then takes Billy to the prison camp’s hospital in 1945, to the day after he had arrived at the prison camp – at this point Billy “had no idea what year it was or what planet he was on” (Vonnegut 2019: 112).

While the narrator frequently announces Billy’s travels in time, not all of the leaps in time are prefaced by the phrase “Billy traveled in time.” Without any accompanying phrases, the discourse transitions from the prison hospital, on the first day of 1945 where another prisoner promises to kill him one day, to “February thirteenth, 1976,” the day that Billy Pilgrim “will die, have died, and always will die” by the hand of that same prisoner (Vonnegut 2019: 116). After his experience of death, during which there “is simply violet light and a hum,” Billy “swings back into life again, all the way back to an hour after his life was threatened” (Vonnegut 2019: 117–118). That day, Billy, along with other prisoners of war, travels to Dresden by train (Vonnegut 2019: 122). Upon their arrival, Billy and other prisoners are taken to their new address – *Schlachthof-fünf* (Vonnegut 2019: 125–126).

From the slaughterhouse, Billy travels to the time of the plane crash. Once again, the narrator does not explicitly mention Billy’s time travel, but discourse time moves to Billy’s future, to the time “Billy Pilgrim got onto a chartered airplane in Ilium twenty-five years after” having arrived in Dresden (Vonnegut 2019: 127).¹⁶³ After having heard a barbershop quartet sing a song on the plane, the narrator takes Billy to “about three days after Billy got to Dresden,” to a public hanging of a Polish farm worker (Vonnegut 2019: 128). After having witnessed the hanging, Billy is back on the plane, which is about to crash. Billy and the copilot are the only survivors (Vonnegut 2019: 129).

After the crash, Billy is taken to a private hospital, where he recovers from the accident (Vonnegut 2019: 129). Billy is unconscious and dreams of “millions of things, some of them true. The true things were time-travel” (Vonnegut 2019: 129). The “true” time travel takes Billy back to “his first evening in the slaughterhouse” and then to the month before Dresden is destroyed, during which the prisoners worked “in a factory that made malt syrup” (Vonnegut 2019: 130, 132). Discourse time soon reaches the period of “two days before Dresden was destroyed” (Vonnegut 2019: 133). While the city is being bombed, Billy falls asleep and finds himself as a middle-aged man “engaged again, word for word, gesture for gesture, in the argument with his daughter with which this tale began” (Vonnegut 2019: 136).

¹⁶³ There is some contradiction in dating this event within the narrative. While the narrator identifies the plane crash as twenty-five years after Dresden, according to Billy’s short bio, it actually occurred in 1968, which would have to occur twenty-three years after Dresden (Vonnegut 2019: 127, 20).

From the argument, discourse time shifts to 1964, to a time when Billy met his favorite science fiction writer Kilgore Trout (Vonnegut 2019: 136). After this meeting, discourse time goes forward two days to Billy's 18th wedding anniversary party (Vonnegut 2019: 139). During the party, a barbershop quartet sings and Billy finds "himself upset by the song and the occasion" and as he excuses himself from the party, he remembers the destruction of Dresden (Vonnegut 2019: 142, 146). Suddenly, discourse time throws Billy to the Tralfamadorian zoo, where Billy tells his imprisoned companion, the movie star Montana Wildhack, about the night Dresden was destroyed, February 13, 1945 (Vonnegut 2019: 147). The narrator then describes the sights seen by the survivors of the Dresden bombing (Vonnegut 2019: 148).

After the destruction of Dresden, discourse time transitions to the story of "how Billy Pilgrim lost his wife, Valencia" in a car accident after having heard of Billy's plane crash (Vonnegut 2019: 150). When his daughter comes to tell Billy the news, Billy is in a Vermont hospital, but also "ten years away, back in 1958" and then from there he travels "in time to when he was sixteen years old, in the waiting room of a doctor" because of an infected thumb (Vonnegut 2019: 155). When "Billy Pilgrim opened his eyes in the hospital in Vermont," he once again "did not know where he was" (Vonnegut 2019: 156).

Upon properly regaining consciousness, Billy decides to tell the world the truth about time and begins "preparing letters and lectures about the flying saucers, the negligibility of death, and the true nature of time" (Vonnegut 2019: 156). After a discussion about the Dresden bombing with Bertram Copeland Rumfoord, another patient, Billy closes his eyes and travels "in time to a May afternoon, two days after the end of the Second World War in Europe" (Vonnegut 2019: 159). Discourse time makes a short jump to Billy as a middle-aged optometrist and then "back to the hospital in Vermont" (Vonnegut 2019: 162). Discourse time goes back and forth between the hospital and the two days after the destruction of Dresden while Billy and Rumfoord discuss the event. After Billy is released from the hospital, he starts working on his plan "to tell the world about lessons of Tralfamadore" about time (Vonnegut 2019: 163). Billy travels to New York to appear on a radio talk show and then to the time he spent on Tralfamadore with Montana Wildhack (Vonnegut 2019: 170). While this is the last time Billy travels in time in the embedded narrative, Billy's story continues in the last chapter. The first narrator travels with Billy to 1945, to "two days after the city was destroyed" (Vonnegut 2019: 175). When the war is over, the narrator ends both stories as promised: "Poo-tee-weet?" (Vonnegut 2019: 18, 177).

All This Happened, More or Less

The narrator explains the constant temporal dislocation through Billy's time travel. Unlike in *Catch-22*, the fragmented text of *Slaughterhouse-Five* is not difficult to follow. In addition to the summary of Billy's life in the second chapter, most of the leaps in time are clearly indicated by the inner narrator. Usually, Billy

blinks and finds himself in a different time. Had the novel only presented Billy's story, creating a story time would be more or less straightforward. The reader would need to arrange the blocks into an order and a coherent story time would emerge. However, the frame narrative complicates the creation of a neat story time. As the frame narrator assumes an authorial position of the inner story, it is easy to believe the narrator is Kurt Vonnegut Jr. My paperback-copy of the novel, 2019 Vintage 50th anniversary special edition, includes interviews, first reviews, pictures of drafts with Vonnegut's handwritten comments, as well as descriptions of Vonnegut's personal experiences of the war. The bonus material is titled as "All this happened, more or less. The Genesis of *Slaughterhouse-Five*." It starts with a picture of Vonnegut in uniform in 1943 as he is enlisted in the US army. The next pages include a letter home from Vonnegut shortly after his release as prisoner of war and other material related to his experience of war and his experience of writing the novel, associating the author with both the frame narrator and Billy Pilgrim. The sheer amount of extra-textual information surrounding the novel reads like a continuation of the novel and may affect the reader's interpretation of the story of both Billy Pilgrim and the frame narrator.

Even reading a copy without such paratextual info, the associations created between the actual author and the frame narrator will easily blur. Vonnegut's own statements about his writings and his personal war experiences seem to encourage the comparisons between the author and the characters in both the frame and the embedded narrative. As an example, in a 1973 *Playboy* interview, the interviewer asks Vonnegut, "Early on in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, you mention getting a little drunk at night and calling old friends long distance. Do you still do that?" The author answers, "Not anymore. But it's wonderful" (Standish 2016: para. 43). The event in the first chapter of the novel, of calling strangers while drunk, is interpreted by the interviewer as something the author does and Vonnegut does not distance himself from the frame narrator. In the next question in the same interview, Vonnegut also compares his young self to a "preposterous kind of flamingo," a description used by the second narrator of the novel to characterize Billy Pilgrim (Standish 2016: para. 44; Vonnegut 2019: 26, 27). Statements such as these may, naturally, confuse readers into identifying Vonnegut with the frame narrator. There is also a large number of critical texts in which academic readers discuss the frame narrator as the "actual author, Vonnegut himself" (Loeb 1979: 7; see also Harris 1976; Neustadter 1992; Coleman 2008; Glover 2009; Raj & Kumar 2020). As *Slaughterhouse-Five* is almost universally recognized as a postmodern novel, it is remarkable that the frame narrator is often identified as Vonnegut.

There are, indeed, enough similarities between Vonnegut's biography and the frame story that chapters one and ten can be classified as quasi-autobiographical. In two interviews [1977; 1980] Vonnegut states that he was in Dresden during the bombing, he *did* have something to say about it, he *did* forget all about it, he *did* call and write to his war-buddies to ask about the bombing and they *did* not have much to say about it (Vonnegut 2019: 2, 3, 203–216). Extra-textual commentary can be associated with the metanarrative commentary within the frame, "enhancing the credibility of the narrator" and functioning "as proof of

authenticity” (Fludernik 2009: 61). Even if structured to function as such, I will not consider the two framing chapters as foreword and afterword. Instead, I treat them as fictional framing chapters for the embedded narrative which provide a motivation for telling Billy’s story (c.f. Schmid 2010: 167). I will also not discuss what is “real” and what is not, that is, I will not be analyzing Vonnegut’s war experiences against the frame narrator’s or Billy Pilgrim’s. It makes little difference whether the “war parts /.../ are pretty much true” or not; or whether Mary O’Hare really asked Vonnegut to not glorify war or whether Vonnegut himself returned to Dresden with Guggenheim money (Vonnegut 2019: 1, 12, 211). The novel will be considered fictional and fictive in its entirety.

5.2 Story Time

While the formal structure of *Catch-22* tends to resist temporal ordering through numerous elements that hinder story time creation, *Slaughterhouse-Five* relies on strategies that offer an easy reading of linear temporality and then toys with these aspects of the narrative. As mentioned previously, a chronology for the embedded narrative is provided at the very beginning of the second chapter, in which the main events of Billy’s life are summarized in a linear timeline. However, discourse time does not unfold in the same order as the timeline. Instead, events in Billy’s life are described in fragments that occur out of order. Furthermore, Billy’s life does not unfold as a lifetime between birth and death but rather as a loop that has no beginning or end, and which has jumbled threads that appear and reappear. While the summary of Billy’s life helps somewhat in organizing the story time, it does not produce the story time. Story time creation is still tasked to the reader and the tangled threads tend to disturb the linearity provided at the beginning of chapter two. The reader, then, although at first grounded within a linear outline, will also become unstuck in time, as they have to read through the events and contextualize them based on the information provided at the beginning of the novel. As part of my analysis, I will examine how much of the outline of Billy’s life guides the process of connecting the parts of the narrative together.

Although *Slaughterhouse-Five* is slightly more linear than *Catch-22*, the form of Vonnegut’s novel largely mimics that of *Catch-22* in that it presents the events of the novel through isolated fragments. The first-person frame narrator’s activity is represented through short anecdotes mostly about the background of his intention to write a war novel. Billy Pilgrim’s life is portrayed through larger and smaller chunks of events that move back-and-forth along his looped life. While the order of the events may seem random at first, there are certain “hooks” that provide a pattern for Billy’s jumps in time. In a section below, I will study some of these hooks and how they affect the creation of story time.

Unlike in *Catch-22*, it is very difficult to determine the story present of *Slaughterhouse-Five*. The story past and future are constantly shifting as the embedded narrative follows Billy’s time travels. This makes the extraction of a story present from discourse time almost impossible. The identification of story

present would also contradict the truth about time according to Tralfamadorians, as time is always supposed to simply *be*. The frame narrative does not reveal a story present either. The entirety of the frame narrative is written in the past tense by a narrator who is looking back from a future point of view. Despite the inclusion of a helpful chronological overview of the events of the embedded narrative, the novel mostly resists linearity. Billy's life, as well as the frame narrator's activities are described out of order and structured like a loop so that it is difficult to identify beginnings and endings.

The governing principles of the structure of *Slaughterhouse-Five* are influenced by the Tralfamadorian experience of time and the interaction between the two narrative levels presented in the novel. The blurry ontological boundaries between the frame and inner story determine the reader's immersion in Billy's story. According to Tralfamadorian philosophy, the world is four-dimensional and time is fixed, meaning that all moments are simultaneously in existence.¹⁶⁴ The Tralfamadorian time experience functions as an organizational cue for Billy's inner story, establishing events in Billy's life as something resolved and inflexible. Below, I will discuss how each of the set of features mentioned above affects the reader's construction of the story time of *Slaughterhouse-Five*.

Billy is Spastic in Time

For a character unstuck in time, the narrative structure of Billy Pilgrim's story is not that jumbled. The narrator argues that "Billy is spastic in time, has no control over where he is going next, and the trips aren't necessarily fun. He is in constant state of stage fright, he says, because he never knows what part of his life he is going to have to act in next" (Vonnegut 2019: 19). Although Billy's travels in time are numerous and may confuse him, I would argue that there is more structure to his time travels than initially appears. First, not all of the time travels are Billy's. Occasionally, the jumps are performed in discourse time without Billy's blinking. For example, chapters six to nine all begin in a different event than their preceding chapters – in these cases the analepses or prolepses are performed by the narrator and not Billy. Second, due to the short biography provided at the beginning of chapter two, Billy's temporal position in relation to the chronology of life is easy to locate.

While reading, the blocks at the beginning of the embedded narrative help contextualize the presented information. For example, when Billy jumps in time between his honeymoon and his stay at the prison camp hospital, it is possible to place these events into blocks 2 and 4. The blocks help create an order for the events that are presented out of order. Interestingly, although the embedded narrative tends to fluctuate between events, isolating the events of one block reveals that most events within blocks tend to unfold in chronologically. The events of blocks 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 mostly have a linear progression. For example,

¹⁶⁴ The Tralfamadorian philosophy closely resembles B-theory of time.

as block 6 is about Billy's treatment in a Vermont hospital after the plane crash, the story unfolding at the hospital progresses along discourse time and in the reading direction; that is, as the page numbers increase, Billy's stay unfolds chronologically while he recovers. While mostly appearing as isolated passages, all of the events in blocks 2–3 and 5–7 progress chronologically within discourse time

The events of blocks 1 and 4, however, do not progress in a linear manner. The events of block 1 – Billy's birth and infancy, a shower with his father at the YMCA, a family trip to the West during the Great Depression, Billy's visit to a doctor at 16 with an infected thumb, as well as Billy's father's death and Billy's travel to his father's funeral – are described in brief. These events are scattered throughout the novel and do not appear in discourse time in a chronological order. The events of block 4 also cover a significant part of Billy's life (1958–1967). Many of the more significant events within this block unfold in a chronological order, for example Billy's wedding anniversary and kidnapping by the Tralfamadorians.¹⁶⁵ Once Billy is kidnapped and the story of his stay on Tralfamadore progresses, there is no return to earlier incidents within this event. After Billy meets Montana on Tralfamadore, for example, there is no return to the time period he spent alone there. While isolated events within the block mostly appear in a chronological order, there is asymmetrical movement within the block as a whole, meaning that several events which should occur after his wedding anniversary in 1964 are narrated out of order on preceding pages in discourse time.¹⁶⁶

While most of the ordered events are easy to situate in story time, events of block 4 pose some difficulties due to the asymmetrical temporal movement. However, the asymmetry is countered by dating the events of block 4. For example, at the end of chapter two, Billy is said to be visiting his mother in a nursing home in 1965, then is said to travel to 1958 to his son's Little League team banquet, from which he travels to New Year's Eve in 1961 during which he cheats on his wife (Vonnegut 2019: 36–38). Billy's meeting of Kilgore Trout and his wedding anniversary take place in 1964 (Vonnegut 2019: 136–145). He also travels to several events in 1967: to an examination of a female patient, a car ride through a Black neighborhood, a Lions Club luncheon, and the night of his daughter's wedding (Vonnegut 2019: 46–47, 48–50, 58–63). Despite the asymmetrical presentation of events in block 4, the reader can still organize the events because of the dates provided within the text.

Besides the dates within block 4, the war period (1944–1945), his stay at the veterans' hospital (1948), and his plane crash (1968) are also dated. Billy's childhood events are not specifically dated, but his family trip takes place during the Great Depression and Billy is said to have been twelve years old at the time. His visit to a hospital with an infected thumb is said to have taken place when he was

¹⁶⁵ Although there are pauses in the narrative of his kidnapping, as events of other blocks interrupt the story of Billy's kidnapping and his presence in Tralfamadore, the narrative still unfolds progressively.

¹⁶⁶ The anniversary unfolds on pages 139–145.

sixteen and he is stated to have been twenty-one when he joins the war. This means that most of the events in the novel can be easily placed and dated within the story time. However, this does not mean that the reading process is made easy. First, although it is possible to date the Tralfamadorian kidnapping in 1967, block 4 does not actually state that Billy's stay on Tralfamadore happens during the events of block 4 (Vonnegut 2019: 20). Instead, in the summary of Billy's life, discussions of Tralfamadore appear after Billy's plane crash, within block 7. Therefore, readers can situate the Tralfamadorian episodes within the events of block 4 or block 7. The interpretation depends on whether the readers consider the embedded narrative as an independent sci-fi story or as a story of Billy's mental decline.

Upon Billy's return from a radio talk show in New York in 1967 (block 7) to his dome-home in the Tralfamadorian zoo (supposedly block 4), Montana Wildhack tells Billy that she recognizes that Billy had "been time-traveling again" as she "can always tell" (Vonnegut 2019: 170). The conversation between the two characters reveals that Billy's unstuckness in time and space is more psychological than physical.¹⁶⁷ Thus one could interpret it as something concocted by an unstable mind broken by the war and a head trauma from the plane crash. I think it is possible to read Billy's story word for word as well as through the lens of trauma – Billy could be considered as a time traveler or as someone with serious mental decline. The narrator leaves both possibilities open as the mention of Billy's unstuckness in time is repeatedly followed by a "he says" (Vonnegut 2019: 19, 21). Billy decides to reveal the truth about time after his plane crash, which makes his statements about time and aliens especially questionable. The novel presents plenty of evidence to support the interpretation of a war veteran's declining mental health. Billy might counter this argument by claiming that time was not "ripe" for the truth before, during the events of block 4 and that the world is finally ready during the events of block 7 (Vonnegut 2019: 24). Depending on an individual reader's interpretation, Billy's kidnapping could either be placed in block 4 to represent his actual experience of being kidnapped by aliens or in block 7 and categorized as delusions incurred after a traumatic accident. If the event of kidnapping is placed in block 7, the entirety of Billy's story time established thus far would fall apart. This interpretation does not support the block system as the references to Traldamadore are not limited to a singular episode in discourse time but are dispersed throughout the novel.

While most events appear in order in discourse time, the constant interruption of events by other events complicates the creation of a story time. Ursula Heise's concept of recursion may offer some support in discussing event disruptions. According to Heise (1997: 61), recursion occurs when the narration of one event is interrupted by the narration of another event. While Heise uses the concept to describe disruptions between narrative levels, I use the concept to refer to

¹⁶⁷ While time travel can be defined as "a mismatch between personal time and external time," popular theories of time travel mostly consider time travel as something physical (Kutach 2013: 302; c.f. Mellor 2002, 2012),

disruptions within one narrative level in which events are put on pause to explore the unfolding of other events. Throughout *Slaughterhouse-Five*, recursion occurs when events are interrupted by events of other blocks, suspending the started story to either introduce another event or to continue from a previously interrupted event. While the interruptions are clearly signaled through references to Billy traveling in time, they still disturb the continuity of the story. While most of the events proceed after a short interlude, the fragmentation of the events splinters the entire embedded narrative.¹⁶⁸ This effect contributes to the weakening of causal connections between events. The events appear as isolated chunks that are chopped into smaller pieces every time an interruption occurs, making it difficult to recognize the events, the blocks, as well as the entire embedded narrative as coherent units. The difficulties are caused by the distancing of the fragments in discourse time but also by temporal distances in story time. If an event occurs in 1958, the next one in 1961 and there is nothing in between to connect the events thematically or temporally, the events will remain detached and isolated. This is the case for many of the events within the larger blocks. Since the novel leaves large gaps between the events of blocks, most events appear as independent entities that are connected by few threads.

Such a structure starts resembling the Tralfamadorian novels, which have “no beginning, no middle, no end, no suspense, no moral, no causes, no effects” (Vonnegut 2019: 72). It seems that readers of *Slaughterhouse-Five* are thrust into a reading situation that embraces the Tralfamadorian system. Because of the gaps in story time, readers are unable to attribute causes and effects to Billy’s story. Thanks to the summary at the beginning of chapter two, readers, along with Billy, will know about the events that are about to occur. This means that there is little narrative tension and barely any suspense. While the material text does have a beginning, middle and end, Billy’s story has no discernible beginning, middle, or end as Billy is spastic in time. In the same way, the reader is forced to be spastic in reading about Billy. The reader has to move into different times with Billy even if reading about another event will remain unfinished. The reader’s experience of *Slaughterhouse-Five* aligns with Billy’s experience about being unstuck in time.

Billy Blinked

While the chronological summary of Billy’s life in chapter two establishes certain boundaries within the narrative for the reader to follow, much of the structure of the novel remains in a disarray. The events of the novel are presented through brief and disordered scenes and images, few of which last longer than a couple of pages and most of which are limited to a page. Despite the disordered scenes, certain patterns emerge to reveal similarities between the many events featured in the embedded narrative. Readers will be able to create causal connections

¹⁶⁸ Based on several interviews with Vonnegut, this is an intentional effect as he intended his novels to be “mosaics made up of a whole bunch of tiny little chips; and each chip is a joke” (Standish 1973/2016: para. 71; cf. Vonnegut 1977/2019; McCartan 2011)

between events through thematic similarities and discourse time adjacency. In addition, some settings (such as the hospital and Dresden) function as hooks, as centers of action that suspend the time of the other events by pulling the narrative towards the hook.

Many of the shifts in discourse time are linked thematically. For example, Billy travels from one party to another, from a banquet in honor of his son's Little League Team in 1958 to a New Year's Eve party in 1961 (Vonnegut 2019: 37). He travels on a spaceship in 1967 and then on a train in 1944 (Vonnegut 2019: 58, 63). Billy is about to visit Tralfamadore for the first time but then ends up visiting the West for the first time with his parents (Vonnegut 2019: 72). A recently widowed Billy travels in time to meet a new "mate" in the Tralfamadorian zoo (Vonnegut 2019: 107–108). When being threatened with death, Billy is transported from the prison hospital to the actual day of his death, February 13, 1976 (Vonnegut 2019: 116).

