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**„The Seduction of Beginnings:
Gaps and Meaning-making from the Perspectives of
Phenomenology, Reception Theory and Cognitive Theory
in the Short Story Openings of Ursula K. Le Guin”**

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DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I confirm to have conceived and written this MA Thesis in English all by myself. Quotations from other authors are all clearly marked and acknowledged in the bibliographical references, either in the footnotes or within the text. Any ideas borrowed and/or passages paraphrased from the works of other authors have been truthfully acknowledged and identified in the footnotes.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The sound of the language is where it all begins.

*Ursula K. Le Guin*¹

Isn't it interesting how the gaps that readers fill in while reading a fictional text reciprocate, as it were, by filling in the existential gaps in the life of the reader?

Beginnings are seductive, they are wooing. Both within text-worlds and outside. This is, ultimately, how this thesis came into being, following the desire to make meaning of some insights about the nature of this seduction.

Opening lines often have such strong impact that some of them transform into glorious, perpetual sculptures in our minds. Not vanishing, they are memorized by some readers for the rest of their lives. The ways to engage with the *magic* of opening lines are numerous. Søren Kierkegaard's statement offers an initial conceptual approach to this subject, as he writes "[t]here is something seductive in all beginnings because the subject is still free" (253). Significantly, this short statement leads to a consideration of the double meaning of the term "subject", meaning either the agent of an act or the subject matter. Or both? Beyond the numerous approaches that have been suggested regarding the reasons of this seduction, Edward Said's interpretation of beginnings as an achieved discontinuity in a given continuity (32-33) sheds some light both on the power of beginnings and the result of this seduction: It is both complex and paradoxical, making it particularly a promising subject for theoretical, analytical, conceptual and empirical approaches.

Narrative beginnings, despite the power they hold for narrative theory, have been surprisingly neglected, as Brian Richardson notes, on the theoretical level (1). Only a handful of books² have been written on the subject, one of the most outstanding and inspiring works being Edward Said's seminal *Beginnings*.

This lack of theoretical attention is even more surprising given that almost all references in this handful of publications, with the exception of some canonical

¹ *Craft* 1.

² For a detailed account, see the first page of Chapter 1.

beginnings such as John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, refer to novels. This indicates both the hegemony of the *novel* as a genre and the difficulty the *short story* has faced in receiving credits as a genre worthy of theoretical consideration in the past century.

It is in such a landscape that this thesis combines these two theoretically underestimated and under-theorized subjects. It investigates the inherent relation between gaps and meaning-making processes by drawing on theories from philosophy (Phenomenology), narrative theory (Reception Theory), and cognitive sciences (Cognitive Theory). Each theory chapter is complemented by an analytical section, demonstrating how each theoretical approach can be applied to opening lines in practice. To do so, I analyse several selected short story openings by Ursula K. Le Guin. Her meritorious use of language as a short story writer, and, in the background, her perpetual stress on the value of imagination, which in the context of the filling-in activity of the reader is a merging point, have played determining roles in this decision.

Meaning-making – regarded here as the principle underlying mechanism in reading literature – and narrative gaps – approached here, within a more detailed account, in terms of phenomenology, ontology, hermeneutics, reception theory and cognitive theory – are so closely related to gap-filling that dealing with gaps in understanding the world is, indeed, an everyday activity for the human mind (Spolsky qtd. in Auyoung 65). Susanne Reichl describes meaning-making as something the reader is actively involved with and therefore a constructive cognitive activity (16), a definition that encompasses the gap-filling activity of readers during meaning-making.

Gaps, as the object of the activity of filling-in, are thus indivisible elements of the meaning-making process. In this thesis, the definition of gaps refers both to the word-meaning level and to the advanced level of interpretation regarding the context of the story, such as inferring relations between situations and characters as well as deducing more assumptions, e.g., about a character, than the text concretely mentions. Within this context, in particular “deceptively unremarkable” opening lines are dense with narrative gaps and meaning-making processes, being the first steps in the intentional production of meaning (Richardson 5).

With respect literature, Roman Ingarden claims that literary works of art as intentional objects, in contrast to actual objects, contain “blanks” and “ontologically irremovable

places of indeterminacies” which cannot be fully realized and thus contain potentials of meaning (249). Wolfgang Iser, further refining the work of Ingarden in Reception Theory, argues that “[...] one text is potentially capable of several different realizations, and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential, for each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his own way, thereby excluding the various other possibilities” (*Reader* 280). Cognitive Theory (CT), on the other hand, recognizes gaps not only in texts but essentially in all human consciousness (Dennett qtd. in Bernaerts et al. 3), bringing a complementary aspect to the discussion.