Although Billy's story is patchy, with readers having little information about the periods that are not narrated, discourse time adjacency and thematic repetitions provide continuity for the novel. For example, the narrator's silence on the period between his engagement and honeymoon means that the reader will have no information about Billy's wedding. This is a significant gap in story time. Billy is still hesitant about his engagement in the veterans' hospital, and, yet, in the next narrated event in story time, Billy is already on his honeymoon. The narrator never reveals how Billy overcame his dislike of "ugly" Valencia. However, Billy's honeymoon links up with his stay in the prison camp hospital through the bathroom/ shed door that allows Billy to time travel between the two events (Vonnegut 2019: 81–82, 87–88, 96–97, 99–101, 103). Therefore, the stay in the prison camp hospital, which is far behind in story past, becomes a link between the period of Billy's engagement and his honeymoon. It does not explain why Billy ends up marrying Valencia but it provides an adjacency-hook between the gap. A blanket that Billy covers himself with while in bed functions as a similar adjacency-hook, linking the stay in the prison camp hospital with Billy's voluntary commitment in the veterans' hospital (Vonnegut 2019: 83–91, 96–103).

Billy's stays in three hospitals – a psychiatric hospital in 1948, a prison camp hospital at the end of 1944, and a hospital in Vermont where he is recovering from the plane crash – function as thematic and adjacency-hooks. During his one-night stay at the prison camp hospital, the narrative pivots between the prison hospital and the psychiatric hospital. Billy goes back and forth between the hospitals, connecting the two stays thematically (Vonnegut 2019: 81–91). During the period that covers Billy's experience in Dresden immediately before and after the bombing, the Vermont hospital stay becomes prominent as an adjacency-hook. The narrative presents the destruction of Dresden not through Billy's direct experience but through his dreams, reminiscences, report to Montana, discussions with another patient, and through excerpts from other works.

The most significant hook is the entire block two which narrates Billy's experience as a prisoner of war. Despite Billy's spastic temporality and the unpredictability of the temporal shifts, the POW-period in Germany is a fragmented

event that retains sequentiality throughout the novel. While both Billy's pre-war and post-war life tends to be disordered, his experience of the war unfolds chronologically in discourse time with no analepses within the block 2.¹⁶⁹ Every time discourse time returns to the POW period, the narrative continues from where it previously left off. Throughout Billy's time travel, his experience as a prisoner of war is moving forward in discourse time in a linear manner from when Billy is first captured to when he arrives at the German prison camp and, finally, to Billy's experiences in Dresden before and after its destruction. As the line is constant, the remaining events seem to revolve around it. While the linear narration of the period Billy spends as a war prisoner is often interrupted by other events, unlike other events, it always continues from where it was last suspended. This period thus acts as a steady hook between most events within the novel. The POW period additionally functions as a hook between the frame and the embedded narrative. By stating his presence alongside Billy during the war, the frame narrator intrudes into the embedded narrative and, in the last chapter, merges the frame story and inner story through the POW period.

The Truth About Time

The truth about time that Billy wants to broadcast to the world is taught to him by the Tralfamadorians. The Tralfamadorians present the beingness of time to Billy through two images. In the first image, a Tralfamadorian explains that they see "all time as you might see a stretch of Rocky Mountains" – simultaneously (Vonnegut 2019: 70). According to the second image, all time is structured to be the way it always is and we are "trapped" like bugs "in the amber of this moment" (Vonnegut 2019: 63, 70). While the first image establishes the Tralfamadorian time as a series of slices in a block relating to one another not through the triad of past, present, and future, but through the relation of earlier than and later than, the second image touches upon a common debate among time theorists, the question of free will.

Tralfamadorians do not subscribe to the idea of free will: "[o]nly on Earth is there any talk of free will" (Vonnegut 2019: 70). For Tralfamadorians, time and moments just are. There is no need to change anything if time is. The Tralfamadorians even know how the Universe ends – they "blow it up, experimenting with new fuels for [their] flying saucers" – and, yet, they see no need to change that moment, as the "moment is *structured* that way" (Vonnegut 2019: 95–96, original emphasis). Therefore, even if the Universe ends, it does not really end – it will still *be*, as it has always *been*. While accessible to the Tralfamadorians (and Billy, to some extent), temporality in the universe of the story is permanently fixed and settled. In the eyes of the Tralfamadorians, free will and the ability to change things is considered as an exclusively human fantasy. The reality, according

¹⁶⁹ One exception occurs when Billy's plane is about to crash and he travels back in time to when Roland Weary is shaking him awake (Vonnegut 2009: 128). This is also the only time an incident within an event is repeated.

to the experience of the Tralfamadorians, strongly points to a deterministic perspective on temporality.

Structurally, every novel is determinist, as the real author has already determined which events are presented in the novel. The events are in place before readers open their books. Regardless of whether the novel has a linear structure or a distorted temporality, each novel has a pre-determined structure. The reader can only read what has previously been written. On the level of the narrative, a fictional world presented within the pages of a book is also deterministic – characters in the narrative have no free will, they do not choose their own actions or the direction of the narrative. In the case of *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Billy's life follows a pre-determined path within the story. Billy experiences life by being thrown around in the time of his own life, in which nothing can be changed. Billy not only lacks agency as a fictional paper person but he also lacks agency within the level of the story.

Billy seems to have accepted this Tralfamadorian reality and has decided that there is little point in trying to escape from the pre-determined events or from being thrown around in time. Billy's office has a framed prayer mounted on the wall: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom always to tell the difference" (Vonnegut 2019: 50).¹⁷⁰ The same prayer is worn on a necklace by Montana (Vonnegut 2019: 172). After the first reference to the prayer, the second narrator explains that the past, the present and the future are things that Billy cannot change (Vonnegut 2019: 50). But what can Billy change? It seems that there is nothing that Billy is willing to change. Indeed, his philosophy of life conveys a certain fatalism. He is not actively trying to die but he is not actively trying to live either. Before his capture during the war, Billy would have preferred to have been left alone, "for just a little while /.../ he wouldn't cause anybody any more trouble. He would turn to stream and float up among the treetops" (Vonnegut 2019: 39). This mindset follows Billy throughout the novel until he decides to tell the world the truth about time (e.g. Vonnegut 2019: 83, 152, 156). As sort of a metacommentary, Billy, by accepting the Tralfamadorian philosophy, has decided that the structure of his life has been determined in advance, be it by the second narrator, the first narrator, the implied author, or the actual author. While Billy does not refer to authorial levels, he does not resist the chaotic structure either – he accepts it as it simply is.

Another inescapable, predetermined event is Billy's death. Death is no great tragedy for Tralfamadorians, like everything else, it simply is. Each creature always dies, so it goes. "When a Tralfamadorian sees a corpse," explains Billy, "all he thinks is that the dead person is in a bad condition in that particular moment, but that the same person is just fine in plenty of other moments." Thus, even if someone dies, they still *are* because "when a person dies he only *appears* to die. He is still very much alive in the past, so it is very silly for people to cry at his funeral"

¹⁷⁰ Known as the Serenity Prayer, Vonnegut borrows this prayer from a commonly quoted version composed by Reinhold Niebuhr.

(Vonnegut 2019: 22, original emphasis). It seems that Billy and both narrators accept the Tralfamadorian philosophy as every death described in the novel is followed by a “so it goes.” The phrase is not exclusive to human or Tralfamadorian deaths either – several dogs die in the novel; lice, bacteria, and fleas die, champagne dies, and even the death of the novel is discussed by literary critics (Vonnegut 2019: 51, 60, 69, 115, 169). In the novel, death does not end anything and so, for Billy, it is not terrible either (Vonnegut 2019: 117). Death is “simply violet light and a hum. There isn’t anybody else there” and in all of the other moments, the person is not dead (Vonnegut 2019: 117). According to the novel, then, a person’s death occurs only during one moment in time, all of the rest are filled with life.

Since the Tralfamadorians are able to experience four dimensions, instead of the human three, their own books have a very different formal structure of presenting clumps of symbols that are read all at once (Vonnegut 2019: 72). Discussing philosophy of time Mark Currie (2007: 23) describes what it would be like to read novels in B-time, like a Tralfamadorian, all at once: “If the words of a sentence were encountered simultaneously rather than in order, they would obviously fail in their mission to signify, and a reader incapable of viewing a sentence as a dialectic of tensed and untensed views of time would be unable to read.” Reading clumps of symbols that each describe a whole event is impossible for three-dimensional readers. However, it seems that Vonnegut has tried to do his best to provide his readers with a three-dimensional version of the Tralfamadorian way of reading by picking out events to present as slices of time.

While *Slaughterhouse-five* includes no clumps or stars, it does present readers with time slices – events that are randomly distributed over the novel. For obvious reasons, these have to be read in an order but they themselves are not in an order. So, the reader is reading seemingly random slices of time taken from Billy Pilgrim’s life. Although some causal blanks can be filled with some reader-made connections within the story level – Billy’s capture by the Germans led to him experiencing the bombing of Dresden, his choice of a school resulted in him marrying his wife, his airplane crash made him decide to talk about the unstuckness of time – as previously discussed, due to the non-sequential order of events presented in the novel, there does not seem to be causality in the unstuckness of events. Thus, while there are some connections between the time slices on the level of the embedded narrative that make it possible to detect some patterns within the fragmented time jumps, it is still difficult to find a set of features that would offer a glimpse into the philosophy of the novel’s organization

Remarkably, although the Tralfamadorians are able to experience time in four dimensions, they do not actually travel in time. B-theorists, who accept the theoretical possibility of time travel, only consider physical time travel as time travel. Mellor (2002), for example, rejects the idea that mental processes can transport people back and forth in time. Instead, the traveler has to have the ability to affect and be affected by the events that were traveled to – time travelers, then, need to be physically present in the time they arrive to. A conversation between Billy and a Tralfamadorian, however, reveals that the Tralfamadorians can only

mentally time travel. Observing the peaceful planet of the Tralfamadorians, Billy finds out that the planet is only sometimes peaceful:

Today we do. On other days we have wars as horrible as any you've ever seen or read about. There isn't anything we can do about them, so we simply don't look at them. We ignore them. We spend eternity looking at pleasant moments /.../ That's one thing Earthlings might learn to do, if they tried hard enough: Ignore the awful times, and concentrate on the good ones. (Vonnegut 2019: 96).

Since they see all times and are able to isolate specific moments in time, it could be said that they are able to *experience* all times but not that they are actually traveling in time. While they are able to travel to moments, they are not able to affect these moments and are, therefore, not able or willing to affect time in any way (they do not even try to stop the ending of the Universe!). All that Tralfamadorians are able and willing to do is *look* at times and to focus on the good times and ignore the difficult ones.

While both Billy and the Tralfamadorians are able to experience time out of order, the two experiences differ significantly. Both experiences concern the unstuckness of time but Billy is not able to choose between the times he experiences. Although responsible for his space travel, the Tralfamadorians “didn't have anything to do with his coming unstuck. They were simply able to give him insights into what was really going on” (Vonnegut 2019: 25). Billy is described as being able to travel in time through the blink of an eye. Although he can travel both to the future and to the past, he is only able to do so within his own lifetime. Just like the Tralfamadorians, I would argue that Billy is not traveling in time either.¹⁷¹ It is certainly true that Billy is able to travel between all of his life-events. However, he cannot affect the times he travels to: “Among the things Billy Pilgrim could not change were the past, the present and the future” (Vonnegut 2019: 50). All the moments that he travels to are already in place in their respective timeslices. Billy only has mental, and mostly non-linear access to the events of his life. One of the main philosophical points of the Tralfamadorians is the idea that we could choose to only look at the pleasant moments of life. Billy, however, is not even able to do this – when he time travels, he finds himself in rather awful and traumatic situations. The inner narrator explains that choosing to see the good times was, for some reason, impossible for Billy:

Billy stayed in the wagon when it reached the slaughterhouse, sunning himself. The others went looking for souvenirs. Later on in life, the Tralfamadorians would advise Billy to concentrate on the happy moments of his life, and to ignore the unhappy ones—to stare only at pretty things as eternity failed to go by. If this sort of selectivity had been possible for Billy, he might have chosen as his happiest moment his sun-drenched snooze in the back of the wagon. (Vonnegut 2019: 160)

¹⁷¹ The narrator constantly mentions that Billy travels in time (e.g. Vonnegut 2019: 36, 37, 46, 58, 81, 87, 91, 101, 108, 110, 128)

The reader's position in *Slaughterhouse-Five* mirrors both Billy's experience of time as well as Tralfamadorian time. The Traldamadorian experience is represented by the fixed discourse time. At the same time, readers are not able to choose the order of events presented within the novel and will usually follow the sequence of the material text.¹⁷² Just like Billy, the readers cannot choose to only focus on the happy moments. Locked into the reading moment, readers are "trapped in the amber" of the reading now (Vonnegut 2019: 63).¹⁷³ The reader's experience of reading *Slaughterhouse-Five* is as close as it gets for an Earthling to experience the Tralfamadorian reality. While the readers, like the Tralfamadorians, read about pre-determined events, they have no choice but to accept the events as they unfold, like Billy.

I Was There

Since the structure of the *Slaughterhouse-Five* consists of a frame story and an embedded story, the reader's interaction with the novel may result in multiple versions of story time. It is possible to read Billy Pilgrim's journey in time as an independent narrative or through the lens of the frame story, as something invented by the frame narrator. If only chapters 2–9 are considered, Billy's unstuckness in time could be read as a semi-plausible sci-fi story. However, meta-narration and metafiction can disrupt the reading of Billy's story as independent.¹⁷⁴ It is rather difficult to separate Billy Pilgrim's story from the frame story as the fabricated nature of the embedded story is so strongly emphasized throughout the novel. While the frame chapters definitely complicate the reading of the sci-fi plot, certain elements within the embedded narrative itself also interfere with an independent reading of the inner story.

Billy Pilgrim's journey in time is mostly treated as a fabricated story by the first narrator. He explains that Billy's story is written by a "a pillar of salt" to reproduce his own war experience (Vonnegut 2019: 18). The first intrusions of the frame narrator appear within the frame itself. From the first page of the novel, the frame narrator claims to have witnessed the events later narrated within the embedded narrative. From the second page until the end of the first chapter, the frame narrator offers readers glimpses into the writing process of his war novel. By reflecting on the act of writing, the frame narrator is engaging in meta-narration. The metafictional quality of the novel is a product of the constant textual reminders within the frame story as well as within the embedded story that disrupt the reader's immersion. A passage in chapter eight explicitly

¹⁷² That is, as long as the readers adhere to the conventional reading model of reading novels page by page.

¹⁷³ Of course, in a way, readers *could* skip the moments they do not want to read about but that would also affect the reading experience in general in a major way.

¹⁷⁴ While "metanarration refers to the narrator's reflections on the act or process of narration; metafiction concerns comments on the fictionality and/or constructedness of the narrative" (Neumann & Nünning 2012: para. 1)

addresses the artificial nature of the narrative: “There are almost no characters in this story, and almost no dramatic confrontations, because most of the people in it are so sick and so much the listless playthings of enormous forces. One of the main effects of war, after all, is that people are discouraged from being characters” (Vonnegut 2019: 134).

On the last page of the first chapter, the frame narrator tells readers how his failure of a war book will begin and end. And indeed, the first chapter of the embedded narrative begins as promised, with an invitation to “Listen.” The call to listen provides a clear separation between the frame and framed story in the first two chapters. As the frame narrator has prepared this novel for a long time, he is now ready to tell the story and have an audience listen (Vonnegut 2019: 1, 3, 8, 16, 18, 19). The ending of the frame narrator’s war novel, however, is slightly more ambiguous, introducing another complication to a reading of an independent embedded story. The ending promised by the frame narrator – “Poo-tee-weet?” – appears at the end of chapter ten and not at the end of chapter nine, as one would expect. While chapter one can confidently be considered as a frame narrative and chapters two to nine as embedded narratives, chapter ten is ambiguous as it contains characters from both the frame and the embedded narrative, merging the two narratives. The blending of narratives concerns the narrators, as well as the events. While the first chapter and the embedded chapters have separate narrators with different functions, the perspective of the frame narrator is combined with the perspective of the inner narrator. This new, blended narrator un-suspends the frame narrative by reflecting on his trip to Dresden in first-person but also comments in the third person on the Tralfamadorians, and Billy’s activities during the destruction of Dresden and the end of the Second World War.

Indirect intrusions into the embedded narrative surface in the form of repetitive phrases – e.g. “and so on,” “so it goes,” “Poo-tee-weet?” and “listen” that appear in both the frame and the embedded narrative – as well as through remarks about elements of the novel, such as the reference to the epigraph of the novel within the embedded narrative (Vonnegut 2019: 162). The first narrator’s direct intrusions into the embedded narrative occur during the passages describing the POW period. Although the frame narrator does not directly interact with Billy, he inserts himself into the events experienced by Billy. When Billy is addressed by a delusional colonel, the frame narrator claims he was there, with his “old war buddy, Bernard V. O’Hare” (Vonnegut 2019: 56). When Billy wakes up in the prison camp hospital shed and goes to the bathroom, he finds the latrine filled with American POWs, made sick by a welcome feast prepared by British POWs. Among the sick American POWs is the frame narrator: “An American near Billy wailed that he had excreted everything but his brains. Moments later he said, ‘There they go, there they go.’ He meant his brains. That was I. That was me. That was the author of this book” (Vonnegut 2019: 103). Upon arrival in Dresden, the frame narrator, as “the author of this book,” compares Dresden to the fictional land of Oz (Vonnegut 2019: 122). After the bombing, as the POWs are marched back into the city to retrieve the dead from the ruins, the frame

narrator is again present along with Billy and his war buddy O'Hare (Vonnegut 2019: 175).

Some of the descriptions of Billy's travels in time are accompanied by the repetition of "he says." Billy says that he is "spastic in time" and that he "has no control over where he is going next" (Vonnegut 2019: 19). When Billy's death is discussed, "he says" that he will die by the hand of Paul Lazarro in 1976 (Vonnegut 2019: 116–117). The lack of narratorial confidence in Billy's statements and the constant repetition of "he says" weakens the interpretation that Billy travels in time and was kidnapped by aliens. If the narrator does not believe that Billy travels in time, why should readers? The inner narrator's undermining comments coupled with the frame narrator's intrusions into the embedded narrative shatter the illusion of an independent embedded story. The growing distrust of the narratorial voice will force the reader to consider the possibilities of alternative interpretations of Billy's story.¹⁷⁵

Intrusions can also work in the opposite direction, as elements from the embedded narrative can also appear in the frame. For example, the phrase that Wild Bob from Cody, Wyoming keeps repeating is first described in chapter three, then muttered by Billy in chapter nine and finally spoken by the first-person narrator in chapter ten (Vonnegut 2019: 55, 169, 174). One of the most interesting intrusions is an indirect one in chapter four. As Billy is about to be kidnapped by the Tralfamadorians, his phone rings: "Billy answered. There was a drunk at the other end. Billy could almost smell his breath – mustard gas and roses. It was a wrong number. Billy hung up" (Vonnegut 2019: 60). This episode refers back to chapter one and the frame narrator's description of his habit of drunk-calling friends and old girlfriends while smelling of mustard gas and roses (Vonnegut 2019: 4, 7).

Genette (1983: 234–245) refers to transitions between separate narrative levels as metalepses. A transgression of a narrator to another level may make readers "aware of [their] role as recipients" and may "distance" them from the "powerful immersion that completely occupies [their] perception and attention" (Möllendorff 2018: para. 12). While the frame chapters already prevent the consideration of *Slaughterhouse-Five* as an independent sci-fi war story, the frame narrator's intrusions into the embedded narrative further weaken the autonomy of the embedded story. The first narrator's intrusions into the embedded narrative may, in Ursula Heise's (1997: 59) words, cause "systematic violations of the boundary between frame narrative and embedded story" and destabilize "the narrator's control of the story." In contrast, Fludernik (2009: 61) believes meta-narrative statements strengthen the narrator's credibility. Both can be considered true in the context of *Slaughterhouse-Five*. While metalepses, intrusive meta-narrative and metafictional statements may undermine the embedded story, these strategies also reinforce narratorial credibility of the frame story.

¹⁷⁵ Some of the alternative interpretations have been explored by Veas-Gulani 2010, Vanderwerken 2012, Wicks 2014.

I Remembered the Two Russian Soldiers Who Had Looted a Clock Factory

As the first narrator's primary goal is to write a novel about Dresden, a large part of the novel circles around the bombing of Dresden. However, neither the frame narrative nor the embedded narrative describe the direct experience of the Dresden bombing. While writing his "famous Dresden book," the frame narrator decides to ask his friend, who shared the experience, to help him remember the event (Vonnegut 2019: 4, 11–13). Yet, while they reminisce, they only hint at incidents that happened around the period and offer no descriptions of the event that the frame narrator intends to write about. The frame narrator visits Dresden twenty-two years after the bombing but the event of the bombing is not revisited (Vonnegut 2019: 1, 16–17). The frame narrator also discusses the event with a professor and describes the loot retrieved from the dead in Dresden but offers no further description of the event to the readers (Vonnegut 2019: 5–6, 8–9).

Although the frame narrator's book is supposed to be about air raids over Dresden, the embedded narrative only features short passages of the event. While Billy's journey to Dresden and his activities after the bombing are extensively described, only small glimpses of the bombing appear in the embedded narrative. Additionally, instead of having Billy time travel to the Dresden bombing, the event is only seen, remembered and recounted by Billy. The reader's first exposure to the air raids within the embedded narrative occurs through a war movie "about American bombers in the Second World War and the gallant men who flew them" (Vonnegut 2019: 60). Billy sees the movie on the evening he is about to be kidnapped by the Tralfamadorians. The movie does not explicitly mention Dresden, only a "German city that was in flames" (Vonnegut 2019: 61). Billy sees the movie "backwards, then forwards again" (Vonnegut 2019: 60). Seen backwards, the movie tells the tale of miraculous restoration, healing, and creation. The meaning of the movie in the forward direction is not elaborated upon as shortly after seeing the movie, Billy is kidnapped by Tralfamadorians.

The next time the Dresden bombing is described, Billy remembers the event. During his anniversary party, Billy has an emotional response to a performance by a barbershop quartet. The singing evokes the memory of the destruction of Dresden but does not transport Billy to the event. Billy remembers that

He was down in the meat locker on the night that Dresden was destroyed. There were sounds like giant footsteps above. Those were sticks of high-explosive bombs. The giants walked and walked. The meat locker was a very safe shelter. All that happened down there was an occasional shower of calcimine. The Americans and four of their guards and a few dressed carcasses were down there, and nobody else. The rest of the guards had, before the raid began, gone to the comforts of their own homes in Dresden. They were all being killed with their families. So it goes. /.../ A guard would go to the head of the stairs every so often to see what it was like outside, then he would come down and whisper to the other guards. There was a fire-storm out there. Dresden was one big flame. The one flame ate everything organic, everything that would burn. It wasn't safe to come out of the shelter until noon the next day. When the Americans and their guards did come out, the sky

was black with smoke. The sun was an angry little pinhead. Dresden was like the moon now nothing but minerals. The stones were hot. Everybody else in the neighborhood was dead. So it goes. The guards drew together instinctively, rolled their eyes. They experimented with one expression and then another, said nothing, though their mouths were often open. They looked like a silent film of a barbershop quartet. (Vonnegut 2019: 146)

The aftermath of the bombing is also not revisited through time travel. Instead, Montana asks Billy to tell him a story while the two are together on Tralfamadore and Billy tells her of Dresden:

'Dresden was destroyed on the night of February 13, 1945,' Billy Pilgrim began. 'We came out of our shelter the next day.' He told Montana about the four guards who, in their astonishment and grief, resembled a barber-shop quartet. He told her about the stockyards with all the fenceposts gone, with roofs and windows gone—told her about seeing little logs lying around. These were people who had been caught in the firestorm. So it goes. Billy told her what had happened to the buildings that used to form cliffs around the stockyards. They had collapsed. Their wood had been consumed, and their stones had crashed down, had tumbled against one another until they locked at last in low and graceful curves. 'It was like the moon,' said Billy Pilgrim. (Vonnegut 2019: 147)

The third-person narrator comments that "Billy's story ended very curiously in a suburb untouched by fire and explosion" (Vonnegut 2019: 148). However, as there are two chapters left of Billy's story, the narrator does not refer to the general ending of the embedded story but the ending of the story that Billy tells Montana, without explaining why such an ending would be curious. In the narration of Billy's memories, the Dresden bombing is narrated by the third-person narrator and not by Billy himself. The tone of the narration remains the same as it had been throughout the embedded narrative. This makes the narrator's commentary of the curious ending striking. It is as if the narrator had heard of the bombing from Billy and was relaying the information to the readers. This gives the second narrator an interesting function – they act as a witness not to the Dresden event but to Billy's retelling of the event.

The Dresden bombing is later also approached through other textual sources. While Billy is in the hospital, his fellow patient, a Harvard history professor Bertram Copeland Rumfoord reads from an actual book, *The Destruction of Dresden* (1963) by David Irving and actual excerpts from actual forewords are inserted into the embedded narrative (Vonnegut 2019: 153–155).¹⁷⁶ Rumfoord and Billy briefly also discuss Dresden, although Rumfoord finds it hard to believe that Billy had been there (Vonnegut 2019: 157–159, 163). The conversation between Billy and Rumfoord reveals as little as the conversation between the frame narrator and the professor from the University of Chicago (Vonnegut 2019: 8).

¹⁷⁶ The book has become rather controversial due to David Irving's possible exaggerations as well as his later Holocaust-denying statements.

While the bombing is described in the novel, it does not receive nearly as much attention as one would expect. Although the frame narrator is supposedly writing his famous Dresden book, narration about the Dresden bombing is mostly avoided.

Poo-Tee-Weet?

While the frame narrator is quite insistent that his novel – the embedded story – is a war novel about Dresden, neither Billy nor the frame narrator travel to the central event – the bombing of Dresden. Instead, both discuss the event with others, read about it, and reenact the event through the act of remembering (Vonnegut 2019: 145–147, 154, 158–159). The first time the bombing is described in detail, the second narrator explicitly mentions that Billy “did not travel in time to the experience. He remembered it shimmeringly” (Vonnegut 2019: 145). The act of remembering functions as a point of contact between the frame story and the inner story. The reader is invited to listen to the various ways in which this point of contact unfolds. The unfolding of this point of contact unsticks the time of *Slaughterhouse-Five* but the central event hooks the narrative and pulls it back towards the event. Although the foregrounded story of Billy is more prominent, the frame story seeps into the embedded story through the frame narrator’s desire to remind the reader that he, too, was present. Despite the detailed description of events surrounding the destruction of Dresden, neither the first narrator, Billy, nor Kurt Vonnegut and his war buddies wish to return to the event – they simply “did not want to think about” the bombing of Dresden (Vonnegut 2019: 213). They choose not to remember, to rather look at the good moments and ignore the awful ones.

While our reading process may differ from that of the Tralfamadorians, the result of our reading can be considered similar. Our clumps of symbols cannot be consumed at once as our words and letters unfold over a longer stretch of time and our experience of the world forces us to read those clumps of symbols one after the other. However, the outcome of the transactional relationship, the event unfolding between us and the text, the brief moment occurring between the Tralfamadorians and their books, coincides. Although readers may not be able to read of the events all at once, the structure of *Slaughterhouse-Five* strives to produce a similar experience in the three-dimensional reality. While certain events of Vonnegut’s novel do have points of contact, there really does not seem to be any particular relationship between the messages of the time slices presented to the reader. I believe that Vonnegut has carefully chosen the windows of time representing Billy’s life to convey a story with no beginning, middle, or end, and no closure. At the end of the reading process, we have a story time that simply is. It is no longer in pieces, scattered over hundreds of pages. The reader and the text have participated in collaborative story-building. Our stories, like those of the Tralfamadorians will provide an image of life that is beautiful and surprising and deep. These stories contain depths of many marvelous moments and once read, they become part of our lived experience.

CHAPTER SIX

6. TIME'S ARROW

In a paper titled “The Arrow of Time,” Thomas Gold (1962) argues that within the laws of physics, there is no intrinsic difference between the past and the present. The Gold Universe model theorizes that the universe is time-symmetrical, with low entropy at both ends and a mid-point culminating in a high entropy contraction, the Big Crunch. In Gold’s model, the arrow of time will reverse direction after the universe recontracts, with the first phase of the universe experiencing increasing and the second phase decreasing entropy. In this model, the inhabitants of the two halves of the universe would give opposite meanings to the passing of time. If one could observe the other half of the Gold universe, “it would be like looking at a film backwards; /.../ people would die before they were born, and trees would start off as rotting logs, rise up to towering heights and then dwindle into seedlings” (Dainton 2010: 53). In Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Billy Pilgrim sees a film about World War II, in which the war heals soldiers and builds cities. After the war, imagines Billy, “[e]verybody turned into a baby, and all humanity, without exception, conspired biologically to produce two perfect people named Adam and Eve” (Vonnegut 2019: 61). The premise of Martin Amis’s novel *Time’s Arrow: Or The Nature of the Offence* ([1991] 2003) unfolds according to that principle – war will heal and the world will become more innocent in time.

Amis wrote *Time’s Arrow* with Vonnegut’s scene at the “at the back of [his] mind” (Amis 2003: 175). The novel, progressing in reverse, is an example of an antinomic narrative, in which “both narrator and reader are moving prospectively /.../ though time’s arrow is reversed” (Richardson 2000: 26). The reversed direction of time concerns the intradiegetic time, the time of the story in Amis’s novel (Alber 2016: 152).¹⁷⁷ In the style of a “postmodern unbildungsroman,” Amis’s work opens with the death of the main character, Tod T. Friendly in the American suburbs (Menke 1998: 959). Reversing the arrow of time, Tod’s life is recounted from death to birth in a mixed first-person/third-person narrative. The narrator is a soul-like passenger within Tod’s body, who switches between identifying as the protagonist and withdrawing from Tod and declaring itself as a separate entity. The tone of the novel switches between comical, absurd, and grim as the narrator experiences life in reverse through the body of Tod.

The novel consists of three parts divided into eight subchapters. The setting of the first three subchapters in Part I is in the United States, the setting of the next four subchapters in Part II is in Europe – Portugal and Germany – and the setting of the final chapter in Part III is in the protagonist’s hometown in Germany. *Time’s*

¹⁷⁷ Ryan (2009: 142–143) refers to such narratives as “reversed time narratives.”

Arrow follows the entire life of the protagonist through the first-person narrator, starting from their death and ending with the conception of the protagonist in a German-English family at the end of the First World War in Germany.

The novel could be interpreted through a Heideggerian lens, with his most important idea of existence being-toward-death being reversed in favor of existence being-toward-birth. While Heidegger's phenomenology and Amis's novel are very different settings for discussions of the mode of being – one a philosophical inquiry into the meaning of life and the other a postmodern narrative playing around with the structure of fictional temporality – the two experiences, being-toward-birth and being-toward-death, do not contradict one another. Both experiences are directed forward, toward a potentiality that can be fulfilled.

Out of the three novels discussed within this dissertation, Amis's is easiest to follow, at least during the first half of the novel. While the other two novels stand out with highly fragmented narratives, *Time's Arrow* progresses in a linear manner and is not overly demanding. While the reader is still responsible for producing a story time, the linearity of *Time's Arrow* facilitates this process. For most of the novel, the reader is provided with a comfortable position of following the narrator and sharing their observations about the absurdity of going through life backwards. However, certain elements of the novel will eventually produce a disparity between the reader and the narrator. When the narrator accepts the direction of time in the latter part of the novel, the reader will find it difficult to conform to the narrator's position, creating a rift between the reader and narrator. As with the previous two novels, I will read *Time's Arrow* through discourse time and story time. I will discuss how the novel plays with the concept of a reversed temporality and how this affects the reading process.

6.1 Discourse Time

Time's Arrow presents a linear narrative through the perspective of a first-person narrator.¹⁷⁸ The novel is an ideal example of Brian Richardson's (2000, 2002) concept of antinomic temporality, according to which the main temporal distortion of the work concerns the reversed direction of time. The novel follows the life of Tod Friendly through a narrator, whose preferred direction of time seems to run counter to the presentation of events in discourse time. The opposite experience of the narrator and the protagonist creates a "moral distance" between the two (Currie 2007: 100). The moral distance between the narrator and the protagonist is present for most of the novel, until the schism between Tod and the narrator is repaired and the narrator's sense of temporality starts to coincide with the direction of discourse time. As soon as the narrator accepts the direction of time, the readers, who had thus far shared the narrator's point of view will be forced to distance themselves from the narrator/protagonist.

¹⁷⁸ A linear but not a chronological narrative in the sense of a common understanding of the direction of time

As the novel's progression is linear, discourse time of *Time's Arrow* is not difficult to follow. However, as the world of Amis's novel runs counter to the time of being-toward-death, the reader's preferred direction of time for story-worlds, with movement from past to future being most typical, will be immediately challenged. I will analyze the relationship between narrator and protagonist, and reader and narrator in the next section. In this section, I will introduce the reversed world of the novel, and the progression of discourse time.

I Don't Quite Recognize This World We're In

The entire narrative of *Time's Arrow* is structured to progress backwards. While the novel unfolds in a mostly linear manner, it is not chronological in any ordinary sense. Its chronology is reversed: "After October 2, you get October 1. After October 1, you get September 30" (Amis 2003: 16). Temporality in *Time's Arrow* is sequential but there is no causal structure to the sequence of events and thermodynamic laws demonstrate temporal asymmetry in the wrong direction. In this fictional world, effects precede their causes and entropy decreases: "Water moves upward. It seeks the highest level /.../ Smoke falls. Things are created in the violence of fire" (Amis 2003: 51).

In the inverted world of the novel, technology is becoming simpler, cars are getting slower, air cleaner, and people become fewer and more innocent as time passes, injuries heal people and candy is taken from babies. The environment is also benefitting from the reversal of time, as earth's inhabitants "clean up the earth and the sky, transmogrifying cars, turning tools, parts, weapons, bolts into carbon and iron" (Amis 2003: 57). In the logic of the narrative, "[w]ork liberates" as employees happily move toward the workweek on Friday evenings and contentedly offer money to employers for the privilege of working (Amis 2003: 57). Affairs, however, begin with "a moment of *horror*" – the breakup (Amis 2003: 59, original emphasis). Although, after some fighting and weeping, a period of "unbounded tenderness" can be experienced. As the relationship progresses, it becomes cooler, with partners starting to recede and fade away from one another, "with the lightest of kisses, the briefest squeeze of the hand" and then, "one day, they just look right through you" (Amis 2003: 61, 159).

Since everything happens in reverse in the world of the protagonist, the quality of life depends on the quality of one's trash and excrement, quite literally as "[a]ll life, /.../ all sustenance, all meaning (and a good deal of money) issues from a single household appliance: the toilet handle" (Amis 2003: 18). Trash and the toilet provide the inhabitants of the novel's universe with everything necessary for life. Garbage returns from the trash can to its owner and excrement is returned to the body, passing back through the gastrointestinal tract to be chewed, spit out into a neat meal on the plate, uncooked into ingredients, and finally returned to the store for cash before loading things onto the trolley to return "each can or packet to its rightful place" (Amis 2003: 19).

Destruction and creation, violence and healing have switched meaning in the novel. Creation happens through swift action which mends the broken – an explosion fixes a building, a crash fixes a car, a blow to the face fixes a nose. Destruction, on the other hand, happens slowly, a beautiful garden is dismantled over long years and a knitted sweater is dismantled over long hours (Amis 2003: 26, 147). Violence “mends and heals” and in this world, “you have to be cruel to be kind” (Amis 2003: 164, 41). Toys are taken from children to make them cry, women “at the crisis centres and refuges are all hiding from their redeemers,” who, upon meeting, hit and rape the women until “they’re okay again” (Amis 2003: 39). The narrator also has a moral aversion towards the protagonist’s profession (2003: 11). Working as a doctor, the protagonist always leaves his patients in a much worse condition, as doctors apply tumors, remove bandages to insert nails, and administer fevers. In the storyworld, the hospital “is an atrocity-producing situation. Atrocity will follow atrocity unstopably. As if fresh atrocity were necessary to validate the atrocity that came before. As if the atrocity that came before was necessary to validate the atrocity that will come after” (Amis 2003: 102). Work at the hospital “is an eight-hour panic attack” for the narrator (Amis 2003: 33–34).

From the very beginning of the novel, the narrator/soul-figure is quite perplexed by the order of the world and believes that something must be wrong. The narrator is confused to see people walking, driving, speaking backwards – greeting others with a ‘Aid u too y’rrah?’ – as well as growing smaller and getting younger (Amis 2003: 14). The narrator does not “quite recognize this world we’re in. Everything is familiar but not at all reassuring /.../ this is a world of mistakes, of diametrical mistakes,” yet the narrator realizes that other inhabitants of this world “don’t find it counterintuitive, and faintly disgusting, as I do” (Amis 2003: 15–16). It is as if the narrator is watching a movie running backwards or observing the other half of a Gold Universe, a world with a decreasing entropy. As this seems wrong for them, the narrator has come across a situation in which their individual sense of temporal direction is running in the opposite direction from that of the other characters of the novel. The narrator has knowledge of the correct direction of the world and is thus able to recognize that Tod’s life is moving in the wrong direction.

The information that readers receive from the narrator is presented through a succession of events in which the sequence is preserved but the chronology reversed. There are few temporal interruptions in the narration. The interruptions mostly occur due to worldbuilding and are presented in the form of the narrator’s comments about the reversed world. While inhabiting the protagonist’s body, the narrator is unable to control Tod/John/Hamilton. The narrator has access to the protagonist’s feelings and thoughts but cannot influence his actions. When the protagonist transforms into Odilo, the narrator is able to finally gain access to the protagonist’s body. As the novel’s focus is on the experience of the narrator, a fairly significant amount of the narrative deals with the narrator’s state of mind, which is heavily impacted by the protagonist’s actions.

Tod T. Friendly

The easiest approach to mapping the structure of discourse time is through the different identities of the protagonist. The protagonist is always running from something, fleeing from the discovery of his past, fleeing from Europe, fleeing from the war, and, as a result faces circumstances that force him to change his identity. I will briefly go over the developments of the protagonist's life from the beginning of the novel to the end, as the sequence of events presented in discourse time follows the lifetime protagonist from death-to-birth.

The protagonist is first introduced to the narrator and the reader through the identity of Tod T. Friendly. The narrator's insight into the life of the protagonist, however, is slightly more immediate than that of the reader as the narrator wakes up in the resurrected body of Tod. It is through Tod that the narrator is first introduced to the world and how it works. The protagonist is brought back to live life as a lonely retired doctor "in washing-line and mailbox America, innocuous America, in affable, melting-pot, primary-colour, you're-okay-I'm-okay *America*" (Amis 2003: 14). Although dead at first, Tod is a lively person who "loves the company of crowds," and who, after some time recovering from old age, can be considered as a "superb physical specimen" (Amis 2003: 21, 57, 59). After retirement, Tod starts working at a hospital as a geriatric doctor. More than a third of the novel subsequently unfolds from within the body of Tod Friendly. The fictional world is mostly explained through Tod's chapters, which make up most of Part I of the novel.

In the final chapter of Part I, the narrator travels to hectic New York with Tod Friendly, who decides to reinvent himself and trades his name for John Young (Amis 2003: 74). Younger, fully recovered from his death and full of life, John's life in New York is characterized by a newfound joy in work, hobbies, and women: "our world is suddenly very full, humanly, full of faces and voices. Everybody knows me /.../ for the first time in my life I have friends and interests, shared interests like baseball and opera and partying, and I gleam and hobble with privilege" (Amis 2003: 86). However, the narrator's satisfaction soon turns into misery as he discovers John's fondness of dating several women at a time and his new job as a surgeon. While Tod's life is described in detail, only one chapter is narrated through the protagonist as John. Although the narration in the first third of the novel consisted, in large part, of worldbuilding, and the extensive proportion of discourse time that unfolds with Tod could be attributed to this, the smaller proportion of discourse time dedicated to John is caused by the narrator's dislike of the protagonist's lifestyle as John Young. While going through life as John, the narrator grows weary of "being human" (Amis 2003: 103). "Some sort of bifurcation had occurred, in about 1960," says the narrator, after which he leaves John to live his life "out there" while "still living inside, quietly, with my own thoughts" (Amis 2003: 107).

As the narrator dissociates from John, the period from the 1960s to 1948 is unnarrated. The narrator decides to rejoin the protagonist when John travels to Portugal by ship. There, the protagonist once again adopts a new persona and

settles down in a Portuguese villa, complete with a serving staff, as Hamilton de Souza (Amis 2003: 111). The three-year period as Hamilton is also covered in a single chapter; this time, however, not because of the narrator's dislike of Hamilton's lifestyle but because of the leisurely pace of life at the villa. The narrator observes that the protagonist is growing richer, younger, and more vigorous with each passing day (Amis 2003: 108). Although "[I]assitude and shame and dreamy disgust provide the medium for these transactions," much to the narrator's joy, Hamilton occupies himself in Portugal by collecting gold (Amis 2003: 113).

By the end of the Second World War, the narrator and the protagonist are "inserted into" the war, "with what they call surgical precision. With slow care" (Amis 2003: 117). Prior to his departure from Portugal, the narrator observes Hamilton, usually "so smart and handsome," to be looking "grimy and fatalistic" (Amis 2003: 117). "[I]n a relay race to war," the protagonist and narrator journey through war-torn Europe with their collected gold, "praying and shivering" and speaking to no one for the fear of the "other language /.../ climbing to the surface" (Amis 2003: 121, 119, 117). In Italy, the protagonist confesses to a Catholic priest and assumes a new identity, Odilo Unverdorben, one last time

At the end of the journey, the protagonist arrives at Auschwitz. There, Odilo is personally responsible for supplying the gas chambers with pellets of Zyklon B, or rather, responsible for removing it and "entrust[ing] them to the pharmacist in his white coat" (Amis 2003: 129). At the extermination camps, Odilo dives into his work of "resurrecting" the Jews, making sure they wake up in the gas chambers, supplying them with their "[c]lothes, spectacles, hair, spinal braces" and giving them gold "direct from the *Reichsbank*" but also from the personal stash of the Auschwitz staff, with Odilo giving more than anyone else (Amis 2003: 129–130). As time marches backwards, more and more Jews are resurrected. Through a "regime of hard work and strict diet" the inhabitants of the camp become stronger, families are put together and shipped by trains to various locations in Europe (Amis 2003: 132). The "triumph of Auschwitz," according to Odilo, is "essentially organizational: we found the sacred fire that hides in the human heart" (Amis 2003: 132). At the camp, Odilo also meets his wife for the first time. The early meetings between the couple are dedicated to grieving their lost child. The period for grieving is brief, however, as the child eventually resurrects, is born, and is inserted back into the body of Odilo's wife, Herta.

Post-Auschwitz, at the outset of the war, Odilo starts working at Schloss Hartheim, as "part of my winding down from the experience of the KZ" (Amis 2003: 153). Work there, however, is not as satisfying for Odilo as the people produced in the gas chambers "just weren't any good any more" and were sent away with defects (Amis 2003: 154). Eventually, the war period reaches its beginning. The final chapter of part II portrays Odilo in medical school while simultaneously pursuing a relationship with Herta. Their relationship is gradually becoming less intimate. At the same time, Odilo and his friends start helping the Jews integrate better into the German society. Roughly one-third of the novel is dedicated to the Odilo chapters in Auschwitz and post-Auschwitz. Odilo's

childhood unfolds in the only chapter of part III of the novel. Settled in his hometown Solingen, Odilo's days are filled with playing and spending time with his mother. As a newborn, Odilo enters the womb of his mother and some of the last moments of the narrator's awareness are spent hating his father for what is about to do: Odilo's father "will come in and kill me with his body" (Amis 2003: 172).

6.2 Story Time

The creation of a cohesive story time is considerably easier in *Time's Arrow* than in *Slaughterhouse-Five* or *Catch-22*. There is no need for tables or comprehensive notes as the sequence of events is linear. However, the time of the reader does not coincide with the time of the storyworld of *Time's Arrow*. As if observing the second phase of the Gold Universe, the reader observes the storyworld progressing in reverse, against the reader's own temporal progression from birth to death. In his analysis of *Time's Arrow*, Mark Currie (2007: 102) explains that this conflict between the narrative direction and reader's natural sense of time places the "reader in such a position of utter helplessness from which the defence of rationality must entail the reassertion of forwards time." The novel establishes an environment in which the reader must rethink the directionality of time and focus on reinterpreting the meaning of words and actions. While the narrator's explicatory commentary on the storyworld is convenient at first, their initial confusion and eventual conclusions about the storyworld will result in a strange effect on the reader as the novel progresses. As the already untrustworthy narrator becomes progressively less reliable, the reader will need to constantly reexamine the information provided by the narrator.