The view that narratives come into being only as a result of the interaction between minds and narrative gaps seems to be agreed on by theorists of both the mind and of narrative. It leads to decisive insights about the significance and role of gaps: “[T]he construction and interpretation of narratives as coherent wholes paradoxically require gaps, empty spaces, and hidden information” (Bernaerts et al. 3). While these gaps refer to the “gappy” nature of consciousness as such, Schema Theory, which is based on the gestalt principles, specifies the filling-in process and thus provides a more concrete approach to analysis.

Regarding the analytical process, it is critical to decide where the opening lines of a given narrative end, i.e. how much text to include. While this decision inevitably includes a subjective element, it should rely on certain narratological considerations. In the present thesis, the emergence of an initial frame for the rest of the story is taken as a criterion: In other words, analysis of the initial lines continues until a basic frame based on the relevancy for the rest of the story is achieved on the textual level. In the case of Ursula Le Guin’s short stories under investigation, this procedure yields approximately three to five sentences as ‘opening lines’.

Regarding my choice of terminology, I use ‘meaning-*making*’ for its reference to the reader’s active role in achieving a meaning, as opposed to its quasi-synonyms ‘interpreting’, ‘understanding’, ‘comprehending’ and at times ‘reading’, all of which are used by different theorists discussing in the thesis. Another remark on the use of words is related to the ‘openings’ and ‘beginnings’: They are used synonymously and interchangeably. Similarly, the term ‘filling-out’ is used as a synonym to ‘filling-in’ by Ingarden, a minor variation that appears during theory writings.

Finally, to offer an outline of the chapters: The first chapter of the thesis offers extended information regarding opening lines and the genre of the *short story*. Starting with a focus on the art of story-telling that goes back to ancient times, the time-taking acknowledgement of the short story and the genre's principle elements are introduced, followed by a section on how genre influences the meaning-making process. The second sub-section offers some conceptual insights into the term 'beginnings', followed by sub-sections on prose and short story beginnings, the narrative power of beginnings, and a typological overview of beginnings. A final section focuses on Ursula K. Le Guin and her short stories as well as her resistance to 'genre-tification'.

The second chapter, a philosophical perspective on the question of gaps, focuses on Roman Ingarden as a key theorist, for his merging of phenomenology and literature, and on his teacher Edmund Husserl, for the principles of phenomenology he contributed to Ingarden's approach. Ingarden, working on the ontology of literary works and the phenomenology of the reading experience, remains a significant influence on the study of gaps and meaning-making: beyond his influence on the emergence of Reception Theory. In the words of Bernaerts et al., "[b]efore the emergence of narratology and cognitive theory, Ingarden's discussion of the textual organization and the readerly filling out of blanks already deals with issues taken up by recent cognitive approaches" (5). His unique theory regarding gaps and meaning-making comprises the concepts of "spots of determinacies", "concretization" and "filling-out". The theoretical discussions are followed by a demonstration of how this particular theory can be applied in analysis, using the opening lines of the short story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas".

The third chapter covers Reception Theory, which is informed by the principles of hermeneutics and phenomenology but most remarkably by the theories of Ingarden (Holub 14). Besides Ingarden, the emergence of Reception Theory or RT is linked to Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Having first reviewed these precursors, Wolfgang Iser's and Hans-Robert Jauss' theoretical contributions are discussed. Significantly, Reception Theory foregrounds not only the discussion of the multiplicity of meaning but also the insight that "it is the unwritten part that gives us the opportunity to picture things; indeed without the elements of indeterminacy, the gaps in the text, we should not be able to use our imagination" (Iser, *Reader* 283). In describing the meaning-making process, Iser establishes the concept of the "implied reader", a model

based on textual evidence rather than on real reader responses (Kafalenos 240), making his approach rather abstract and general in contrast to soon-to-emerge cognitive approaches. Following these basic insights, three key concepts related to Reception Theory are introduced, namely *horizon*, *gestalt* and *schema*. This chapter concludes with the analysis of the opening lines of two stories by Le Guin, i.e. “Brothers and Sisters” and “Unlocking the Air”.