As the past and future have switched places in the story, the reader must also continuously reassess the novel's temporality. In an antinomic narrative, time simultaneously unfolds in two opposing directions (Richardson 2000: 26). As the arrow of time for reading and the arrow of discourse time are directed towards one another, it is difficult to describe and convey the novel's temporality. Although, an evaluation of story time might not be too complicated, communicating the novel's temporality through previously established terms such as story past, story present, story future, is rather challenging. Commenting on the time of the *Time's Arrow* entirely depends on perspective and narrative level, and the novel offers too many different perspectives for following the unfolding of time. If the reversed direction of time occurs within the storyworld, with the thermodynamic arrow of the story universe pointing towards the wrong direction and with Tod's life genuinely unfolding from death (Tod's past) to birth (Tod's future), the story past coincides with the discourse past. However, if the reversed direction unfolds on the level of the narrative, with the narrator's initial impression of the storyworld being accurate, the story past would concern Tod's birth and would be in conflict with the textual chronology. The narrator's perspective, however, is not the most reliable as the narrator's interpretation of the storyworld fluctuates. Similarly, from the actual reader's perspective, story past and discourse past progress inversely,

but as the reader's interpretation of the storyworld's direction remains constant throughout the novel, the reader's perspective is preferable to the narrator's. As I will analyze the effect of the reversed storyworld on the reader and on the narrator, commenting on time by contrasting story past and discourse past, would be difficult. In order to preserve consistency while writing about the novel's temporality, my commentary will mostly retain the direction of discourse time – the beginning of the novel will be the past and the ending of the novel is the future.

Finally, the typographical configuration of *Time's Arrow* remains mostly conventional but the few exceptions have an interesting effect.¹⁷⁹ While the narrative of the reversed storyworld unfolds in the direction of reading, all dialogue is presented as starting with the last utterance and progresses into its beginning. This means that dialogue is running counter to the conventional direction of reading. In order to understand the dialogue, readers are forced to change their direction of reading. The effect of reading dialogue in reverse will be discussed at the end of this section.

This Body I'm in Won't Take Orders from this Will of Mine

Time's Arrow is narrated through a narrator, who considers itself as the soul or "hidden sharer" of the protagonist's body (Amis 2003: 64). This soul-figure is the only voice in the novel. As the narrative unfolds through the narrator's point of view, the protagonist, while not insignificant, is not focalized. Instead, the reader's access to the storyworld is governed in its entirety by the narrator's gaze. The relationship between the narrator and the protagonist is in a constant flux: some passages highlight the narrator's identification with the protagonist through the pronoun "we" and some clearly differentiate between the narrator and protagonist, with the narrator distancing itself from the protagonist through "he/him"-pronouns or by name. When the world starts making sense to the narrator, for two chapters in part II, the narrator stops distinguishing between itself and the protagonist and refers to an "I." As the relationship between the narrator and the protagonist is constantly shifting, this section is concerned with the role of the narrator in the novel and the changes that occur in the narrator's relationship with the storyworld and with the protagonist.

The role of the protagonist is to host the narrator within their body. The role of the "nameless inner *doppelgänger*" is to narrate "the events of Tod's life from finish to start" (Menke 1998: 960). The narrator cannot access the thoughts of the body it shares, cannot communicate with the protagonist, but it can experience the "feeling tone" of the body (Amis 2003: 15). The narrator feels how the body can be fearful, full of shame, "aweless, distant," full of "specialized attitudes and readiness," and sometimes in a state of "no feeling tone" (Amis 2003: 15 33,

¹⁷⁹ While the narration preserves the direction of reading from left to right, the narrator offers a brief demonstration of how sentences spoken backwards would look like in print in the beginning of the novel (Amis 2003: 14). Currie (2007: 104) remarks that the conventional direction of reading "must be preserved in order for linguistic significance to survive."

49–50, 89). While the narrator has “no preselected feelings about anybody /.../ except about doctors,” it starts internalizing and accepting Tod’s predispositions early in the novel (Amis 2003: 50). For example, the narrator admits that “a few years ago /.../ we really *hated* the Japanese” (Amis 2003: 50). While this occurs during the protagonist’s Tod-era, a time period during which the narrator mostly distances itself from the protagonist, the narrator’s views are still guided by Tod’s biases and prejudices. The narrator explains that nobody else knows that it is inhabiting Tod’s body and considers itself as a parasite or a passenger, “stuck with the old bastard, whatever the lifestyle” (Amis 2003: 69, 73, 102). The narrator also considers itself as a mirror image or a double of the protagonist:

Narcissus fell in love with his reflection – with his own soul. If you ever close a deal with the devil, and he wants to take something from you in return – don’t let him take your mirror. Not your mirror, which is your reflection, which is your double, which is your secret sharer. The devil has something to be said for him: he acts on his own initiative and isn’t just following orders. (Amis 2003: 17).

The narrator as a reflection of the protagonist could explain why it is traveling through time in reverse – the narration is a mirror image of the story, projecting the storyworld in reverse.

When the protagonist resurrects, the narrator stirs to life with no memory of Tod’s life in the discourse future but has considerable general knowledge about the world. While the direction of the world is somewhat confusing, the narrator is “not a complete innocent. For instance, I find I am equipped with a fair amount of value-free information, or general knowledge, if you prefer. $E=mc^2$. The speed of light is 186,000 miles per second” (Amis 2003: 16). As the narrator is not thrown into the world as a blank slate, its previous knowledge shapes the narrator’s interpretation of the world Tod inhabits as being wrong, somehow. While the narrator learns and retains information about the textual past as the novel progresses, Tod’s memory works in reverse. Growing younger and moving towards the textual future, Tod starts forgetting his past.

As a sharer of the protagonist’s body, the narrator’s relationship with the protagonist is complicated, to say the least. The narrator shifts between identifying with and withdrawing from the protagonist, depending on whether it agrees with the protagonist’s actions or not. The narrator becomes the protagonist, Odilo, in chapters 5 and 6 which concern Odilo’s wartime activities. The narrator becomes “I, Odilo Unverdorben” in the beginning of chapter five, when he realizes that finally, for him, the “world is going to start making sense,” no longer is “there a secret passenger on the back seat of the bike, or in some imaginary sidecar,” as Odilo and the narrator become one (Amis 2003: 124). The narrator is able to make sense of the world as long as they are ‘saving’ the Jewish people from death. In his black boots and white coat, the narrator is one of the officers at Auschwitz responsible for the ‘magic’ of “dream[ing] a race,” of making “a people from the weather. From thunder and from lightning. With gas, with electricity, with shit, with fire” (Amis 2003: 124, 127, 128). As Odilo, the narrator forces his “thrusts

of love” upon the “bald whores” in the “officers’ bordello” and personally assists Uncle Pepi, the novel’s equivalent of Josef Mengele, with phenol injections (Amis 2003: 134, 136).

As one with the protagonist, the narrator discovers bodily emotion and sensation. Previously, the narrator was only aware of the emotions and ‘feeling tone’ of the protagonist. However, as the protagonist, the narrator discovers a “new thing in [his] life called emotion” and pain, which “flits around [him]” (Amis 2003: 146, 148). As soon as the world stops making sense again, at the end of chapter six, the narrator will still remain within Odilo, but the protagonist will be “on his own” (Amis 2003: 156). The “preternatural purpose” feeding his drive and the insight gained during the war, however, remains with the narrator as motivation for further action and thought, even after retreating from Odilo (Amis 2003: 124, 127, 160). Even after the war, the narrator considers the resurrected Jewish people his children and claims to “love them as a parent should, which is to say that I don’t love them for their qualities (remarkable as these seem to be, naturally), and only wish them to exist, and to flourish, and to have their right to life and love” (Amis 2003: 160).

It is evident that the narrator of *Time’s Arrow* “may be relied upon to get things diametrically, and often poignantly, wrong” (Menke 1998: 960). The narrator decides to become Odilo at Odilo’s worst and interpret the time as Odilo’s best. Yet, when the task of “dreaming a race” is over, the narrator immediately disassociates from Odilo, without whom the narrator is “[f]ully alone. I who have no name and no body – I have slipped out from under him and am now scattered above like flakes of ash-blond human hair” (Amis 2003: 155–156). The disturbing misrepresentation of the tragedy of the Holocaust makes the narrator entirely unreliable and forces the reader to reevaluate their previous interpretations of the narrator and their role.

Besides the wartime chapters as Odilo, there are a couple more passages, in which the narrator identifies with the protagonist – at the very beginning of the novel and at the very end. At the beginning, in the very first lines, as the protagonist moves “forward, out of the blackest sleep,” the narrator has yet to realize that it is not in charge of Tod’s body (Amis 2003: 11). It isn’t until the narrator is released from the hospital, “zapped” and kissed back into life that it realizes that the body it is in “won’t take orders from this will of mine” (Amis 2003: 13). It is then that the narrator discovers another inhabitant of the body and the protagonist becomes a “he.” At the end of the novel, while the narrator claims to have left Odilo on his own after chapter six, a degree of association still remains between the narrator and the protagonist in his childhood. During the final chapter, Odilo is spoken of in the third person but the narrator still has some agency in the body of Odilo. During a youth camp at Birkenau, the narrator recounts:

I unrolled my sleeping-bag, quite unthinkingly, though I noticed the patches of arrow grass, the familiar three-pronged marsh plant, with its burst points. That night the arrow grass filled me with inklings, and disquieted me, as Odilo slept. (Amis 2003: 169).

Reaching further into childhood, while Odilo is slowly losing awareness of his surroundings, the narrator remains mindful of Odilo's age, his location, how he calls his father "fatti" and about their shared upcoming birth (Amis 2003: 170). Odilo, as a child, is mentioned but does not act. Although Odilo is unaware of his own past, with the retreating time erasing his memories, the narrator has retained the information about the entirety of Odilo's life. During this period, Odilo and the narrator are not a singular first-person subject, but rather a plural first-person subject. They are not one, the narrator does not identify with the protagonist but they still share a body and both have agency within that body. In the pre-Odilo period, the narrator also shares the body of the protagonist but it cannot govern the body. The relationship between the protagonist and the narrator can be summarized in three stages: 1) complete dissociation, with the narrator hidden and powerless in the body of the protagonist; 2) complete identification, with the narrator and protagonist merging as one body; 3) partial identification, with narrator and protagonist having control of the body separately.

While the narrator does not govern the body for most of the protagonist's life, first-person plural pronouns are still often used when referring to the body of the protagonist. At the beginning of the novel, when the narrator first sees old Tod in the mirror, he exclaims that "[w]e really *do* look like shit" (Amis 2003: 18, original emphasis). As the protagonist grows younger, the narrator, along with Tod, is "awfully proud" of their shared body:

our own body, our own corporeal instrument /.../ the bobbly briskness of our stride. My, the clarity and attack of our bowel movements. How perfectly we function... It's hardly surprising, I suppose, that the ladies go for us in a big way and come across so quickly, with our impassive oblong of a face, our clean and powerful hands. (Amis 2003: 66)

Yet, the shared body sometimes also becomes only the narrator's own or only the protagonist's own. Even in periods of complete disassociation the narrator claims the body whenever there is improvement within the body as the protagonist gets younger:

Physically I'm in great shape. My ankles and knees and spine and neck no longer hurt all the time – or not all at once, anyway. I get to places much quicker than I used to: places like the far end of the room. I'm there before you know it. My bearing is almost princely. I sold that stick of mine long ago. (Amis 2003: 20).

On the other hand, when the body of the protagonist "is not all that promising," there is a pattern of associating the body with only the protagonist (Amis 2003: 17). This happens in instances where the narrator finds the actions of the protagonist highly objectionable. During certain passages as John or Hamilton, the narrator distances itself from the protagonist as well as his body:

the body he is most interested in, these days, is his own. He is his own hobby. And his body is its own lover. What a love is this, between upper limb and external heart. /.../ Hamilton just can't get over it, his body. You would think he'd never had one before. As he moves through the house, mirrors monitor him. Him, it, this, this: *this* is the body he primes and mortifies and shrewdly inspects in all the rippling funhouse mirrors of Portugal. (Amis 2003: 114)

It is not only the body that is rejected by the narrator when it dissociates from the protagonist. One major theme of the novel is the narrator's animosity towards doctors. When Tod/John seeks penance for his actions in the future by actually healing bodies as a doctor, the narrator misunderstands the purpose and is truly bothered by his work as a doctor. The narrator cannot understand why doctors are believed to be healers when patients leave the hospital worse off than they were when they were admitted to the hospital (Amis 2003: 85–86). For some reason, the narrator's hostility towards doctors is part of their general knowledge. They awake from death with a deep contempt towards doctors: "How I hate doctors. Any doctors. All doctors" (Amis 2003: 11). In passages where Tod's work as a doctor is discussed, the narrator not only distances itself from the protagonist but goes so far as to distance itself from any responsibility as a doctor: "I don't give the orders around here. I don't wear the pants" (Amis 2003: 33). While John works as a surgeon in NYC, the protagonist is so disgusted by the work it considers dying as a soul for the body to stop: "If I died, would he stop? If I am his soul, and there were soul-loss or soul-death, would that stop him? Or would it make him even freer?" (Amis 2003: 96). Since nobody in this world is able to die (they are only able to be born), the narrator cannot leave the body completely alone. However, the narrator "tunes out" from the 1960s until 1948 and leaves those years without narration until John stops working as a doctor and travels to Portugal (Amis 2003: 110, 107).

Relationships are another reason the narrator distance's itself from the protagonist. During the Tod and John years, the protagonist has a semi-serious relationship with his maid, Irene. Although the protagonist is accustomed to dating several women at the same time, the narrator is quite fond of Irene: "'Tod may be two-timing,' I want to whisper, 'but I'm true to you. I am constant. I am true'" (Amis 2003: 63). The narrator "can't *stand* the way he treats her" and claims to be in a love triangle with John and Irene – "I love her but she loves him and he loves no one /.../ I *burn* for her" (Amis 2003: 94–95). The narrator even expresses jealousy for Tod after a big fight "reestablished their relationship on a sexual footing" (Amis 2003: 97).

As Odilo, the narrator builds a relationship with Odilo's wife, Herta. The narrator had been aware of Herta ever since the Tod-period and was looking forward to meeting her (Amis 2003: 47, 63). The narrator first becomes acquainted with Herta as "pen pals" (Amis 2003: 135). Their first meeting takes place at Auschwitz. In this meeting, Odilo and Herta discuss the death of their baby and the narrator discovers that his relationship is 'icy' due to Herta's disapproval of Odilo's work (Amis 2003: 140, 155). The relationship between Herta and Odilo

improves after the end/beginning of the war. Although, by that time the narrator has distanced itself from Odilo, the narrator discovers that it is still “mad about” Herta, how her “body gossips with youth. Her ears are like cookies, her teeth are like candy. Her flesh is as taut as the flesh of an olive” (Amis 2003: 158). As Herta and Odilo become younger, the narrator becomes frustrated by the irregularity of Odilo’s and Herta’s love life (Amis 2003: 159). While the narrator was disturbed by the emotional ill-treatment of Irene, after identifying as Odilo, the narrator does not discourage Odilo’s physical abuse of Herta. The narrator even finds itself “urging Odilo to use violence (quickly, before she is fifteen): violence, which mends and heals” (Amis 2003: 164).

I Move Forward, Out of the Blackest Sleep

Constantly looking for new ways to describe itself, the narrator truly considers itself as a “soulful type” (Amis 2003: 50). But what would be the role of a soul? Mirroring Heidegger’s language, the narrator declares itself as the “voice of conscience” which “speaks in a whisper” (Amis 2003: 56, c.f. Heidegger 1962: 277, 314, 317).¹⁸⁰ Is the narrator’s role, then, to function as a call of conscience to the protagonist? In brief, Heidegger’s ideas about the notion of conscience concern Dasein’s authenticity and potentiality-of-being.¹⁸¹ The concept of conscience manifests as a voice that speaks in silence without any words, without conveying information, tries to pull Dasein out of everydayness, speaks of guilt, finds Dasein as long as they are living authentically, and comes from within Dasein. Does the narrator of Amis’s novel fulfill any of these requirements to be considered the conscience of the protagonist’s Dasein?

First, the narrator could, indeed, be considered as a voice. However, unlike Heidegger’s conscience, this protagonist’s supposed conscience is anything but silent as it narrates the entire novel. On the other hand, while the narrator is loud in its narration, its words do not seem to reach the protagonist, for most of the novel. While cheating on Irene, the narrator wants the protagonist to stop, “Tod, I wanted to say: don’t do this,” yet realizes that Tod will not hear it (Amis 2003: 56). While the role of conscience is to pull Dasein out of everydayness, out of the “they,” the protagonist fails to listen to the voice of the narrator as it is absorbed within the crowds of “they.”¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ While I do not have the space to develop this further, it should be noted that Heidegger’s own sympathies with the Nazi party creates an interesting connection between Heidegger’s philosophy and Amis’s novel. The narrator’s ambiguous morality becomes especially interesting in a Heideggerian frame, considering that many of Heidegger’s concepts remain rather abstract as he tends to avoid associating concepts such as fear and guilt with any moral judgments.

¹⁸¹ See paragraphs 54–59 on the call of conscience in *Being and Time* (Heidegger 1962).

¹⁸² In everyday existence, Dasein is absorbed in the world and goes along with the public “they” (Heidegger 1962: 164)

Crowds make me paranoid and claustrophobic but Tod seeks and loves the company of crowds. With rapture and relief he elides with the larger unit, the glowing mass. He sheds the thing he often can't seem to bear: his identity, his quiddity, lost in the crowd's promiscuity. My presence is never tinier. But it's the same story. Render up your soul, and gain power. (Amis 2003: 57–58)

The call of conscience to the Dasein of Tod, John and Hamilton cannot pull the protagonist out of the chatter of everydayness. The protagonist is living inauthentically in the familiar everyday and is unable to hear the voice of the narrator speaking in a whisper.

Heidegger's notion of guilt is not connected to morality or bad deeds but is present in every Dasein, as part of its existential guilt.¹⁸³ While the narrator projects some value-based judgments on the protagonist, especially concerning the protagonist's work as a doctor, its overall judgment of the protagonist remains free of moral reasoning. The narrator's appearance in Tod's life might be triggered by a general Being-guilty, which is inherent in every Dasein, and not by Odilo's personal guilt over his actions as a Nazi doctor. The narrator's familiarity with the protagonist's constant "white smell of fear" suggests that the narrator and the protagonist share an attunement to the world (Amis 2003: 18). Fear, as a mood directed towards something specific – towards the protagonist's past/narrator's future in this case – is present within Dasein as long as they are living inauthentically, as long as Dasein hides its being from itself.¹⁸⁴ It is quite significant, then, that fear, which was present in most of the novel (e.g. Amis 2003: 15, 63, 66, 77, 119) disappears when the narrator becomes Odilo. The fear disappears with the emergence of the narrator's authentic existence.

According to Heidegger, conscience reaches Dasein when Dasein is living an authentic life. Conscience also comes from within Dasein. The narrator's voice does not reach the protagonist until Odilo arrives at Auschwitz. It is then that the protagonist comes to an authentic existence. The narrator as conscience becomes the protagonist as Dasein, its authentic Being is finally realized as Odilo. While living as Tod/John/Young, the protagonist does not recognize that the world is running in a reversed fashion. However, as soon as the narrator as conscience reaches Odilo, he acknowledges and embraces the direction of the world, as it finally makes sense (Amis 2003: 123, 128, 148). Odilo chooses to step out of a comfortable existence in everydayness, actualize his potentiality as a Nazi doctor and he accepts the authentic thrownness into action at Auschwitz. This is the only time that the narrator, instead of the "they," is in control of the protagonist. While the protagonist was previously comfortable in the "they," the narrator was not at home in the world. During his period as Odilo, however, the uncanniness of the world is revealed and the narrator is able to assign their own interpretations to the storyworld (c.f. Heidegger 1962: 233–234). As soon as this period is over, the

¹⁸³ Being-guilty is discussed in detail in paragraphs 54 and 58 in *Being and Time* (Heidegger 1962).

¹⁸⁴ The notion of fear is developed in paragraph 68 (Heidegger 1962).

narrator withdraws from the protagonist and the protagonist's existence continues in inauthenticity in the everyday.

The interpretation of the narrator as the authentic conscience within the protagonist's Dasein is also supported by the manner in which the narrator comes into being – by thrownness into a “definite world,” a world with a shape, form, definite direction and history (Heidegger 1962: 264). The narrator inherits a world full of meanings and is tasked with interpreting those meanings, to come into Being. The narrator as the protagonist's conscience is Dasein, waiting to come forth in an authentic mode of being. The narrator is the protagonist, waiting for Odilo to exit the “they” and accept his thrownness into being-toward-birth.

Heidegger's concept of being-toward-death indicates that the direction of one's life starts from birth and ends in the ending of existence, death. Existing, or Being, according to Heidegger, is being in time, temporally existing between birth and death. Death is what makes Dasein whole; yet, as Dasein does not exist after death, the best way to analyze Dasein's wholeness is to examine Dasein as being-toward-death. However, before discussing the most important features of being-toward-death, it is important to note that this experience is not simply perishing, or in Heidegger's words, going-out-of-the-world. What Heidegger means by the notion of being-toward-death is that death is in Dasein's being and a possibility-of-being of Dasein, reaching its actualization at the end of Dasein. Although the narrator seems to be provided with a knowledge of a world moving toward-death, the concept is reversed in the novel. Temporality is defined by being-toward-birth and death is not what ends existence, birth is what ends existence:

I know how people disappear. Where do they disappear to? Don't ask that question. Never ask it. It's none of your business. The little children on the street, they get littler and littler. At some point it is thought necessary to confine them to push-chairs, later to backpacks /.../ of course they're sad to be going. In the very last months they cry more than ever. /.../ the mothers then proceed to the hospital. Where else? Two people go into that room, that room with the forceps the soiled bib. Two go in. but only one comes out. Oh, the poor mothers, you can see how they feel during the long goodbye, the long goodbye to babies (Amis 2003: 41).

Heidegger believes that Dasein ought to embrace its own death. As Dasein is “always already dying,” there is no such thing as escaping death (Heidegger 1996: 235). Dasein's existence, by default, is directed toward death. In the same manner, there is no escape from being-toward-birth. In fact, the novel presents a truly deterministic philosophy of being. In the world of the novel, people, as they exist being-toward-birth, are freed from making any choices of their own: “the people move through something prearranged /.../ They're always looking forward to going places they've just come back from, or regretting doing things they haven't done yet.” (Amis 2003: 51). The events ahead have been pre-established, everything has its appointed time. The war will begin on time, and every person has their appointed end. In the world of the novel, “suicide isn't an option /... / Once you're here, once you're on board, you can't get off. You can't get out” (Amis

2003: 33). In this world, every being must linger on until their birth. In this world, the dead are resurrected, the old become young, the adolescents escape into childhood, and the infants are rushed to the hospital, only to disappear into wombs.

Heidegger finds that for an authentic sense of death, Dasein must be aware of being-towards-its-end and so, must be in the attunement of Angst. Angst reveals to Dasein that it “exists as thrown being-towards-its-end” (Heidegger 1996: 233). If Dasein accepts Angst and its effort to pull Dasein out of everydayness, Dasein can have an authentic experience of life. In such a case, Dasein will find “itself faced with the nothingness of the possible impossibility of existence” (Heidegger 1996: 245). If Dasein is authentically being-toward-death, it will accept its thrownness into death and open itself up to anticipating death. Through anticipation, Dasein “lays claim on [death] as something individual” and frees itself to experience death as something true (Heidegger 1996: 243).

In a reversed temporality, birth would need to be experienced as something individual and authentic. While the novel is more focused on death as something that creates life rather than birth as something that ends life, I would argue that an authentic experience of birth as the ending of existence is still present in the novel. Throughout his life, the protagonist is mostly in an inauthentic existence. Once the narrator as conscience is able to bring Odilo out of everydayness, the protagonist is actively participating in the present that is directed toward an end. However, once the war years are over, the narrator as conscience withdraws from Odilo and Odilo again becomes inauthentically involved with its temporality. Despite this, readers will still have access to the narrator’s active anticipation of the future. The narrator does not have to be immersed in Odilo’s occupations so they are free to anticipate the common future of the narrator and protagonist. They are also aware of the exact moment of Odilo’s disappearance and through anticipation of the end, the narrator is authentically being-toward-birth: “Soon I’ll be born too. This terraced house will be my birthplace. It’s a pretty tense situation, I suppose, but I don’t let it get me down” (Amis 2003: 170).

What Is the Sequence of the Journey I’m On

In *Time’s Arrow*, “[t]he future always comes true” (Amis 2003: 162). It makes no difference that the past of the characters happens to be the future of the narrator and future of the reader. This is actually true for most books and is related to the fact that any book is always arranged like a block of events that are always existing simultaneously but which must be experienced in succession. However, in the storyworld of *Time’s Arrow*, the order of events directs the reader, from their perspective, to experience the future of the characters first and their past later. From the perspective of the reader, the characters are erasing their future as they move towards their past: “Clothes everywhere become more innocent. Everyone becomes more innocent, constantly forgetting. Central Park is cleaner but no safer. We are fewer” (Amis 2003: 99). Even serious offences are forgotten, such as a married nurse cheating on her husband with John:

We still date. Her husband, Dennis, is a nightwatchman. She keeps saying she's glad Dennis doesn't know about us and she hopes he never finds out. What is it with them, the human beings? I suppose they remember what they want to remember. And I suppose, in our case, John and I should exchange high-fives in squalid thanks to this human talent for forgetting: forgetting, not as a process of erosion and waste, but as an activity. John forgets. Nurse Davis forgets. The husband, Dennis, shuddering in the cold on his way to work, on his way to watch the night, forgets. (Amis 2003: 89).

While the characters are forgetting, the narrator is not. As the characters move towards textual future, the narrator retains information about the protagonist and remembers its own experience in textual past, and, through foreshadowing, will also learn about the future. In this, the reader's position with the narrator coincides. As I discuss the following through the perspective of the narrator, I will use the term past to refer to the protagonist's earlier life (although, in discourse time, this is in textual future)

Clues about the textual future start out vague – the narrator has a “sense of starting out on a terrible journey, towards a terrible secret” (Amis 2003: 12). Only the protagonist knows of the secret as “[h]e leaves it undisclosed, which is perhaps the best thing to do with secrets” (Amis 2003: 98). The narrator notices how the smell of burning hair or nails affects the protagonist and how his dreams “have the white smell of fear,” as “Tod is a big depositor in the bank where fear is kept” (Amis 2003: 58–59, 18, 63). The narrator also mentions how hearing “that other language” triggers a fearful response in the protagonist before he arrives in Nazi Germany (Amis 2003:15, 58, 117).

As the story progresses, the blanks and gaps in the story are being progressively filled through the narrator's commentary about the looming future of the text – as the characters unlearn their future, the narrator learns of their past. The narrator's learning manifests as foreshadowing for the reader. The narrative relays information of the textual future through the protagonist's actions, his discussions with other characters, the narrator's observations about the protagonist's life, as well as through the dreams of the protagonist. Repeated themes in dreams hint at the horrific revelations ahead – black boots and a white coat hint at Odilo's past as a Nazi doctor; the smell of fire refers to Odilo's work at Auschwitz; and references to babies points to a specifically gruesome event, an execution of a Jewish family.

Besides the apparent hurt that doctors impose on their patients, the narrator has another reason for its strong dislike of doctors – the black boots and white coat that doctor number one wears. The outfit refers to a “male shape, with an entirely unmanageable aura, containing such things as beauty, terror, love, filth, and above all power” in the image of a “ghost-negative of doctor number one” (Amis 2003: 12). Throughout the narrative, multiple candidates could fill the role of doctor number one – it could be the doctor presiding over the death of Tod, or it could be the deliverer of Odilo, but most likely, it refers to Odilo as a Nazi doctor. The protagonist often dreams of the doctor in the black boots and the white coat and throughout the protagonist's career as a doctor in the United

States, the narrator looks out for the figure, expecting the protagonist to become the doctor at some point in the textual future (Amis 2003: 16, 48, 72, 83). However, the figure is only found once the narrator becomes Odilo: "Beyond the southern boundary of the Lager, in a roofless barn, I slipped out of our coarse travelling clothes and emotionally donned the black boots, the white coat, the fleece-lined jacket, the peaked cap, the pistol" (Amis 2003: 124). Through the outfit, the narrator becomes Odilo, "fused for a preternatural purpose" (Amis 2003: 124). Suddenly, the black boots and white coat are not the stuff of nightmares but are claimed as "my black boots" (Amis 2003: 125, 144).

Throughout the narrative, the protagonist's dreams evolve and each new description of a dream includes more information than the previous one. Dreams of a wooden hut, where the "atmosphere is badly wrong" and "in which something mortal will be monotonously decided" make Tod weep "like a baby before the dreams happen" (Amis 2003: 63, 54–55). As the story progresses, narration about the room in the dream becomes more detailed, as do the actions performed in the room and the participants:

Tod features another kind of dream in which he is a woman. I'm the woman too: in this dream I am participant as well as onlooker. A man is near us with his face averted, his slablike back half turned. He can harm us, of course. But he can protect us, if he likes. On his protection we gingerly rely. We have no choice but to love him, nervously. We also have no hair, which is unusual, for a woman. (Amis 2003: 67).

When the events of the dream pass, the narrator is able to recognize them:

I recognized Room 1 from my dreams. The pink rubber apron on its hook, the instrument bowls and thermoses, the bloody cotton, the half-pint hypodermic with its foot-long needle. This is the room, I had thought, where something mortal would be miserably decided. But dreams are playful, and love to tease and poke fun at the truth ... already showing signs of life, patients were brought in one by one from the pile next door and wedged on to the chair in Room I, which looked like what it was, a laboratory in the Hygienic Institute, a world of bubbles and bottles. (Amis 2003: 136).

While the dreams were presented as something horrific and suggestive of an emerging tragedy during the Tod-years, the narrator eventually fails to follow the interpretations previously implied and re-interprets the dreams during Odilo-years.

Another frequent dream of the protagonist's features a baby, a 'bomb baby': "In the dream, the baby wields incredible power. It has the power, the ultimate power of life and death over its parents, its older brothers and sisters, its grandparents, and indeed everybody else who is gathered in the room" (Amis 2003: 54). The narrator is terrified of these dreams about babies: "I wish I had power, just power enough to avert my eyes. Please, don't show me the babies. Where does the dream come from? He hasn't done it yet. So the dream must be about what

Tod will eventually do” (Amis 2003: 48). Every encounter with a baby is a potential fulfillment of the dream – the illegal abortions that the protagonist performs and baby Eva, the child of Odilo and Herta, are considered as possible dream babies. Since baby Eva as “*das Baby*” is often discussed within the narrative during the war years, she is considered a likely contender for the bomb baby by both the narrator as well as the reader. However, the narrator quickly realizes that although Eva “exerts colossal power as a *subject*,” she does not have “the physical power that the bomb baby exerted, over its parents and over everybody else in the black room: some thirty souls” (Amis 2003: 135). Eventually, however, the narrator and reader are introduced to the actual bomb baby, “thus fulfilling the ironic prophecy of [the protagonist’s] dreams” (Amis 2003: 148). The bomb baby is among a group of people being picked up from a mass grave:

Out they all filed. Among them was a mother and a baby, both naked, naturally, for now. The baby was weeping in a determined, muscular, long-haul rhythm, probably from earache. Its mother already looked exasperated by these cries. Indeed she looked stunned – stopped dead in the face. For a moment I wondered if she’d fully come round from the carbon monoxide. I was concerned. We then escorted this group of about thirty souls into a low warehouse littered with primitive sewing machines and spindles and bolts of cloth /.../ But these Jews, led by the weeping baby, made their solemn way past a series of curtains and blankets suspended from the ceiling and, one by one, backed their way through a missing panel in the wall. This panel I myself replaced with a softly spoken ‘Guten Tag’. I don’t know. I was moved, by their continued silence, by the baby’s muffled cries. ‘*Raus! Raus!*’ I shouted – to the men, who romped off to explore the premises, and to lay out some trinkets, and some food, some bread and tomatoes, say, as was traditional, for the Jews’ later use. ‘*Raus! Raus! Raus!*’ But I remained in the still warehouse, crouched by the wall, and listening. Listening? To the baby’s weeping, and to the sound that perhaps the whole planet makes when it tries to soothe: ‘Schh... Schh ...’ Hush now. I tiptoed away, and joined the men. Quiet. Best to leave them to it. Schh. This may be the way they soothe their young. Thirty souls in the black gap, saying Schh... The baby, then, was clearly much loved. But of course it had no power at all. (Amis 2003: 150–151)

The narrator’s interpretation of the dream is influenced by its understanding about the direction of time. The narrator’s tendency to see his actions during Odilo-years as a hopeful “creation” of a race reverses the meaning of genocide in the Final Solution. However, as the reader’s interpretation is affected by previous warnings of the narrator as well as by historical knowledge, the reader cannot accept the narrator’s position and will interpret the events unfolding during Odilo-years as something absolutely appalling.

After the post-war separation of the narrator and the protagonist, dreams stop having a foreshadowing effect:

The tutelary spirit of these dreams is no longer the man in the white coat and the black boots: it is a woman, a woman the size and shape of a galleon’s sail, who can forgive him everything. My hunch is that this woman is his mother, and I’m

anxious to know when she's going to show up. Odilo is innocent. Odilo is, it turns out, innocent, emotional, popular, and stupid (Amis 2003: 157).

It is interesting that the narrator mentions forgiveness here. Neither the war years nor the post-war years suggest any guilt from the narrator. In addition, Odilo suddenly becomes innocent. What is there to forgive, then? Odilo's future actions in the war? Or perhaps Hamilton's, John's or Tod's deeds? The narrator does not clarify.

Until the narrator becomes Odilo, its stance towards the storyworld occupies a similar position with the reader. Once the narrator merges with the protagonist, the understanding of the reader and the commentary of the narrator will move in different directions with conflicting interpretations. Considering the actual history of World War II, the reader will have to translate "every moral judgment into its opposite" as the narrator's point of view is so disturbing (Currie 2007: 103). In addition, the narrator's deep unreliability will force the reader to reassess each of the previous statements made by the narrator as well. Differentiating between story past and future and discourse past and future also becomes complicated. The reader's past and future do not coincide with the storyworld's past and future. While the narrator's past and future coincide with the reading direction in chapters 1–4, once the narrator becomes Odilo, it is difficult to determine the narrator's direction of time. On the one hand, the narrator is still moving in the same direction, towards the textual future. On the other hand, the narrator no longer recognizes that his life as Odilo is unfolding in the opposite direction. The narrator's direction towards-birth persists but Odilo's point of view adjusts the narrator's perspective of temporality. Instead of recognizing that the other half of the Gold Universe is moving in the other direction, the narrator accepts the arrow of time as an inhabitant of the opposite half of the universe.

Reading the Wrong in Time

The reader's work of interpreting the reverse is constant in the chapters describing Odilo's life at the extermination camps as the difference between the reality of the Holocaust and the narrator's interpretation of it becomes substantial. For a brief two chapters, the world makes sense for the narrator. He is convinced of time being right during the war because of Odilo's supposed love for "the human body and all living things" (Amis 2003: 128, 144). Since the Nazis have declared a "war on death," and are creating life out of violence, the logical conclusion for the narrator is that this is right (Amis 2003: 143–144). Even if creation is ugly, the narrator feels compelled to partake in it because

Human beings want to be alive. They are dying to be alive. Twenty cubic centimetres of air – twenty cubic centimetres of nothing – is all you need to make the difference. So nobody thanks me as, with a hypodermic almost the size of a trombone and my right foot firmly stamped on the patient's chest, I continue to prosecute the war against nothing and air. (Amis 2003: 145)

The novel is filled with similarly disturbing descriptions of Odilo and other Auschwitz staff participating in war crimes. But perhaps the most alarming aspect of the war chapters is the doublethink performed by the narrator. According to the narrator, the mission of the Nazis is “to make Germany whole. To heal her wounds and to make her whole” (Amis 2003: 149). This obviously evokes the language used in historical fascist propaganda (e.g. *Volksgemeinschaft*) but, for a reader in 2023, it can also serve as an eerie reminder of the current trends of growing nationalism. Apparently, making a nation whole again in the world of the novel includes the use of Zyklon B, phenol injections, extreme violence and rape, gas chambers, and forced labor (Amis 2003: 129–131, 136)

The narrator’s “love” for the Jewish feels insincere at best and deeply racist at its worst: “My position on the Jews has always been without ambiguity. I like them. I am, I would say, one of nature’s philo-Semites. It’s their eyes I particularly admire. That glossy, heated look” (Amis 2003: 160). The narrator’s duplicity is exposed further through an interesting juxtaposition between the liberties “received” by the Jewish after the war and the sexual liberties with Herta lost by Odilo pre-marriage. Passages detailing the “progressive measures” of Nazi policies are placed side-by-side with “some fresh interdiction of Herta’s” (Amis 2003: 163):

Blind and deaf Jews can now wear armbands identifying their condition in traffic. I no longer have a lower body, an external heart, in Herta’s scheme of things. I am cut off at the waist for ever. Jews allowed to keep pets; budgies and puppies, etc., doled out at police stations; Jews weeping with gratitude as they take their new playmates home. Herta starts to breathe differently as we kiss; she is always self-possessed; every move of mine is coldly monitored. Jews permitted to buy meat, cheese and eggs. Revocation of all picnicking privileges, even though I whine about my health and name flowers in English until I’m blue in the face. Jews empowered to have friendly relations with Aryans. Herta no longer says ‘I love you’. I still say it. Kissing continues, after a fashion, but tongues now completely verboten. Curfew for Jews lifted. It used to be 9 p.m. in summer and 8 p.m. in winter. Herta has to be home by 8.30, whatever the season. (Amis 2003: 164)

Presenting the events in this manner makes it seem like Odilo’s losses are “somehow the Jews’ fault” (Amis 2003: 165). Although this interpretive mistake has long been obvious to the reader, it is not until the very end of the novel that the narrator realizes the backwardness of its thinking.

While not immediately apparent, the ominous quality of the unfolding world is communicated to the reader in the very beginning of the novel: “What did the secret have to do with? Him, with him: the worst man in the worst place at the worst time” (Amis 2003: 12). As this knowledge is shared by narrator and reader in the beginning of the novel, it becomes especially disquieting to have the narrator ignore its own prediction and switch around the meaning of the war years. Although the narrator’s insistence about the wrongness of time was frequent in the first part of the book, time seems to stop along with the Treblinka railway station clock at the latter part of the novel, “[i]ndeed at the railway station in

Treblinka, the four dimensions were intriguingly disposed. A place without depth. And a place without time” (Amis 2003: 151). Even though the second half of the novel moves forward, towards-birth, there is no meaning in the direction of time for the narrator. Time is no longer wrong, the narrator does not actively try to make sense of temporality. That is, at least until the narrator finally realizes to have been the one “who came at the wrong time” (Amis 2003: 173). As the narrator’s commentary is sufficient in demonstrating that the direction of time is wrong in the first part of the novel, the reader does not have to actively work to make sense of time. In the second half of the novel, however, as the narrator settles into the timelessness of Odilo’s life, the reader is forced to translate the narrator’s ideas for a sense of correct or normal temporality (see also Currie 2007). The narrator’s comfortable assimilation into Odilo’s life may also compel the reader to reinterpret all of the narrator’s previous remarks to see whether anything in the narrator’s previous commentary might have suggested such a turn of events.

By the end of the novel, the narrator becomes aware of the true arrow of time. The mistake is caught by noticing cause and effect instead of effect-cause in toddler Odilo’s speech:

Mummy? Chickens are alive. We catch them and burn them – and then they’re dead! But you can’t eat chicks. Not little good chicks. Because chicks are good. You can just stroke them and everything. But you *can* eat ducks. Because ducks are fat. (Amis 2003: 171).

Awareness of the mistake hits the narrator in a Joycean fashion:

Wait. Mistake there. Mistake. Category... We brang. We putten. We brang, we putten, their own selves we taken all away. Why so many children and babies? What got into us? Why so many? We were cruel: the children weren’t even going to be here for very long. I choiced it, did I? Why? Because babies are fat? (Amis 2003: 171)

These lines are repeated at the very end of the novel when the narrator sees “an arrow fly – but wrongly. Point-first. Oh no, but then...” (Amis 2003: 173). The reader has been aware of the narrator’s mistake for several chapters at this point, it is only the narrator who comes to understand the true direction of time and the true nature of their offence. The reversal of the narrator’s cognitive arrow comes with a breakdown of the past tense. Imitating the childlike speech of Odilo, the narrator makes linguistic errors that should not be made considering the narrator’s experience and semantic knowledge. The narrator did not age backwards with Odilo. And yet, the previously perfect grammar and syntax is suddenly struck by regression. The narrator’s confusion about the representation of past events is mirrored by a confusion of past participles of verbs. Despite the incorrect grammatical tense, the narrator’s presentation of the Holocaust is finally accurate.

You Could Run Them Any Way You Liked

Although reversing the narrator's interpretation requires constant effort on the part of the reader, perhaps the most unyielding part of the narrative is dialogue. While most of the novel is composed of scenes and summaries, the narrator observes and repeats a couple conversations between the protagonist and other characters. The narrator notices that "most conversations would make much better sense if you ran them backwards. But with this man-woman stuff, you could run them any way you liked – and still get no further forward" (Amis 2003: 60). However, even with the "man-woman stuff," reading the lines in the dialogues in the order presented really does not help with comprehension. The best way for the reader to read these passages, then, is to find the ending of the conversation and work back. It is, of course, possible to read dialogue as presented but it will then be difficult to follow the content of the conversations.

The first dialogue the narrator witnesses is a phone call between Tod and his ex-girlfriend, Irene:

'Goodbye, Tod.'
'Wait. Don't do anything.'
'Who cares? It's all shit anyway.'
'Irene,' he said.
'Yes I am, Tod, I'm just this terrible old lady now. How'd it happen?'
'No you're not.'
'No I'm not. I'm going to kill myself.'
'No you're not.'
'I'm going to call the *New York Times*.'
'Irene,' he said, with a new heat in his voice. And a new heat all over his body.
'I know you changed your name. How about that! I know you ran.'
'You know nothing.'
'I'm going to tell on you.'
'Oh yes?'
'You say it in the night. In your sleep.'
'Irene.'
'I know your secret.'
'What is it?'
'I want you to know something.'
'Irene, you're drunk.'
'Piece of shit.'
'Yes?' (Amis 2003: 28–29)

Read from bottom-to-top, this conversation is fairly straightforward as it does not include a lot of commentary by the narrator. While not exactly coherent, the conversation could still be somewhat understood if read from top-to-bottom. However, as the narrative progresses, the narrator tends to add more and more of their own commentary to dialogues. This creates a situation in which the dialogue must be read from back to front but the narrator's comments must be read from left-to-right, top-to-bottom of the page. Tod's breakup with Irene is a good example of

the direction of the narrative and the direction of the dialogue moving in different directions (Amis 2003: 42–46). Since it is impossible to read in both directions at once, the reader must choose whether to read the dialogue between Irene and Tod first or the commentary of the narrator. Similarly, the conversation between John and the person who provides him new identities, Reverend Kreditor, runs in one direction and narration about it in another (Amis 2003: 79–82). Since the dialogue includes a description of a photograph, it is much easier to understand the conversation if it is read backwards. However, reading from end-to-beginning is made difficult by long paragraphs of narrator's commentary in the middle of the dialogue. Therefore, the reader must often read through the dialogues several times – at least once forward and once backwards.

Most of the conversations presented in the novel concern relationships or doctor-patient interviews. Interestingly, the last dialogue presented in the novel occurs right before Hamilton becomes Odilo. It is a confession-like conversation between a priest in Italy – who also happens to provide new identities to Nazis – and Hamilton:

'We help those that need,' said Father Duryea, on our final visit, 'not those that deserve.'

'You do what you do best,' said Hamilton, 'not what's best to do.'

'I'll do what I can.'

'I can't explain what I did. I can't ask you to help me.'

'Ah now.'

'I'm nothing. I'm dead. I'm just... I'm not even...'

Father Duryea sat up. And so did I. In a deep and distant voice Hamilton went on,

'I lost my idea of the gentleness of human flesh.'

So. Sense. Here it comes. It's all coming out. It's been in here too long and now it's all coming out.

'Explain,' said Father Duryea.

'We lost our feeling about the human body. Children even. Tiny babies.'

Father Duryea's face contracted around the scorched core of his nose. And he said, 'I understand.'

'You know where I was. In a situation like that certain acts suggested themselves.'

'I understand, my son.'

'The situation was mad and impossible.'

'There's no need to say.'

Hamilton moistened his cheeks with his sleeve and sniffled richly. 'There were things...'

'Speak.'

'I still want to heal, Father. Perhaps, that way, by doing good...'

'Hell?'

'I have been to hell.'

'Of course. Of course'

'I have sinned, Father.'