The fourth and last chapter, having introduced CT in historical and definitional terms within its interdisciplinarity field of research, covers basic elements of human cognition within the context of cognitive narratology, referring to memory, pattern recognition and the gappy nature of consciousness in addition to the separate discussions of meaning-making, reading and opening lines. The final theoretical sub-section of the chapter focuses on Schema Theory (ST), which is based on the research of gestalt psychology (Cook 4) and has been used in cognitive narratology to distinguish three schemata types, i.e., language schema, text schema and world schema. With regard to schema, the notion of Schema Refreshment concludes the theoretical part of this chapter. The analytical section of chapter four applies Schema Theory to the openings of five shorty stories by Le Guin: “Half Past Four”, “Ether, OR”, “Imaginary Countries”, “Texts”, and “The Diary of the Rose”.

In the Conclusion, I reflect on the results of the use of these theories on the short story openings by Le Guin and the research question.

2. OPENING LINES and the SHORT STORY

It is nothing new to say that all utterance is erotic in some sense, that all language shows the structure of desire at some level. Already in Homer's usage, the same word (mnaomai) has the meaning 'to give heed, to make mention' and also the meaning 'to court, to woo, be a suitor.' Already in Ancient Greek myth, the same goddess (Peithö) has charge of rhetorical persuasion and the arts of seduction. Already in earliest metaphor, it is 'wings' or 'breath' that move words from speaker to listener as they move eros from lover to beloved.

Anne Carson³

In the community formed among reader, author, and character, each desires the company of another voice. Each hears in the other the seductive beginning of a new life, an alternative to his own.

Edward Said⁴

If on a winter's night a traveller

Italo Calvino⁵

³ *Eros* 108-109.

⁴ 88.

⁵ Book title by Calvino.

It is surprising that, despite the powerful position opening lines hold for narrative theory and textual analysis, only few books and papers have been written on this subject.⁶ This sense of astonishment is aptly expressed by the narrative theorist Brian Richardson as follows:

The beginning is a foundational element of any narrative, fictional or nonfictional, public or private, official or subversive. The full importance of beginnings, however, has long been neglected or misunderstood and is only recently becoming known. Currently, only a handful of studies address this surprisingly rich and elusive subject. [...] This critical and theoretical neglect is particularly surprising given the power beginnings possess for the act of reading. (1)

Among this “handful” of studies on narrative beginnings, none focus on short story beginnings. By the 1990s there had been so little academic study of the short story genre that the critical shortcomings began to become evident:

At a time when the theory and criticism of literature has achieved an extraordinary level of complexity and specialization, it is curious to find a major literary genre - the modern short story - that has *not* been subjected to the systematic attentions of literary theory. A welcome recent development has been the increase in outlets (including specialist journals) for articles on the genre, but book-length surveys remain scarce, and relatively unsophisticated: where the theory of novel runs to countless volumes, short story theory compromises no more than a handful occasional works from which no developing aesthetics emerges. (Head x)

The fact that it took until 2013 until a writer who writes only short stories was recognized with the Nobel Prize for Literature⁷ is another indication of the late recognition of short story as a major literary genre.

The decision to focus on the opening lines of Ursula K. Le Guin’s short stories challenges the trend of under-recognition on multiple levels. Le Guin, the renowned American author often referred to as America’s greatest living science fiction writer,

⁶ Said’s *Beginnings* (1975) refers to a great deal of interrelated subjects such as origin and beginning, interrelated texts as well as a rich scale of theorists from literary and philosophical fields. A. D. Nuttall’s *Openings* (1992) focuses on canonical beginnings (Dante’s *Commedia*, Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Wordsworth’s *The Prelude*, Virgil’s *Aeneid* etc.) and Peter Child’s *Reading Fiction: Opening the Text* (2001) offers rather an example of textual analysis. *Narrative Beginnings* (2008) edited by Brian Richardson is an insightful and comprehensive work on the subject. There is a simplistic, essayistic, close-reading approach by Terry Eagleton to opening lines in the first chapter of his *How to Read Literature* (2013). Edward James Phelan, a renowned narrative theorist, has also written articles on the subject (e.g. “Beginnings and Endings” in *The Encyclopedia of the Novel*, ed. by Schellinger (1998)).

⁷ The writer in question is Alice Munro. For more information see <https://www.britannica.com/topic-browse/Literature/Nobel-Prize-in-Literature/1>.

has produced notable texts in various genres. Nevertheless, she is known almost exclusively for her fantasy and science fiction novels. The value and reputation of her short stories, as well as her poetry, have often remained obscured by the mainstream success of her novels. This thesis, foregrounding not just the opening lines of short stories, but Le Guin's short stories in particular, aims to create a framework in which these underrated elements are given the central focus.

In the following sections these three subjects - short story, opening lines and Le Guin - will be closely examined.

1.1 In The Beginning Was A Story

There are two generally accepted views related to the emergence of the short story genre: One traces it back to the oral storytelling tradition reflected in such diverse works as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (ca. 8th century BC), Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1387-1400), and Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1348-1353). *One Thousand and One Nights*, the collection of tales belonging to the Arabic oral story telling tradition, transcribed and collected over centuries by scholars and first published in English in 1706, is another powerful example of the storytelling tradition (Wright 46). The art of storytelling shares remarkable characteristics with the modern genre of short story writing. Scheherazade, for example, does not survive simply by telling stories, but by the skill of coaxing a story to its climax and then pausing at just the right moment to achieve maximum suspense. Leading the king to a narrative climax where the king's, and the reader's, primitive wish becomes the desire to know how the story continues is what spares Scheherazade's life for another day. E. M. Forster draws a convincing parallel between the reader and Scheherazade's husband: "We are all like Scheherazade's husband in that we want to know what happens next. That is universal and that is why the backbone of a novel has to be a story" (41). Scheherazade's role remains a significant symbol of the art of storytelling: Harold Bloom, for instance, utilizes Walter Benjamin's Scheherazade reference to describe Le Guin when he observes that "Benjamin once remarked of Kafka's stories that in them, 'narrative art regains the significance it had in the mouth of Scheherazade: to postpone the future.' Le Guin's narrative art, though so frequently set in the future [...] also works to postpone the future" (Bloom 3).

Postponing the future, a valuable quality of a good work of literary prose, is compressed into an even smaller frame in the case of the short story, and thus demands skillful maneuvers in terms of the artistry of the author. Forster consequently argues that a story “can only have one merit, that of making the audience want to know what happens next. And conversely, it can only have one fault: that of making the audience not want to know what happens next” (42).

Pacing and the distribution of details have great significance not only for the art of the novel and short story but for the purpose of art in general. The Russian literary theorist Victor Shklovsky (1893-1984) in his *Theory of Prose* (1925) claims that the fundamental characteristic of art lies intrinsically in prolonging perception, similar to Scheherazade’s life-saving storytelling:

Automatization eats away at things, at clothes, at furniture [...]. If the complex life of many people takes place entirely on the level of unconscious, then it’s as if this life had never been. And so, in order to return sensations to our limbs, in order to make us feel objects, to make a stone feel stony, man has been given the tool of art. The purpose of art, then, is to lead us to a knowledge of a thing through the organ of sight instead of recognition. [...] the device of art makes perception long and “laborious”. (Shklovsky 5-6)

The long and laborious perception Shklovsky refers to, a phenomenological approach in its essence, is particularly condensed during opening lines, and especially in short story opening lines due to the genre’s compactness in form and content when compared to the spacious prose types of novella and novel.

While the first view focuses on stories as stemming from an oral tradition, the second, which is reviewed in the following section, approaches the question from a ‘genre’ perspective, starting with Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Edgar Allan Poe, and moving more specifically to Anton Chekhov, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Ernest Hemingway, and William Faulkner (Wright 46, May 65). It is noteworthy to stress that both of these approaches contain a ‘story’ as their backbone.

1.1.1 Short Story the Genre

The first theoretical writings about stories were produced by writers who themselves wrote stories, such as Edgar Allen Poe, Anton Chekhov, Henry James, Frank O’Connor, and Eudora Welty (Lohafer 3). The folktale theory of Vladimir Propp as well

as earlier works of formalists such as Shklovsky, Boris Tomashevsky, and Boris Eikhenbaum contributed significantly to the evolution and definition of short story theory (Lohafer 4).