'You seem troubled, my child' (Amis 2003: 120–121)

As was the case with previous examples, reading from end-to-beginning will make it easier to understand the conversation. Reading backwards, the conversation

is about the protagonist's guilt and his regret about the actions he performed at Auschwitz. Reading forward, however, may also make sense in the case of this dialogue as it presents the narrator's perspective on Hamilton's/John's/Tod's actions as a doctor. The narrator is quite disgruntled to have been witness to the protagonist's cruelty as a doctor and had even wanted "the law or whatever to catch up with him (which it didn't)" (Amis 2003: 108). From the narrator's perspective, then, the protagonist seems to be asking for forgiveness for the sin of doctoring. Since the protagonist now promises to do better, it makes sense for the narrator to interpret the following war years as a way of making up for the sin of doctoring. After all, they are about to create people from dust (Amis 2003: 128). This interpretation, of course, does not coincide with the reader's perspective.

In fact, the reader's position in these dialogues becomes rather complicated. On the one hand, in order to understand the dialogue, it has to be read from end-to-beginning. On the other hand, in order to understand the narration, certain parts in between the dialogue must be read from beginning-to-end. This means that the linear progression established within the form of the novel is interrupted and it also means that readers are interrupted in their immersion of the story. Readers are forced to change their physical reading habits in order to understand the presented dialogue. This also interrupts story time creation – it brings the materiality of the narrative to the foreground and the story will be switched into the background. Once it is read through, the reader will be able to situate the dialogue within story time and the information from the dialogue will be later available for the reader as well. But in the reading process, the reader must come out of their immersion in order to comprehend the dialogue. If readers do not read the dialogues from end-to-beginning, the information within the dialogue will become only partially available to the reader and thus parts of it will not be inserted into story time.

A World of Diametrical Mistakes

The main difficulty of reading *Time's Arrow* is not caused by the structure of discourse time. Rather, the disturbing progression of the narrator's interpretation of the storyworld makes the reader's creation of time problematic. The major element contributing to the ambiguity of the protagonist's story is the inconsistency of the narrator's usage of terms expressing temporal relation. A passage from the period of the protagonist as Hamilton – this is before the war years and before the narrator reinterprets the meaning of life and death – illustrates why it is difficult to interpret the directionality of the storyworld.

When he goes out there to wait for her in the evening, I sometimes think: It isn't Rosa. It's the camp he loves. The fierce and sentimental music and the ignorant colours, the prettiness and the disease under the fake-gold light, the tuberculosis and syphilis, the fires showing through the branches like illuminated brains, the glamorous nomas of eye and mouth, the childishness and all the valueless trash. He wants to do something to the camp. What? Here in Portugal he pretends not to

be a doctor, probably wisely, and steers well clear of anyone who is sick or injured /.../ But he wants to do something to the camp. He wants to doctor it. (Amis 2003: 115)

The problem here is the idea of doctoring. Thus far the narrator has only shown strong resentment towards the protagonist's profession so a first reading would suggest that the narrator means doctoring in a negative sense – that Hamilton would like to unheal the inhabitants of the Gypsy camp. However, once Odilo's past is revealed, a more sinister interpretation could be imposed on this passage as well – that due to Odilo's Nazi past, Hamilton's first impulse would be to want to hurt the camp. Promptly before entering the war, Odilo seeks forgiveness for his sins in the coming war. Yet, since the narrator notices some racist leanings of the protagonist during Tod-years, it is difficult to settle anything about the protagonist's actual beliefs (especially since they are conveyed to readers through the narrator's judgments).¹⁸⁵ This makes the passage above difficult to assess. The reader's understanding of this passage depends on whether they are reading the narrator's interpretations in reverse for the entirety of the novel or only in certain chapters and whether the reader is aware of Odilo's Nazi past or not.

Additionally, there are several passages in which the narrator discusses aging in an unclear manner:

So it's almost total, this immersion in the bodies of others. And bodies are nice, are they? Is that what I'm supposed to think? Yes, well, okay – they are nice. They forgive everything. When they're old. They can't judge. (Amis 2003: 66)

It is unclear whether 'old' here means old in a regular sense of the world (that they are closer to death than to birth) or in the reversed sense of the storyworld of having been in the world for a long time (so closer to birth than to death). A similarly complicated passage appears a couple of pages earlier:

It's called two-timing, or double-lifting, and that's exactly how it feels. There is integrity-loss. On the other hand it's a buzz physically, I admit, because our new friend has been around quite a bit longer than Irene. This little honey's only fifty-four. (Amis 2003: 56)

The phrasing in the second passage makes the concept of aging especially ambiguous – how can one be around for a long time and yet *only* be fifty-four? Is fifty-four old or young? Which direction of time is indicated in these passages – is time going forward or backward? The narrator seems to be suggesting a Benjamin Button-esque approach to aging.¹⁸⁶ Since the context suggest that Tod's girlfriend Irene has forgiven his cheating due to forgetting, "old" in these

¹⁸⁵ E.g. the protagonist's feelings towards the Japanese during Tod-years (Amis 2003: 50)

¹⁸⁶ A short story by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (1922), which inspired a film by the same name by David Fincher (2008). The story is about a man being born with the body of an old man and moving through life while getting younger.

passages must have the meaning of being longer in the world but getting physically younger. Yet, another reflection on aging cancels this impression:

For most of our lives we are all doctors to ourselves. Not when you're old, and everything feels so numb and dead, and decency and disgust forbid inquiry. And not when we are young, and the body is an unexamined ecstasy. (Amis 2003: 99)

Here old means old and young means young. But does it also mean that previous references to old age indicate being closer to death than to birth? Or is this simply an inconsistency in writing?

These inconsistencies are a result of the difficulty of trying to preserve linguistic cohesion while demonstrating the effects of the reversal of time's arrow.¹⁸⁷ It would not be possible to abandon the forward motion of language even if the goal of *Time's Arrow* is to demonstrate a storyworld running in reverse. Therefore, inconsistency between forward language and backward narration is probably unavoidable. The passages demonstrating temporal inconsistency and contradiction, however, do not spoil the reading experience. Bronstein (2016: 80) argues that "ambiguity is a strategy to produce a particular reader experience." The ambiguous temporal relations will offer the reader an opportunity to read the passages in multiple ways. The narrator's lax control of temporality will enable the reader to impose their own authority on the text. Ambiguity coupled with the narrator's incorrect interpretation about almost every aspect of the storyworld forces the reader to constantly work against the narrator in their creation of story time. In order to produce a coherent story time, the reader must reverse the narrator's descriptions of actions as well as the narrator's commentary and interpretation of events.

While the sequential order of events in *Time's Arrow* ensures a linear structure of the narrative, the reader's production of story time may remain challenging. The narrator's sudden conformity with the direction of the storyworld will force readers to reevaluate their own submission to the narrator's commentary and reassess the storyworld. Moral judgments presented by the narrator will have to be reevaluated in each chapter by readers, depending on the narrator's interpretation of temporality. The greatest obstacle in the reader's production of story time is the constant need to reassess the direction of time. Readers will have to determine the instances in which they can go along with the direction of discourse time and in which they have to actively work against the unfolding of the narrative.

However, rather surprisingly, it was not the experience of reading backward time that was most challenging about *Time's Arrow*. Instead, presenting a reading of the novel is considerably more complex than the experience of creating a story time as the reader is forced to define the direction of the narrative when discussing the novel. My work of reading involved decisions about which aspect of reading

¹⁸⁷ Currie (2007: 103–106) has provided a more detailed analysis of the difficulty of coordinating forward-moving language and backward-moving narrative.

the novel was made to move backwards, the narrative, the storyworld, the narrator, or the reader. In the text above, I made the choice to present the storyworld in reverse. However, every time I reflect on the novel, I waver. Choosing to present one of the aspects in reverse will only lead to more uncertainties. For example, as I decided that time in the storyworld is reversed, I struggled to answer whether I considered the narrator to be part of the storyworld or above the storyworld? The narrator is moving against the storyworld at first, will later conform to the storyworld, only to finally discover that the arrow of time was wrong. Does this mean that the storyworld was not moving backwards? That it was the narrator all along who was going in the wrong direction? Each answer will result in another question, preventing any definitive rulings on who or what is reversed. The struggle with the temporality of *Time's Arrow* is more pronounced in efferent reading than in aesthetic reading. Even if I have to work against the narrator, creating a story time is possible. Performing a reading, however, is frustrating. The text yields but my own writing does not.

CONCLUSION

Time is fixed, and yet time flows. In the flow of time, in the continuous sinking down into the past, a nonflowing, absolutely fixed, identical, objective time becomes constituted. This is the problem.

(Husserl 1991: 67)

The first words of *Catch-22* state that Yossarian fell madly in love with the chaplain the first time they met. Yet this event occurs over and over again every time the novel is read. Yossarian's love for the chaplain remains fixed on the first page of the novel and it endures as long as readers are actualizing the text, evoking the emotions and feelings that remain statically on the page. The tension between the fixed nature of the text and the dynamic experience of reading parallels the tension between the physical reality of time and our experience of time as illustrated by Husserl's observation about the problem of time. Throughout the dissertation, my goal has been to understand the lived reading process and aspects that affect the reader's experience of the text. As literature allows readers to undergo imaginary experiences through "the magnetism of the patterned words of the text," it offers us a unique experience of temporality (Rosenblatt 1994: 34). Literature has the distinctive capability to express compelling ideas through its content as well as through its form. Communicated in content, the true nature of time is something that the Tralfamadorians reveal to Billy Pilgrim. Conveyed in form, something as abstract as the Gold Universe theory can be made tangible by showing the effects of reversing the arrow of time through the soul of Odilo Unverdorben.

Literature also becomes a medium through which we can experience time as a totality, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. While the honor of building a storyworld belongs to writers, readers are equally responsible for actualizing the storyworld by activating the potentials of meaning within the text. When the readers enter the world of the novel, the "concrete, temporal world, peopled with singular characters and events," they will become co-creators of that world (Beauvoir 2005: 269). Literature can illustrate the static and untensed quality of time but also offer a dynamic, tensed experience of reading. The creative agency of the reader becomes pronounced as they participate in the process of producing temporal stories and storyworlds.

This study of the experience of reading time is founded on experientiality and framed by the theoretical perspectives of phenomenology, reading theories, narratology, and philosophies of time. In the first theoretical chapter of the dissertation, I discussed the lived experience of reading and aspects that affect the reading process. While phenomenology has long been associated with the reading process (e.g. Beauvoir 2005, 2011; Sartre 1988; Poulet 1969, Felski 2008; Caracciolo 2014), I decided to return to the roots of the phenomenological tradition and thus to consult Husserl to discuss the interaction between reader and text. As my project with phenomenology is limited to the study of reading, I have chosen

some key concepts from the works of Husserl to discuss the lived experience of reading: intentionality, intersubjectivity, embodiment and temporality.

The dissertation demonstrates that the reading activity involves intentional attention towards the text and the possible stories within it. As we move through the narrative, we experience a temporal progression of events and ideas and, at the same time, we are intentionally interpreting and making sense of the meaning potentials conveyed by the text. Our reading experience is also an embodied process, with physical sensations associated with eye movements and page turns as well as with the feelings and emotions the stories will stimulate. Finally, as we are surrounded by a shared world, reading is intersubjective. Our previous experiences and expectations influence our reading of the narrative, shaping how we evoke the story from the text. The feelings, emotions, and meanings the text inspires are not solely determined by the reader's individual response to the story. As the text is a shared material, the reader's knowledge of the response of other readers and the wider cultural context will also influence the reader's creation of stories.

According to Husserl, our lived experience unfolds through a three-point structure of primal impression (original perception), protention and retention, which together form primary memory. These three components of a moment make up our field of experience – a “now” of our consciousness that is stretched to include modifiers of the now and which connect successive moments. As I have showed above, by adapting Husserl's theory of inner time-consciousness, we can envision the experience of reading to be shaped by the retentive-protentive field that helps construct a coherent understanding of the text as a whole. While we read, we are directed toward a physical object – a book that contains text. When we read a text, we retain previous words, sentences, and passages and integrate them into the present reading moment. Retention allows us to understand the text as a whole, rather than just a series of disconnected words or sentences. Protention provides readers with expectations about upcoming grammatically correct sentences as well as of the development of narrative. As we read, the reciprocal modification of protention and retention will start shaping our experience of the text.

While primary memory affects our experience of any text, re-presentation in secondary memory is perhaps the most distinctive feature of the act of reading. When reading, our experience of the material text unravels in the lived present of primary memory, which preserves traces of our immediate experience by connecting successive now-moments to create perceptual continuity and a cohesive text. However, as we read, we are not simply processing symbols on a page but we are actively engaged in the process of constructing meaning. We use our secondary memory to visualize the scenes, characters, and settings described in the text and we draw on our past experience, immediate environment, sensation, and feeling to relate to the characters and events described by the text.

We enter the storyworld by switching it into the foreground of our experience. During this process, our presence in the real world is relegated to the background. The virtual space, where the text and the imagination of the reader meet, depends

on how the reader recreates the world of the text in her own imagination (Iser 1978a, 1993). As long as the reader actively engages with the text, the reader's imagination "mediates between the fictive and the real and animates their interaction" to depict the fictive as-if real (Armstrong 2000: 213). If we read about an object, a Tralfamadorian spaceship, for example, it appears to us through secondary memory. While the spaceship is not going to appear in front of us, we can still experience it through our imagination. As imagined objects are experienced through secondary memory, they are re-presentations, rather than original perceptions. However, even if imagined objects, such as characters and events in the stories we read, are not real, and Tralfamadorian spaceships are certainly not real, they become lived-through in the act of reading. During the reading activity, then, readers typically direct their attention to the evolving storyworld, rather than the material text, meaning that stories as imagined re-presentations of textual cues will surface to the foreground of our lived present.

These ideas are taken further in my second theoretical chapter, which focuses, specifically, on ways of reading. While I discuss reader-response theories of the 20th century as well as the more recent reading debates, I rely on Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading to describe the relationship between reader and text and how meaning is created between the two. The transactional theory suggests that the reader and text are inextricably linked, each constantly shaping the other. While the text must provide a basis for a response in the form of a collection of potential meanings, the reader is responsible for evoking the fictive realm through their imagination. This process involves an active engagement of the reader's senses and cognitive processes. Stepping into the text, the imagined situations will enable us to interact with the paper world and to empathize with paper people (Bal 2009). After the reading process, the deep, intimate knowledge from the storyworld will spread into the real world and will also start shaping the reader's interactions with real people (Hughes 2013; Caracciolo 2014).

I have argued, alongside Rosenblatt (1994), that creating a literary work of art is dependent on the reader's aesthetic experience of the text. The aesthetic reading experience transforms a static text into a dynamic story. As we move through a fixed, material text, we experience a temporal unfolding of events and ideas. As our understanding of the temporal world is structured by a context that establishes our experience of a causal world in motion, our experience of reading is also of an as-if world in motion, even if the words stay still on paper. Narrative temporality is approached through two terms derived from Genette's narratology and inspired by the philosophy of time – discourse time and story time. Discourse time refers to the text as fixed on paper. It provides us with a manipulated presentation of events that often distorts the temporality of the narrative. In order to transform the distorted temporality into something that we can recognize as a sequential progression of events within the storyworld, the reader will have to flip through the pages of the novel and form connections between fragments that may be located far apart within the material book.

As the as-if world of the text cannot emerge on its own, once the storyworld is switched into the foreground of the reader's experience, the reader will start

synthesizing the events that are presented in discourse time into a sequential order. While the text provides a blueprint for the storyworld, the reader's task is to fill the blanks, bring together the scattered pieces of the text, and to transform and refigure the isolated events into a cohesive pattern to complete the storyworld. The result of the intimate communication between the reader and the text is a story, a collection of characters and events organized into a specific timeline that are gradually made whole while the storyworld is in the foreground of the reader's experience. Story time need not be linear as individual readers' idea of the shape of the storyworld may vary. Story times may also take different shapes with each subsequent reading. This subjective dimension of the reading process is unique to each individual reader and cannot be fully captured for description and analysis.

However, I have proposed that it is possible to approach the activity through efferent reading. As readers lose themselves in the activity of reading, their attention is diverted from the fact that they must continually work with the raw material of the text to understand the meanings offered in the text. Since much of our pleasure in literature comes from the discovery of patterns, synthesizing the material and reconciling the discrepancies, the forming of a story becomes the culmination of the work of reading (Armstrong 2013; Auyoung 2020). Although we might not be able to access our aesthetic experience of reading, the static text is indispensable for allowing us to examine the elements that have influenced the aesthetic experience and how textual elements have affected our creation of story time. Efferent reading describes readers who approach texts with the specific purpose of disentangling the text to examine its various components and elements. To perform a reading is to pursue coherence and to produce organized interpretations of the text.

The theories shaping this dissertation and my engagement with the text provide insight into the subjective experience that results from reading. Following Moi (2017), my method of attending to the text can be called, first and foremost, the attentive work of reading. The text can provide an inexhaustible source for performing readings. The readings we perform are dependent on the type of attention we afford to the text and the type of information we wish to extract and synthesize. The readings I perform are a result of having "been moved or disturbed by a text," which has manifested "an urge to talk about it, to clarify and crystallize [my] sense of the work" (Rosenblatt 1994: 146).

As the potentialities of meaning evoked by the text are singular and informed by my own experience, the story times I share are expressions of my reading (Rosenblatt 1964: 126; Moi 2017: 191). While the readings I perform are constrained by certain personal and professional attachments and limited by my reading goal of discussing temporality, previous readings of the novels as well as my overall reading history have also affected my relationship with the texts and the components I extract from the text. To discuss story time creation, I have shown how the disentangled elements can be rearranged to reveal ways of reading Heller's *Catch-22*, Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* and Amis's *Time's Arrow*. As the temporalities of the three novels have left me feeling vexed, bothered, and

perplexed, I ask the novels, “why this?” (Moi 2017). My readings have focused on textual elements and features that either guide the reader to a certain interpretation of story time or interfere in the process and prevent readers from creating a cohesive storyworld. The novels I read revealed a close relationship between the composition of the narrative and the underlying philosophical ideas expressed about time. In the case of each novel, I have traced how the reader navigates through textual chronology to construct story time chronology. When reading for story time, I have tried to find patterns that help me organize and structure the ways in which temporality is presented in discourse time.

The absurd, meaningless cruelty of war in *Catch-22* is conveyed in discourse time through the breakdown of structure and order. Yossarian’s desperate struggle to break out of the endless cycle of loss and to make sense of the tragedies he experiences over and over again is mirrored in the reader’s struggle to make time from the disorienting fragments that keep reappearing throughout the narrative. The novel’s events can be divided into major reoccurring events, minor reoccurring events, unfolding events, major and minor past events. While all events take place either in the story present or in the story past, in discourse time, the presentation of events is rarely chronological. Although gradually becoming more linear, the narrative of *Catch-22* mostly unfolds in fragments that are often disrupted by the depiction of other events.

I read for the story time of *Catch-22* by isolating elements that either helped produce a sequential timeline for the novel or interrupted that process. As the novel is highly repetitive, recurrence of events dominates the narrative. Identical and similar events repeat throughout the novel with various levels of new information added through each repetition. The repetitions can be helpful in determining the time of the events within the story time if added information is coupled with other helpful elements, such as references to a temporally established event. Repetition that provides no new information will probably obstruct the reader’s creation of story time. Generalization mostly hinders the reader’s production of story time as it is impossible to establish whether generalized events are singular or regularly occurring and hence they cannot be established within the novel’s story time. Certain temporal expressions and demonstratives that have no specific reference point can also limit the reader’s ability to create story time. References to years, seasons, and months, however, usually help readers establish events within story time. Another mostly helpful feature is the constant repetition of mission numbers. The novel begins with Yossarian having already finished thirty-eight combat missions while forty-five missions were required by the higher officers of Yossarian’s squadron. This creates a temporal landmark for the novel – events that precede this point in time can be considered as past events and events following this point can be considered as unfolding events. This device is one of the major guiding factors in the reader’s creation of story time.

My reading of the story time of *Catch-22* is one of many possible ones. The differences in readers’ story times demonstrate that the structure of the novel discourages a linear story time. While a sequence of events can eventually be established for most of the episodes in the novel, some remain vaguely hovering

above the timeline, denying readers a complete, definitive story time. Although the ambiguity of the novel's temporality may frustrate readers, it also provides opportunities for endless re-readings and interpretations.

The predestined, looped life of Billy Pilgrim becomes tangible in the reading process as the reader travels through the scattered moments of Billy's life. The disarray of the discourse time of *Slaughterhouse-Five* is, surprisingly, organized as chapter two of the novel provides a chronological summary of all events portrayed in the novel. While the rest of the narrative does not follow a linear organization, the summary functions as a template for the novel's story time. Although the difficulty of creating a story time is somewhat mitigated by the provided outline of Billy's life, readers will still struggle to piece together the full story. Governed by the deterministic worldview of the Tralfamadorians, the novel presents Billy's experience as entirely determined by the random time travel that can throw him into any period of his life. Billy travels in and out of moments throughout his life with little control over the process.

While most of the novel is dedicated to the story of Billy Pilgrim, narrated in the third person, the first and last chapter also feature a first-person narrator who discusses the process of writing a war novel. In the first chapter, the unnamed first-person narrator suggests that he is the author of Billy's story, linking the two narratives. Through interjection and commentary in the embedded narrative, the frame narrator makes his presence known within the story of Billy Pilgrim. The novel's final chapter interweaves the frame narrative and the embedded narrative. This complicates the reader's interpretation of the novel's story time. Considered as two independent narratives, the reader will create two separate story times operating on two different layers. However, the surfacing of the frame narrator in the embedded narrative and the merging of the two narratives in the final chapter contradicts the interpretation of two story times. Metanarration and metafictional statements of the frame narrative draw attention to the fictive quality of Billy's story, further establish the deterministic nature of Billy's life, and disrupt the reader's suspension of disbelief.

Events in Billy Pilgrim's life are defined by the looped structure of suspension and interruption. Even death does not trigger an end or a conclusion. Death, like other events in the world of the novel, is merely a point in time that is always existing. Billy dies, other characters die, and so it goes. The unfolding description of events is constantly interrupted by the intrusion of other events from different periods of Billy's life. This effect enables the reader to experience temporal unstuckness with Billy. As all events remain suspended with barely any conclusion, narrative continuity is disrupted and the filling of gaps by readers is heavily impacted. Although Billy may be permanently stuck on paper, his time travel is not something that can be stopped or avoided when he comes unstuck with every reading of his story.