In his essay on the problems of defining the short story, Norman Friedman summarizes the results of Helmut Bonheim's analysis of six hundred short stories by observing:

With regard to the manner of opening a story, Bonheim finds that techniques of anteriority and the use of pronouns without referents occur more frequently in the short story than in the novel, which simply means, as others have noted, that the short story tends to begin close to the end. (Friedman 18)

The fact that the short story begins closer to the end also relates to the compactness of the genre, as mentioned in the previous section. There are multiple definitions of the short story: Lohafer narrows down the basic, definitive characteristics of the literary short story to compression, economy, and tension (5). Friedman, agreeing with Charles May, claims that

the short story is short because it deals with a special, brief sort of experience and that this experience is most suited to the short story. He [*May*] is referring to the fleeting moment of mythic perception when the mystery of life breaks through our mundane perception of reality — in short, epiphany. (Friedman 22).

Friedman, in a parallel line of deduction, mentions Anthony Burgess's definition, which identifies the short story with "revelation", and novel with "resolution" (22). Unlike in novels, character development is not part of the short story framework, which opens up space for revelation purposes.

The combination of a short form with the essential "revelation" element of short-story-telling potentially invites a dense opening as well as a dense whole. The density element, which may also consist of unstated feelings and silences that contribute to a 'gappy' quality, has been described thus:

It is the degree and nature of the reticence conveyed by the short story at its best that give the genre its own decorum, a tactfulness consisting of respect for silences or unstated feelings, and displaying itself formally in the "artful compromise" by which, Henry James proposed, the "space-hunger and space-cunning" of a writer's material can be "kept down". [...] In many of the stories

presented in this study as attaining a “rich effect”, silence is of paramount significance. (Valerie Shaw qtd. in Rohrberger 42-43)

Shaw, then, concludes that a short story’s success in fact is related to conveying a sense of the unwritten, or even the unwritable (Rohrberger 43).

Short story writing necessitates an exacting craft, as much should be ‘revealed’ in a short time. Narratological elements such as syntax, rhythm, and sentence length play heightened roles in the construction of a short story. Harold Bloom’s comment on Le Guin’s writing therefore gains even greater significance in this context: “Le Guin seems never to have written a wrong or bad sentence” (Bloom 2).

1.1.2 The Genre Effect

*For Sale: Baby shoes, never worn.*⁸

Depending on which genre a reader engages with - poetry, novel, theater play, short story -, the reader’s preconceptions regarding that particular genre shape their meaning-making process prior to and during reading. A key experiment conducted by Suzanne Hunter Brown successfully highlights this:

The only thing on a common-sense level that distinguishes novel reading from short story reading is that the reader is bound to recall more of the details in the short story than in the novel, mainly because of the way memory works in relation to quantity and duration. And all that we can logically deduce from this fact is that each detail will therefore carry more weight in the short story. Suzanne Hunter Brown’s essay on “Tess” experiments with this deduction. She takes an ostensibly detachable portion of the novel *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* and compares the reading of it as if it were an independent short story with the reading of it in its novelistic context. Her conclusion is that the reader sees the same text differently in these two instances. (Friedman 25)

According to this experiment, which attempts to measure possible perceptive and cognitive differences between reading a novel and a short story, it appears that perception is distinctly shaped both by the conceptions the reader has regarding the genre and by the length of the text. Friedman also underlines that in the case of short story, “[s]ince the end is pushed closer to the beginning, each sentence carries a special urgency and calls for a higher level of attention” (27). Consequently, beginning

⁸ A renowned six-worded “flash fiction” whose authorship, although claimed to be Ernest Hemingway, is unsubstantiated.

a reading process closer to the end impacts the reception of the work, and therefore on the meaning-making process, causes the reader to be more alert. As Lohafer observes, “[r]eaders of short fiction are the most ‘end-conscious’ of readers” (Lohafer qtd. in Rohrberger 44). Regarding the genre effect, Bittner reviews the approaches that rightfully draw analogies between the notion of purpose and genre. “The most important principle in any genre” says Darko Suvin - the renowned science fiction critic and a theorist on cognitive enstrangement -:

following the logic of Aristotle and more recent theorists like R. S. Crane, E . D. Hirsch, Jr., and Claudio Guillen: “is its *purpose*, which is to be inferred from the way the genre functions.” According to Hirsch, the notion of purpose, “the most important unifying and discriminating principle in genres,” is similar to an Aristotelian final cause. It is “an entelechy, a goal seeking force [...]” Because definite meanings become associated with different literary forms, even to the point of becoming virtually identical with them, we “naturally” expect certain specific meanings when we encounter well established conventions and usages. When a story begins “once upon a time,” we “naturally” form a whole system of expectations, which are in a sense the genre itself. [...] Genre is, in Hirsch’s words, “an anticipated sense of the whole.” (Suvin qtd. in Bittner 6-7)

This approach, by illustrating the way in which genre creates “a whole system of expectations” in the reader, is highly significant in that it indicates that genre is an intrinsic part of the meaning-making process. The reader does not begin to read a short story or a novel in a *tabula rasa* state of reception; on the contrary, they do so in an *a priori* state in which one’s meaning-making process moves towards a holistic system of relations, assumptions, and expectations. Chapter 3, which covers Reception Theory, will examine the notion of “preconception” adopted by Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Reception theorists, as well as the concept of “gestalt”, which are closely related to this issue.

1.2 BEGINNINGS

This section, following an initial conceptual insight into the term “beginning”, will focus on opening lines in fictional prose, the narrative power they possess, and a general topology of opening lines.

1.2.1 Before the Big Bang

The previously mentioned fact that the meaning-making process begins, owing to preconceptions and expectations, prior to reading the opening lines demands a wider understanding of the term *beginnings* as well. Edward Said, in his seminal book *Beginnings*, shares a similar line of argumentation with Richardson about the theoretical neglect on narrative beginnings and refers to the “left behind” treatment of beginnings:

Yet a beginning is often that which is left behind; in speculating about beginnings we sometimes resemble Moliere’s M. Jourdain, acquiring retrospective respect for what we have always done in the regular course of things. Only now, as we ask about beginnings, classifying something as a beginning seems to matter more than before. (Said 29)

Yet, once approached from a definitional aspect, pinpointing a beginning with clear-cut lines is difficult from both receptive (interpretative) and philosophical perspectives. Regarding this challenge, Said notes a resemblance between the terms ‘beginning’ and ‘pronoun’, claiming that due to the “scattered” area (an allusion to the multiplicity of concepts this word covers), a beginning resembles a pronoun due to the various roles it plays at various points in the discourse (39).

The complexity of defining a “beginning has its equivalence in narrative theory in the distinction between *fabula* and *syuzhet*⁹, the details of which are covered in the upcoming section. Regarding the complexity of describing what a beginning is, Said observes that “[a]s a problem, beginnings seem to have a sort of detachable abstraction, but unlike an idea about which one thinks at some distance from it, a beginning is already a project under way” (13). An analogy can be drawn between being both a “project” and “under way” on the one hand, and being both a noun and a participle on the other. Despite the definitional complexity, an eventual highlight of one powerful characteristic of beginnings, namely of its causing a *discontinuity* in a line, is indicated below:

The beginning as first point in a given continuity has exemplary strength equally in history, in politics, and in intellectual discipline —and perhaps each of these domains preserves the myth of a beginning utopia of some kind as a sign of

⁹ The terms first proposed by the Russian formalists.

distinct identity. To have begun means to be the first to have done something, the first to have initiated a course discontinuous with other courses. [...] The necessary creation of authority for a beginning is also reflected in the act of achieving discontinuity and transfer. (Said 32-33)

This discontinuity is simultaneously a type of continuity given that “[...] man uses language to establish continuity [...]” (Said 38). To offer one encompassing definition, Said’s own definition, in a parallel argument to Saussure, focuses on the factors of *detachment* and *difference*, classifying beginnings into five categories:

A beginning suggests either (a) a time, (b) a place, (c) an object, (d) a principle, or (e) an act - in short, detachment of the sort that establishes distance and difference between either a, b, c, d, or e on the one hand and what came before it on the other. (42)

These categories are constructed according to the difference they maintain to other categories as well as to what came before them. Here, according to Hillis Miller, emerges a grounded paradox that every beginning has: “a new story must be based on ‘something solidly present and preexistent, some generative source of authority,’ but that antecedent foundation ‘needs in turn some prior foundation, in an infinite regress’” (Miller qtd. in Richardson 70).

Cuddy-Keane expresses that “[c]onceptually, beginning inevitably suggests something different and new, just as the material book implies a separate object with integrity of its own” (96). However, how ‘new’ is a beginning? As Virginia Woolf writes “[b]ooks descend from books as families from families” (Moment 106) and, similarly, in *A Room of One’s Own*: “[...] masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice” (106), underlining the heredity factor in the emergence of ‘new’ works.