The conflicting reversal of time in *Time's Arrow* is lived through by the reader as the unnatural direction of discourse towards birth forces readers to remain alert throughout the reading process. Unlike the two cult classics analyzed in the dissertation, *Time's Arrow* unfolds through linear discourse time, albeit with the

future preceding the past. Despite the reversed arrow of time, the novel's form follows a rather conventional structure in its ordering of events. Due to this linearity, the story time of *Time's Arrow* is considerably more accessible than that of *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *Catch-22*. The story time of the novel can be constructed by either following the protagonist's story or the narrator's story. The protagonist's life unfolds from death to birth. He switches identities as he ages backwards, until arriving at his last name, Odilo, that accompanies him to his youth and birth. The novel is narrated in first-person through a soul-figure of the novel's protagonist. The narrator wakes up in the resurrected body of Tod Friendly and travels backwards in time in the body of the protagonist, referred to in third-person. Although familiar with a forward-moving world, the narrator finds himself in a reversed temporality that runs counter to our understanding of the natural arrow of time. All processes and experiences are also reversed. Death becomes a resurrecting force, while birth becomes fatal.

Although the sequence of events is linear in the discourse time of the novel, the reading of the novel is complicated by the contradictory direction of time. While the protagonist's life unfolds in reverse, the narrator tends to interpret events based on our natural understanding of the arrow of time. As the novel progresses, readers become accustomed to the reversed storyworld and the narrator's interpretations of it; that is, until the narrative takes a dark turn, revealing the protagonist's Nazi past. Once the narrative arrives at the protagonist's Nazi years, the narrator stops interpreting the storyworld as reversed, stops referring to the protagonist in third-person, and settles into the birth-facing direction of the storyworld. While the story of the protagonist is not compromised by this, it does affect the reading of the narrator's story. Until now, it was possible for the reader to accept the narrator's commentary on the state of the storyworld and the events of the protagonist's life. The new situation forces readers to reexamine the narrator's current as well as previous commentary.

After the war, narration about the protagonist is switched to third-person again and the narrator stops identifying with the protagonist. At the very end of the novel, the narrator recognizes the true arrow of time. In terms of the order of events in story time, the narrator's realization matters little. The order of events remains the same whether evaluated from the beginning of discourse or the end. However, as the chosen direction of the storyworld will significantly alter the reader's relationship with the narrator and will provide varied readings of the narrator's relationship with the protagonist and the storyworld, the reality of the novel's arrow of time becomes difficult to determine.

The primary objective of my study of experience, reading, and time, was to evaluate the contribution of the reader in the process of reading. While the theoretical chapters focused on the reading process in broader terms – how text and reader collaborate in the reading process and how the reading process unfolds – the empirical chapters highlighted aspects of the text that encourage readers to make interpretive choices about textual temporality. By creating a dialogue between phenomenology, reader-response theories, narratology and

philosophy of time, I have demonstrated how literary temporality is constructed and how text and reader collaborate in producing story time.

As aspects that affect the reading process are experiential in nature, I would have liked to also discuss in detail how the reading time unfolds and how readers actualize texts. While the analytical tools chosen for this dissertation did not allow for a discussion of individual readers, further study on the topic would be beneficial to better understand the reading process and the reader's immediate transaction with the text. Although the transient nature of the reading moment makes it difficult to study, it would be interesting to further examine which textual elements have a greater or a lesser effect on the creation of story time as well as whether individual readers are affected by textual elements to the same degree.

I believe that the creation of a story time from discourse is among the key responsibilities of the reader during the reading process. Readers are in a transactional relationship with the text when they experience the making of time. Philosophies of time reflect the structure of literary texts – while narrative discourse is spatial and static, the nature of the reading process makes reading a dynamic, temporal activity. Through the experience of both form and content, readers will be able to synthesize the information presented in discourse time and organize the non-linear, non-sequential events. In addition to showing that the reader's active collaboration is necessary for the emergence of story time, I believe that the development of stories in general requires the reader's input. While narrative discourse is provided by authors, stories can only emerge through the active participation of the reader.

While the work of reading can be made visible through a discussion of literary texts, the processes in operation affect our communication with all texts. Although the potential meanings can change over time, literary works are stable in a way that other texts are not. Composed with intentions that can be discerned, we know that literary texts try to do things to readers and affect readers. By investigating the function of particular elements in the text, we can answer why the text has been constructed in a particular way, uncover the author's potential motivation for composing the text in such a way, and reveal the effects of the text.

However, texts that lack the same level of intentionality will still require recognition of the elements that evoke response and interpretation. As we are surrounded by texts, we are constantly communicating with different ideas and forming attachments. For the most part, we do not acknowledge the ways in which the various literary and non-literary texts affect us. We also may not recognize how much we contribute to the reading process through our prior understandings, expectations, and the influence of the surrounding environment. In order to understand how much of our world is shaped by our own meaning-making, we should study and reflect on how we respond to and evoke the potentials of meaning of the texts we come across. Although the meaning potentials of non-literary texts may not be readily observable, we should evaluate all texts for intention and monitor our own response. We will discover that regardless of the form of the text, we are constantly making stories out of the narratives presented to us.

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SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Lugedes aega:

Looaja kogemus postmodernistlikus kirjanduses

Doktoritöö fookuses on lugemisprotsess ja lugeja kogemus teksti temporaalsusest: käsitlen narratiivimaailma ja lugeja kokkupuutepunkte ning lugejapoolset panust loomaailma kujundamisel ja teksti tähenduspotentsiaalide avamisel. Kuna doktoritöö eesmärk on mõista läbielatud lugemisprotsessi ja aspekte, mis mõjutavad lugeja kogemust teksti ajast, siis uurin lugeja ja teksti vahelist koostööd teoreetiliste raamistike kaudu, mis põhinevad fenomenoloogial, lugemisteooriatel, ajafilosoofial ja narratiiviuringutel. Seejuures lähtun argumendist, et tekstiaeg sünnib läbi lugeja loomingulise panuse lugemisprotsessis. Lugeja ülesannete hulka kuulub teksti aktualiseerimine, mis kujundab narratiivi looks. Lugemisprotsessi jooksul saab lugejast fiktsionaalse maailma kaaslooja.

Doktoritöö sisaldab kolme teoreetilist ja kolme empiirilist peatükki. Teoreetiliste peatükkide põhiteemad on kogemuslikkus, lugemisprotsess, tekstiaeg (*discourse time*) ja looaeg (*story time*). Analüütilistes peatükkides uurin tekstiaja väljendust kolmes postmodernistlikus romaanis. Töötan ilukirjandusega, milles fiktsionaalse maailma kaudu avanevad filosoofilised ideed (vrd Beauvoir 2005, 2011). Valitud romaanides – Joseph Helli „Catch-22“ („Nõks-22“), Kurt Vonneguti „Slaughterhouse-Five“ („Tapamaja, korpus viis“) ja Martin Amise „Time’s Arrow“ – väljendub ajafilosoofia nii sisu kui ka vormi kaudu. Seega käsitlen temporaalsuse tähenduslikkust nii fiktsioonimaailmas kui ka vormitasandil.

Doktoritöö rõhuasetus on kogemuslikkusel, mis lähtub kirjandusteaduses taas populaarsust koguvatest fenomenoloogilistest lähenemisviisidest ja meetoditest. Leian, et kogemuslikkus on lugemise ja aja uurimise aluseks. Lõputöö esimeses teoreetilisest peatükis käsitlen läbielatud lugemiskogemust ja lugemisprotsessi mõjutavaid aspekte. Lähenen vahetule lugemiskogemusele fenomenoloogilise raamistiku kaudu, et kirjeldada protsesse, mis lugemisel toimuvad. Seejuures kasutan Edmund Husserli ja Martin Heideggeri ideid, et selgitada, kuidas lugeja ja lugu teineteist mõjutavad. Vahetu lugemiskogemuse (*lived experience of reading*) mõtestamiseks arutlen intentsionaalsuse, intersubjektiivsuse, kehalikkuse ja temporaalsuse teemadel. Lugemise kogemuslikkust uurides lähtun enamasti Husserli ideedest ajataju kohta, kuid narratiivimaailma temporaalsuse üle arutlemiseks olen kasutanud ka Heideggeri surma-poole-olemise kontseptsiooni.

Husserl väidab, et vahetu kogemus (*lived experience*) avaldub läbi esmase mälu, mille osad on algtaju, protensioon ja retensioon. Need kolm komponenti moodustavad kogemusvälja, mille pidev liikumine ajas aitab järjestikuseid hetki siduda. Husserli järgi tekib vahetu kogemus protensiooni ja retensiooni koosmõjus: need tekitavad kogemusvälja, kus eelnevad hetked mõjutavad järgmisi ja vastupidi. See loob kogemuse dünaamilisest ajast. Esmase mälu näitlikustamiseks kasutas Husserl näidet muusikast, kus üksikud noodid on tähendusrikkad vaid meloodia ajalise terviklikkuse kontekstis. Husserli näidet meloodiast saab üle

kanda ka lugemisprotsessile. Nimelt oleme lugemise ajal suunatud füüsilise objekti, tekstist koosneva raamatu poole. Alates hetkest, mil me raamatu avame, muudab protensiooni ja retensiooni sisaldav kogemusväli meie lugemiskogemust. Nende puudumisel kogeaks lugeja seosetuid tähejadasid, kuid protensiooni ja retensiooni abil seonduvad täheread sõnadeks ja lauseteks. Kogemusvälja kestusest sõltub, kas lugeja suudab ühendada laused ja leheküljed tähenduslikuks informatsiooniks. Retensiooni kaudu on lugeja võimeline teadvuses hoidma eelnenud sõnu ja lauseid ning samas tekitab protensiooniväli lugejas ootused järgnevate lausete ja narratiivi arengu suhtes. Sellest lähtuvalt kujundab retensiooni ja protensiooni vastastikmõju meie kogemust tekstist.

Lisaks esmasele mälule mõjutab meie lugemist sekundaarne mälu. Husserli filosoofia kohaselt taastoodab ja kordab sekundaarne mälu sündmust või objekti. Representeeritud sündmused ja objektid muutuvad sekundaarses mälus taasesitusteks. Sekundaarse mälu representatsioonide taasesitatakse reaalses esmase mälu kaudu. Näiteks kui otsustame äsja kuulnud meloodiat uuesti mõttes laulda, representeerime meloodia varasemat kogemust. Kuigi taasesitus on esialgse kogemuse sarnane, ei ole sekundaarne mälu tavaliselt võimeline kogetut täiuslikult taasesitama. Representatsioon viitab algsele kogemusele, kuid ei ole selle koopiat.

Kirjandusteksti lugemisel töötavad esmane ja sekundaarne mälu korraga. Sündmuste ja objektide kogemisel oleme suunatud nendesamade objektide või sündmuste poole. Husserli intensionaalsus on relevantne tajutud kogemuste, mälestuste ning ka täielikult fiktiivsete sündmuste ja objektide puhul. Husserli ajataju fenomenoloogia rakendamine lugemisprotsessile loob ebatavalise olukorra, kus kogemust tajutakse kahel tasandil, nii esmases mälus kui ka sekundaarses mälus. Lugemisprotsessi ajal oleme suunatud füüsilise raamatu poole ning meie kogemus kirjandusest on seega realselt tajutav. Raamatul on realselt füüsiline mõõde – saame seda avada, pöörata lehti ja lugeda lehel olevaid sõnu. Samas oleme suunatud ka loo poole, mida loeme, sest esiplaanile tuleb teksti virtuaalne mõõde (Carr 1987). Kui loeme kirjandusest mõne fiktiivse objekti, näiteks õunapuu kohta, jõuab see meieni sekundaarse mälu kaudu. Õunapuu ei ilmu meie ette realselt, kuid me saame seda siiski kogeda kujutlusvõime vahendusel. Kuna kujutletud objekte kogetakse sekundaarse mälu kaudu, on need representatsioonid, mitte otseselt tajutud kogemused. Kuigi kirjandustegelased ja fiktiivsed sündmused ei ilmu lugeja ette, kogevad lugejad lugemisprotsessi kaudu kirjandusteksti vahetu kogemusena. Lugemisprotsessis oleme seega suunatud nii teksti kui füüsilise objekti poole kui ka representatsiooni poole, kogeme raamatut, kuid ka selles sisalduvat lugu.

Käsitlen neid ideid lähemalt töö teises teoreetilises peatükis, mille keskmes on peamiselt lugeja ja lugemisprotsess. Teise peatüki peamine eesmärk on uurida teksti ja lugeja vahelist kommunikatsiooni ja koosmõju teose tähenduslikkusele. Lähenen lugeja mõistele põhiliselt 20. sajandi retseptsiooniteooriate kaudu. Akadeemiline tähelepanu lugejatele ja lugemisele saavutas haripunkti 20. sajandi teisel poolel, mil olid populaarsed erinevad retseptsiooniteooriad. Lugejaid, nende reaktsiooni tekstile ja lugemisprotsessi arutasid nii kirjandusteadlased kui ka

kirjanikud juba enne retseptsiooniteooriate kõrgaega (nt Woolf 1924; Richards 1924, 1929; Rosenblatt 1938), kuid 1960.–1980. aastate kirjandusteoorias tõusis esile just lugeja tähtsus teksti tõlgendamisel. Pakuti välja mitmeid teooriaid, mis keskendusid lugejale ja lugemisprotsessile (nt Holland 1975, 1989; Iser 1978a, 1978b; Bleich 1978; Fish 1980). Lugemisteooriad ja nende kriitika esilekerkimine põhjustasid akadeemilisi vaidlusi (nt Tompkins 1980; Suleiman & Crosman 1980; Mailloux 1982), kuid erinevad teooriad keskendusid siis valdavalt lugeja kujundile (*reader figure*), mitte pärislugejatele.

Viimasel paarikümnel aastal on ingliskeelses kirjandusteaduses taas tärnanud huvi lugemisprotsessi vastu. Selle huvi algatas Stephen Besti ja Sharon Marcuse (2009) essee, mis kutsus teadlasi keskenduma teksti pinnatasandile (*surface reading*). Sellele on järgnenud põhjalik diskussioon erinevate lugemisviiside eeliste ja puuduste üle. Varasemate ja kaasaegsete lugemisvaidluste fookus ei ole seega täielikult sama. Kui 20. sajandi teisel poolel püüdsid teoreetikud välja selgitada, kes on lugeja ja mida ta lugemise ajal teeb, siis tänapäeva kirjandusteadlaste tähelepanu on peamiselt suunatud lugemisprotsessile ja tekstitõlgenduse tasandile. Doktoritöös pean mõlemat fookust võrdselt oluliseks. Tähtis on teada, mida lugeja teeb ja kuidas ta tekstiga suhestub. Seega loob doktoritöö dialoogi kahe lugemisteooriate põlvkonna vahel, et näha, kuidas vanemad ja uuemad teooriad võiksid teineteist täiendada. Siinkohal on kõige relevantsemad Louise Rosenblatti, Georges Poulet', Wolfgang Iseri, Rita Felski, Paul Armstrongi, Mark Currie ja Marco Caracciolo lugemisviisid ja tõlgendusstrateegiad. Nimetatud autorid sobituvad hästi ka teiste väitekirjas kasutatud distsipliinide ja teooriatega. Kui Poulet' ja Iseri teooriad on heaks baasiks lugemisprotsessi teoreetilisele analüüsile, siis Rosenblatt ja mõned kaasaegsemad kirjandusteoreetikud pakuvad praktilisi tööriistu tekstile lähenemiseks.

Teises teoreetilises peatükis väidan, et loomaailma olemasolu sõltub lugeja tööst ja panusest. Loomaailm ei teki iseenesest ja lugejal on vaja seda aktiivselt luua. Lugemine tähendab suhtlemist (*transaction*) jutustatud sündmustega (Rosenblatt 1994). Sündmused, mis raamatus on paberile laotud, ilmuvad meie vahetus kogemuses esiplaanile ning lugeja hakkab neid kogema nii, nagu need oleksid reaalsed. Sisseelamine kujuteldavatesse sündmustesse võimaldab lugejatel tegelelastele kaasa elada. Loomaailmast õpitud teadmised hakkavad lõpuks kujundama ka lugeja suhtlust reaalse maailmaga, tekitades lugeja ja loetu vahel intersubjektiivse suhestumise (Beauvoir 2011; Hughes 2013; Caracciolo 2014). Romaani maailma kogemine tähendab suhtlemist jutustatud sündmustega ja need kujunevad looks vaid siis, kui lugeja teksti aktualiseerib.

Lugemisprotsessi uurimist jätkan kolmandas peatükis, tuues sisse lugemise ajalise mõõtme. Käsitlen teksti temporaalsust narratiivse aja ja metafüüsilise ajalisuse uurimise kaudu ning pakun välja mudeli, mis avardeb meie praegust arusaama teksti ajalisusest. Lähenen teksti ajalisusele kolmest vaatenurgast, millest kaks viitavad aja struktureerivale aspektile ja kolmas ajale kui objektile: 1) ajalisus struktureerib kogemust iseennast; 2) ajalisus määrab narratiivi kuju; 3) ajalisus on postmodernistliku romaani kontekstis oluline. Kuna kirjandus-

teaduslikud teooriad aja olemuse ja tähenduse kohta on puudulikud, olen teksti ajalise mõtme analüüsis kasutanud metafüüsikat.

Kolmandas peatükis esitan lühikese ülevaate ajafilosoofiast, A- ja B-teooriast. Aja metafüüsikast laenatud mõisted aitavad uurida, kuidas avaldub tekstiline ajalikus. Siinkohal lähtun Mark Currie (2007) loodud raamistikust, mis samuti toetub metafüüsikale ning A- ja B-teooriatele. A-teooria kujutab aega dünaamilisena: aeg koosneb „nüüd“-hetkedest, mis on pidevas liikumises tuleviku poole. A-teooria kohaselt on olevik hetkeline, minevik fikseeritud ning tulevik veel (praeguse seisuga) toimumata. B-teooria seevastu pakub staatilist teooriat ajast. B-teoreetikud kujutavad aega plokina. B-teooria järgi on kõik hetked võrdselt reaalsed ning edasiliikuvaid ja „nüüd“-hetke ei ole. Ajas muutuv kogemus, kus hetked liiguvad minevikust olevikku ja sealt edasi tulevikku, on tajutav ainult meie ego-tsentrilise ajakäsituse tõttu. Reaalsuses aeg ei liigu ning igal hetkel on võrdne väärtus, sõltumata meie vaatenurgast. Kui A-teooria vastab paremini meie tava-pärasele ajakogemusele, siis B-teooria on rohkem kooskõlas füüsilise maailma reaalsusega. Kuigi A- ja B-teooria kontseptualiseerivad aega vastandlikult, olen tekstide temporaalsuse uurimisel kasutanud mõlemat.

Meie kogemus hetkest koosneb protensiooni ja retensiooni mikroühikutest. Kogu inimese elu on aga piiritletud sünni ja surmaga. Hetkede kogemuse üle mõtisklemine ei nõua meilt olulist pingutust, sest see vastab meie igapäevasele kogemusele ajast, kuid oma elu kui terviku mõistmine võib olla raskem. Terviku üle mõtisklemise võimalus avaneb meile kirjanduse kaudu. Kirjandus võimaldab meil ühtaegu osa saada aja kulgemise kogemusest ja ka tajuda selle terviklikkust. Teisisõnu annab lugemisprotsess võimaluse kogeda aega nii A- kui ka B-teooria mõistes. Kuigi selline kogemus on vaid kujuteldav, illustreerib ilukirjandus seda, mille vahetu kogemine on keeruline – algust, keskpaika ja lõppu.

Lähenen romaanidele Genette'lt ja A- ja B-teooriatest tuletatud mõistete – tekstiaeg ja looaeg – kaudu. Tekstiaeg viitab teksti fikseeritud ajale. Raamatut lugedes mõistetakse esmalt tekstiaega, mis tihti on moonutatud ning kätkeb endas anakrooniat – prolepse, analepse ja/või metalepse. Tekstiaeg on staatiline, kõik narratiivi elemendid on raamatu kaante vahel oma kindlas paigas. Romaani valmides asetatakse sündmuste ajaline jada ruumiliselt raamatu lehtedele. Iga lehekülj on kui läbilõige ajast. Tekstiaeg võib sündmusi kajastada mittelineaarselt, mistõttu ei ole raamatu leheküljed tihti kronoloogilises järjestuses. Ilukirjanduse lugemine on dünaamiline protsess, mille käigus lugeja kulgeb raamatu lehekülgede vahel. Seetõttu pole tekstiaja üheaegne kogemine võimalik. Lugeja panus on vajalik, et staatiline tekstiaeg muutuks dünaamiliseks protsessiks.

Peale tekstiaja uurin valitud tekstides ka looaega. Lugedes üritab lugeja mõista kirjutatud temporaalselt ning seega tuleb lugeja teadvuses esiplaanile loomaailm, mille üks osa on looaeg. Looaja all mõtlen fiktsioonimaailma aega, perioodi, mida esitab narratiiv, kuid mis ei pruugi ühtida tekstuaalse kronoloogiaga ehk tekstiajaga. Lugeja ülesanne on organiseerida narratiivi nii, et sellest moodustuks lugu. Loomaailm tõstab lugeja kogemuse esiplaanile ning loomaailma sees olles hakkab lugeja seadma raamatus esitatud sündmusi järjestusse. Looaeg kulgeb vastavalt loomaailma loogikale ning on igas raamatus unikaalne, mistõttu tuleb

lugejal lugemisprotsessis kujundada narratiiv sidusaks looks. Lugeja ühendab lugemisprotsessi jooksul tekstiajas laialipaisatud sündmused. Sõltuvalt raamatust võib see kulgeda suurema pingutuseta, aga vahel tuleb lugejal esitatud sündmuste jada(de) osad omavahel teadlikult ühendada. Suur osa ilukirjanduse lugemise naudingust tuleneb mustrite avastamisest, materjali sünteesist ja ebakõlade lahendamisest – nii saab loo moodustamisest lugemisprotsessi kulminatsioon (Armstrong 2013; Auyoung 2020).

Teksti aktualiseerimine lugeja poolt teeb kirjandusest ajalise kogemuse. Seega kirjeldan kolmandas peatükis ka lugeja-aja mõistet. Lugeja olevik vastab hetkel loetavale leheküljele. Lugeja jaoks koosneb minevik loetud ja tulevik lugemata lehekülgedest. Seetõttu tekib lugemisprotsessis asümmeetria – loetud lehekülgedel ei ole sama staatus kui lugemata lehekülgedel. Lugejal on teadmine eelnend lehekülgede, kuid mitte eesolevate lehekülgede kohta. Selline asümmeetria ei pruugi ühtida loomaailma ajaga. Tekstiaja minevikus olevad leheküljed võivad edastada infot loomaailma tuleviku kohta. Seega võib lugejal olla katkendlik ja piiratud teadmine loomaailma ajalisusest.

Lugeja-aeg koosneb nii ruumilisest tekstiajast, mille käigus lugeja on füüsiliselt seotud raamatu lehekülgedega, kui ka temporaalselt kulgevatest hetkedest, mis mõjutavad lugeja kogemust lugemisprotsessi vältel ja loovad loomaailma, kuhu siseneb lugeja, et mõista narratiivi loona. Kuna lugeja-aeg on subjektiivne kogemus, siis uurin vaid tekstiaega ja looaega. Doktoritöö piiratud mahu tõttu keskendun seega mõistetele ja ideedele, millele saab läheneda ülalolevate teooriate ja tekstianalüüsi kaudu.

Looaja loomine nõuab lugejalt loomingulist tööd. Jutustatavad sündmused paiknevad ruumiliselt raamatu lehekülgedel, kuid muutuvad lugemisprotsessi kaudu kogemuslikuks. Kuigi looaeg koosneb tekstilistest elementidest, ei ole see narratiivis kohe nähtav. Erinevalt tekstiajast ei ole looaeg teksti fikseeritud aspekt, vaid see luuakse lugeja ja teksti vahelises suhtluses. Samuti ei kerki looaeg isenesest esile, vaid seda loob lugeja järk-järgult, tekstiajas esitatud sündmuste edenedes. Tekst vastutab loomaailma skeleti, lugeja loomaailma lünkade täitmise eest (Iser 1978b). Lugeja ja teksti suhtluse tulemuseks ongi lugu – kindlale ajateljele organiseeritud tegelaste ja sündmuste kogum ning protsessid, mis muutuvad järjest terviklikumaks. Looaeg ei pruugi olla lineaarne, sest lugejate ettekujutus loomaailma kujust võib erineda. Looaeg võib ka iga järgneva lugemisega muunduda.

Tekstiaja ja looja analüüsis uurin, kuidas lugejad loovad lugedes aega ning milline on looja loomise protsess. Empiirilises osas keskendun tekstilistele elementidele ja võtetele, mis kas suunavad lugejat teatud looja tõlgenduste poole või takistavad looja loomise protsessi. Romaanid, mida looja uurimiseks kasutan, sisaldavad mitmeid tekstielemente, mis mõjutavad lugeja arusaama loojast. Romaani vorm ja sisu on vastastikmõjus ning mõlemad mõjutavad ka seda, kuidas lugeja produtseerib looaega. Kõigis kolmes analüüsitavas romaanis on teksti vorm ja tekstiaja temporaalne struktuur seotud romaanide ajafilosoofiaga. Raamatus „Catch-22“ peegeldub sõja mõttetuse romaanis sündmuste fragmentaarses esitluses. Billy Pilgrimi ettemääratus ja tsükliline elu muutuvad käega-

katsutavaks teose „Slaughterhouse-Five“ lugemisprotsessis. Aja noole suunamuutus romaanis „Time’s Arrow“ sunnib lugejaid läbi elama jutustaja esitatud vasturääkivusi. Kõigi kolme romaani puhul uurin, kuidas lugeja navigeerib läbi tekstilise kronoloogia, et konstrueerida looja kronoloogia.

Tekstidele lähenen oma lugemise kaudu (Moi 2017). Analüüsis kirjeldatu on näide minu lugemisest ja minu suunatusest tekstide poole. Ma olen suunanud ennast kolme kirjandusteksti poole temporaalsust lahtiharutavana lugejana, kes on treenitud olema tundlik elementide suhtes, mis looja loomist mõjutavad. Olen jõuliselt lõhkunud tekstitervikut ja tekstist välja tõstnud teatud tekstiaja elemente, et tekitada dialoogi tekstielementide, varem lahtiharutatud teooria ja enda kogemuse vahel. Spekulatsioon tekstiaja, looja ja lugeja vahelisest suhtest tugineb minu enda kogemusele valitud teoreetiliste tekstidest kui ka kirjanduslikest tekstidest.

Romaani „Catch-22“ lugemisel keskendun teksti struktuurile. Fragmenteeritud tekst esitab loo protagonist, Yossariani kogemusi teises maailmasõjas fragmenteeritud narratiivi kaudu. Romaan on jaotatud 42 peatükiks, mida on omakorda võimalik paigutada kolme tsükklisse, mis kõik algavad ja lõppevad haiglas. Romaani esimene kolmandik on fragmenteeritud ja korrapäratu, kuid muutub järk-järgult lineaarsemaks – viimased peatükid kulgevad suures osas kronoloogiliselt. Romaani loo olevik luuakse esimeses peatükis, kus Yossarian on 38 pommitamismissiooni järel haiglas. Romaani sündmused on võimalik jagada suuremateks ja väiksemateks korduvateks sündmusteks, ainult olevikus esitletud sündmusteks, ning suuremateks ja väiksemateks minevikusündmusteks. Korduvad sündmused kujutavad episoodi nii loo olevikust kui ka minevikust. Käsitlen loo tegelaste surma, Milo looliini, Yossariani viibimist haiglas ja visiite Rooma suuremate korduvate sündmustena. Väiksemad korduvad sündmused on vähem tähtsad missioonid, kaklused ohvitseride klubis ja võimuvõitlus kõrgemate ohvitseride vahel. Olevikusündmused toimuvad ainult loo olevikus. Ainuke olevikusündmus kirjeldab grupi kaplani probleeme. Suuremad minevikusündmused (Ferrara, Bologna ja Avignoni missioon) toimuvad ainult loo minevikus. Väiksemad minevikusündmused on Truudusvande Ristiretk (*The Great Loyalty Oath Crusade*), Yossariani kadetiaeg ja tegelaste lapsepõlve kirjeldused. Kõik sündmused toimuvad kas loo minevikus või olevikus, kuid tekstiajas on sündmuste kirjeldus harva lineaarne või kronoloogiline. Romaani lugejad on pakkunud välja mitmeid kronoloogiaid ning nende erinevused loojas illustreerivad, kuidas romaani struktuur muudab selle keeruliseks.

Oma analüüsis toon välja romaani looja elemendid, mis toetavad sündmuste järjestikuse ajatelje loomist ning mis seda protsessi segavad. Kõnealuses romaanis domineerib sündmuste kordumine. Korduvad sündmused on identsed või sarnased ning kordustega lisandub erineval määral uut informatsiooni. Korduste abil on võimalik paigutada sündmused loojas omale kohale, kui lisandunud teave sisaldab seda soodustavaid elemente, nagu ajaväljendeid või viiteid sündmustele, mis on juba ajaliselt määratletud. Kordused, mis uut informatsiooni ei paku, võivad looja moodustamist takistada. Samamoodi takistavad looja moodustamist ka üldistused, mis kirjeldavad regulaarsena näivaid sündmusi. Seetõttu ei ole võimalik

üldistatud sündmusi paigutada romaani looaega. Looaja moodustamist takistavad ka ajaväljendid (nt *late one night*) ja demonstratiivid, kui pole selge, millele need tagasi viitavad. Samas on teatud ajaväljendid looja loomisel kasulikud, nt viited aastaegadele ja kuudele. Kasulikud on ka missioonide järjekorranumbrid. Romaani alguses on Yossarian läbinud 38 missiooni, kuid kõrgemad ohvitserid on kohutuslikuks teinud 45 missiooni. Sellest tekib romaanis omamoodi temporaalne maamärk: sündmused, mis sellele eelnevad, toimuvad minevikus ning need, mis järgnevad sellele, on olevikusündmused. Missiooninumbrid on romaanis üks tähtsamaid abivahendeid looja mõistmiseks.

Kasutan korduvate, mineviku- ja olevikusündmuste analüüsiks eelmainitud elemente. Suuremate ja väiksemate missioonide ajalist järjekorda saab enamasti määrata, toetudes kohustuslike missioonide arvule. Kuigi arvud aitavad Ferrara, Bologna ja Avignoni missiooni paigutada ligikaudselt looaega, on nende esinemine romaanis siiski fragmenteeritud ja korduv, mis teeb omakorda sündmuste järjestamise raskeks. Yossariani haiglas viibimise korrad on võimalik järjestada kohustuslike missioonide arvu abil. Haiglas viibimiste täpset arvu ei saa siiski välja selgitada, kuna neid on palju ning neid pole võimalik alati eristada. Haiglas viibimised, nagu ka Roomas käimine, toimuvad üldjuhul pärast suuri sündmusi. Sündmusi aitab ajateljele paigutada ka raamatutegelaste hukkumine.

Romaani ehk kõige segadust tekitavam osa on Milo Minderbinderi loodud sündikaadi narratiivi areng. Milo tegevusi kirjeldavad sündmused on fragmenteeritud ja mittelineaarsed, mistõttu on neid keeruline lineaarsesse looaega paigutada. Võrreldes ülejäänud romaaniga esineb Miloga seotud kirjeldustes oluliselt rohkem anakrooniat ja fragmenteeritust. Need kirjeldused on temporaalselt eriti korrapäratud ning neid ei ole võimalik täpsele ajateljele paigutada. Kordused, vasturääkivused ja ebamäärased ajaväljendid narratiivis segavad lugejat Milo loo sündmuste järjestamisel.

Milo sündmuste ajalise korrastamise keerulisust on käsitlenud ka teised kirjandusteadlased. Neljanda peatüki viimases osas loen kolme akadeemilise lugeja interpretatsioone sündmustest ja struktuurist. Kolme lugeja loojad ühtivad enamjaolt, kuid erinevused on seotud just Milo sündikaadi ja suuremate missioonide järjekorraga. Kolme lugeja argumendid romaani looja kohta põhinevad suures osas missioonide arvul, mis kujundavad sarnase looja. Muus aga kolme lugeja tõlgendus ei kattu ning tekib kolm mingil määral vastandlikku looaega. Selgub, et isegi professionaalsete lugejate tõlgenduses ei suudeta luua ühest lineaarset looaega ja mitmed episoodid jäävad ebamääraselt ajaliini kohale hõljuma.

„Slaughterhouse-Five“ on küll vähem fragmenteeritud, kuid järgib sarnast jutustamisstiili, liikudes ajas edasi ja tagasi. Romaaniga „Catch-22“ võrreldes on korratud siiski väiksem. „Catch-22“ keskendub lühikesele perioodile, „Slaughterhouse-Five“ vaatleb aga tervet protagonistide elu. Billy Pilgrimi elu esitatakse üheksas peatükis, milles narratiiv keskendub enamjaolt Billy sõjavangikogemusele teises maailmasõjas. Narratiiv on jaotatud episoodideks, mis kirjeldavad seikasid Billy elust. Kirjeldatavaid hetki katkestavad teised sündmused teistest eluperioodidest. Narratiivi tükeldamine paigutab lugeja Billyga sarnasele tasandile ning imiteerib Billy kogemust. Billy kulgeb, omamata kontrolli, ajas edasi ja

tagasi liikudes läbi oma elu, mistõttu ei asetu raamatu lõigud kronoloogiliselt. Kuivõrd Billy ei kontrolli sündmuste vahel reisimist, ei suuda ta ka neid hetki pikendada ega lühendada. Billy on pelgalt oma elu pealtvaataja, kes võib sattuda juhuslikku perioodi oma elus.

Lugejad saavad teada Billy teise maailmasõja aegsest sõjavangistusest, abielust, psühholoogilistest probleemidest, lastest, tööst optometristina, röövimisest tulnukate poolt, lennuõnnetuse üleelamisest, abikaasa surmast autoõnnetuses, soovist rääkida maailmale tulnukatest ja tõest aja kohta ning mõrvast kaasveterani poolt. „Slaughterhouse-Five“ ei kulge kronoloogiliselt, kuid on oluliselt selgema looajaga kui „Catch-22“. Teine peatükk esitab sissejuhatuseks kronoloogilise lühikokkuvõtte Billy elust ja sündmustest, mis mudeldab romaani looaega ning kergendab lugejal looja loomist. Järgnevate peatükkide narratiiv ei kulge lineaarselt, kuid kajastatakse ainult neid sündmusi, mida mainiti teise peatüki kokkuvõttes. Lugeja peab siiski tekstiaja jälgimisel pingutama, sest sündmusi ei kirjeldata kunagi terviklikult – neid katkestavad sündmused teistest eluperioodidest, mis ei võimalda näha sündmusi tervikuna.

Romaan käsitleb Billy Pilgrimi elulugu ning on enamasti jutustatud kolmandas isikus. Esimeses ja viimases peatükis ilmub aga esimeses isikus jutustaja, kes arutab sõjaromaani kirjutamise protsessi üle. Esimese peatüki põhjal võib järeldada, et tegemist on Billy loo autoriga – see liidab omavahel kaks narratiivi. Billy loo jooksul ilmub aeg-ajalt esimeses isikus jutustaja, kes sekkub üksikute lausete narratiivi, peamiselt sündmustes, mis kirjeldavad Billy kogemust sõjavangina. Kuigi esimene ning teine kuni üheksas peatükk on silmnähtavalt erineva narratiiviga, saavad need viimases peatükis kokku, s.t raam- ja sisunarratiiv ühtivad. Selline ülesehitus muudab looja tõlgendamise lugeja jaoks keerulisemaks. Lugeja loob kahe narratiivi jaoks kaks eraldi looaega, mis kulgevad eri tasanditel: üks väljamõeldud autori tasandil ja teine tema väljamõeldud tegelase eluloo tasandil. Raamjutustaja sekkumine sisunarratiivi ja kahe narratiivi ühinemine viimases peatükis takistavad lugejal kahe narratiivi lahushoidmist. Looaegu on võimalik teadlikult siiski eraldada, kuid raamjutustaja sekkumine sisunarratiivi toob välja Billy loo kahekordselt fiktiivse loomuse ja vasturääkivused Billy ajas rändamise osas.

Tralfamadoorlased, romaani tulnukatest tegelased, tutvustavad romaanis oma deterministlikku ajafilosoofiat, mis sarnaneb B-teooriaga. Nad õpetavad Billyle oma ajakäsitust ja filosoofiat. Seetõttu hakkab tekstiaega juhtima B-teooriaga sarnanev ajakäsitlus. Raamnarratiiv kinnitab veelgi Billy loo deterministlikkust, kuid samas annab ka metatasandi informatsiooni Billy loo fiktiivsuse kohta. Raamjutustaja esitab Billy lugu kui kirjatükki, mis jätab Billy ilma kontrollist oma elu üle. Korrapäratud sündmused toimuvad läbi Billy elu ning korduvad tsüklitena, mistõttu narratiiv ei lõpe Billy surmaga. Kui romaanis „Catch-22“ mõjus tegelaste surm tähtsa fookuspunktina, siis romaanis „Slaughterhouse-Five“ ei märgi surm millegi lõppu. Billy sureb, surevad teised tegelased, *eks ta ole*, nagu romaanis tihti korratakse. Surm ja ka muud romaani aspektid on pelgalt punktid ajas, mis on alati eksisteerinud. See muudab romaani „Slaughterhouse-Five“ deterministlikuks. Billyl ei ole agentsust ega kontrolli oma temporaalsuse ega elu üle. Tema ajas

rändamist ei ole võimalik peatada ega ennetada – Billy on igavesti lineaarsest ajast sõltumatu.

Erinevalt eelmistest romaanidest on „Time’s Arrow“ narratiiv lineaarne, kuigi vale suunaga. See on jutustatud esimeses isikus, kes samal ajal on ja ei ole romaani protagonist. Jutustaja ärkab Tod Friendly surnust äratatud kehas ning reisib ajas tagurpidi. Jutustaja leiab end vastupidises temporaalsuses, olles samas tuttav edasi-liikuva ajaga. Surmast saab ellu äratav jõud, sünnist elu lõpetav sündmus. Tekstiaja sündmuste jada on küll lineaarne, kuid romaani lugemise teeb keerulisemaks vasturääkivus tagurpidi liikuvast ajast. Kuigi protagonist elu kulgeb tagurpidi, tõlgendab jutustaja sündmusi siiski meile loomuliku ajatunnetuse järgi. Kui lugejad on tuttavad „Time’s Arrow“ loomaailmaga ja jutustaja tõlgendusega loomaailmast, muutub narratiiv süngeks. Paljastatakse protagonist natsiminevik. Sellest hetkest alates ei interpreteeri jutustaja enam loomaailma tagurpidi, vaid lepib mineviku suunas kulgeva loomaailmaga. See paneb lugejaid narratiivi perspektiivile vastu töötama ja kogu narratiivi ümber hindama.

Kuigi „Time’s Arrow“ tekstiaeg on lineaarne, ei kulge see kronoloogiliselt, sest tulevik eelneb minevikule. Sündmuste järjestus on Amise romaanis siiski konventsionaalne. Romaani alguses proovitakse näidata maailma peegelpildis, kuid ülejäänud romaan kulgeb enamasti lineaarselt. Seetõttu on looaega kõnealuses romaanis lihtsam jälgida kui eelmainitud romaanides. Looaega on võimalik koostada, jälgides protagonist või jutustaja lugu. Protagonisti elu kulgeb surmast sünnini. Tagurpidi vananedes vahetab ta identiteete, kuni jõuab nimeni Odilo, mis on temaga kuni noorusaastate alguse ja sünnini. Iga nimevahetusega avaldub midagi protagonistist ja tema eesootavast minevikust. „Time’s Arrow“ esimeses pooles vihjatakse narratiivis pahaendelisele saladusele, mida peategelane varjab. Saladus paljastatakse, kui saabub teine maailmasõda koos peategelase põlastusväärsete tegudega, millele vihjati romaani esimeses pooles. Tema teod natsi-arstina vajuvad aga lõpuks tekstiaja minevikku, kui protagonist kasvab järjest nooremaks ja süütumaks.

Peategelase loo minevik on tekstiaja lõpus ning loo tulevik tekstiaja alguses, mistõttu on jutustaja temporaalsus tagurpidi. Jutustaja looaeg algab tekstiajaga ning kulgeb vastavalt. Suurema osa romaanist distantseerib jutustaja ennast peategelasest ning viitab talle kolmandas isikus. Jutustaja ja protagonist keha on ühine, kuid jutustaja ei kontrolli protagonist tegusid. Jutustaja distantseerub peategelasest, olles abitult peategelase kehas, kui peategelane saadab korda tegusid, mille jutustaja hukka mõistab. Jutustajal on teadmised ainult peategelase loo tuleviku kohta. Ta saab oma elust teada järjest nooremaks kasvades. Jutustaja on lugejaga sarnasel tasandil – ta on kõrvalseisja protagonist tagurpidi kulgevas elus. Teise maailmasõja saabudes aga jutustaja ja peategelase tasand ühinevad, narratiiv on nüüdsest esimeses isikus ning jutustaja identifitseerib ennast peategelasena. See ei takista looja loomist, kuid mõjutab siiski lugemisprotsessi. Siiani võis lugeja toetuda jutustajale ning võtta omaks tema seisukohad loomaailma ja peategelase elusündmuste kohta. Lugejal tuleb nüüd aga ümber hinnata jutustaja edasised ja eelnevad seisukohad. Sõja lõppedes ei samastu jutustaja enam peategelasega ja viitab temale taas kolmandas isikus. Romaani

lõpus mõistab jutustaja, et aeg kulges kogu romaani vältel vastassuunas. Jutustaja avastus ei mõjuta loomaailma sündmuste järjekorda. Seda ei mõjuta ka loo alguspunkti valik, kuigi see mõjutab lugeja arusaamist romaani temporaalsusest. Valides tekstiaja alguse alguspunktiks, kulgeb looaeg tekstiajaga samas suunas. Valides aga tekstiaja lõpu alguspunktiks, vastab see meie loomulikule ajakäsitusele. Kuigi sündmuste järjekorda on romaanis „Time’s Arrow“ lihtne kindlaks teha, jääb romaani temporaalsus lugejale ebamääraseks, sest lineaarsusest hoolimata on lugemisprotsessi vältel looaeg ja tekstiaeg pidevalt vastandatud.

Doktoritöös keskendun ajateooriatele, ajakogemusele ja lugemiskogemusele toetudes lugeja panuse ümbermõtestamisele narratiivi temporaalsuse loomises. Teoreetilistes peatükkides vaatlen lugemisprotsessi laiemalt – teksti ja lugeja omavahelist koostööd lugemisprotsessis ja lugemisprotsessi kulgemist. Empiirilised peatükkides toon esile teksti elemendid, mis toetavad teksti temporaalsuse tõlgendamist. Dialoog fenomenoloogia, retseptiooniteooriate, narratoloogia ja filosoofia vahel aitab mõista, kuidas luuakse kirjanduslik temporaalsus ning kuidas toimib looja kujunemisel lugeja ja teksti koostöö.

Lugemisprotsessi mõjutavad aspektid on kogemuslikud, mistõttu oleksin soovinud analüüsida, kuidas lugeja-aeg kujuneb ja kuidas lugejad aktualiseerivad teksti. Doktoritöös kasutatud analüütilised vahendid aga ei võimalda individuaalsete lugejate uurimist. Täiendav uurimistöö aitaks mõista lugemisprotsessi ja seda, kuidas lugejad tekstiga suhestuvad. Kuigi lugemishetk on möödunud ning seetõttu võib selle uurimine olla keeruline, oleks siiski huvitav teada, millistel teksti elementidel on suurem või väiksem mõju lugemisprotsessile ning kas see mõju varieerub lugejate vahel.

Looaja moodustamine narratiivi alusel on lugeja üks tähtsamaid ülesandeid lugemisprotsessis. Lugejatel on võimalik kujutada ette paberinimeste (Bal 2009) kogemusi ning koostöös tekstiga kogeda aja loomist. Ajafilosoofia aitab mõtestada teksti struktuuri – narratiivi diskursus on ruumiline ja staatiline, kuid lugemisprotsess muudab lugemise dünaamiliseks ja temporaalseks tegevuseks. Lugejatel avaneb võimalus vormi ja sisu kogemise kaudu sünteesida ja korrastada tekstiajas esitatud mittelineaarset, mittejärjestikust informatsiooni. Lugude loomine vajab lugeja kaasosalust. Narratiivi koostab autor, kuid lood saavad sündida ainult lugeja aktiivsel osalusel, sest lugejad vastutavad lõpptulemuse eest, vormides loetud loomaailma.

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Projects

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Publications

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Kogemuslikkus, fenomenoloogia, lugemisteooriad, narratiivteooria, kirjandusteooria, postmodernistlik kirjandus, ajafilosoofia

DISSERTATIONES PHILOLOGIAE ANGLICAE UNIVERSITATIS TARTUENSIS

1. **Kristina Mullamaa.** Towards a dynamic role conception of liaison interpreters: An ethnographic study of self-descriptions of practising liaison interpreters in Estonia. Tartu, 2006.
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