Peter Childs, on the other hand, approaches the paradoxical question of beginnings from a strikingly plain aspect, which nevertheless captures to the socio-cultural aspect:

Furthermore, there is an added complication with ‘beginnings’ because everything comes from something else; the first pages of books often allude to other books, refer to incidents outside and antecedent to their own narratives, and draw extensively on the author’s reading. The first pages always necessarily refer to pre-existing ideas, understandings and beliefs, such that, though they are in many ways beginnings in terms of the bound and printed

book, they are also both produced and consumed within specific socio-cultural and linguistic communities. (Childs 2)

Consequently, it can be concluded that a beginning does not have a *tabula rasa* nature; it is unavoidably and inherently dependent on a dialogue with the previous.

1.2.2 Prose and Short Story Beginnings

*First line has to make your brain race that's how Homer does it,
that's how Frank O'Hara does it, why
at such a pace
Muses*

Anne Carson¹⁰

Italo Calvino, in *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* (1979), composes a *novel* that consists of only the beginning parts of various novel concepts. The narrator reflects upon the charm of the first lines:

The romantic fascination produced in the pure state by the first sentences of the first chapter of many novels is soon lost in the continuation of the story: it is the promise of a time of reading that extends before us and can comprise all possible developments. I would like to be able to write a book that is only an *incipit*, that maintains for its whole duration the potentiality of the beginning, the expectation still not focused on an object. (Calvino 177)

The narrator then questions the way to actualize this desire: “But how could such a book be constructed? Would it break off after the first paragraph? Would the preliminaries be prolonged indefinitely? Would it set the beginning of one tale inside another, as in the *Arabian Nights*?” (Calvino 177). Calvino’s narrator desires for a state of perception in which *the-expectation-still-not-focused-on-an-object* is ‘preserved’, and this desire finds an attempt of realization in a concept of composing only the beginning parts of narratives.

Analogous to Calvino’s narrator, the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard’s link to beginnings is that “[t]here is something seductive about all beginnings, because the subject is still free” (Kierkegaard 253). It is no coincidence that both Calvino and

¹⁰ *Decreation* 89.

Kierkegaard, in their formulations related to the seduction of beginnings, choose to use the term “still”. Time, in the special case of beginnings, is exceptionally significant because the identity of beginnings is greatly dependent on the time framing it. As a matter of fact, it is a matter of time that a beginning is not a beginning anymore. The term “subject” in the above-cited phrase “because the subject is still free” can be interpreted in two ways: the first being the ‘subject matter’ - e.g. the plot -, the second being the person as an agent of an act - e.g. the reader. During opening lines in a literary text the subject, in both meanings, is in an arrival process at a time, a setting, a plot, and a stylistics. The ‘still-freeness’ of beginnings is not a zero moment: in the particular case of the reading experience of opening lines, it alludes to the unparalleled situation in which, due to the narrative insufficiencies, principle narrative elements such as characters, plot, and point of view are not *yet* definite. In this relation, opening lines’ consisting of various narrative gaps “encourage[s] nonlinear development, relations of adjacency, and a movement toward dispersion” (Richardson 13).

1.2.2.1 The Narrative Power of Opening Lines

Opening lines are non-metaphorically the key part of a narrative to such an extent that the literary historian Stephen Greenblatt’s research on the beginning of the Bible provides an interesting beginning. The host of the American radio program *Bookworm*, Michael Silverblatt, in a conversation with Greenblatt on his recent book *The Rise and Fall of Adam and Eve* (2017), questions the art of beginning a story and the beginning story of the Bible. As the author explains himself, the Bible may not have begun with the Adam and Eve story initially but is structured like this for it is an archaic story - meaning that once you hear you never forget -, thus makes a better beginning, acknowledging the archaic power of beginnings: The interesting thing is that the Hebrews decided to put not the Abraham story at the beginning of their sacred book, but to put the Adam and Eve story. [...] There is the widespread scholarly belief that (Chapters 2 and 3) the story of naked men and women, was earlier than what was written in Chapter 1” (Silverblatt 01:21 - 05:17).

This insight reveals a great deal about the strategical position of the opening lines of any narration. Said’s comment on this, from the perspective of writerly craft, is that “[e]very writer knows that the choice of a beginning for what he will write is crucial not only because it determines much of what follows but also because a work’s beginning

is, practically speaking, the main entrance to what it offers" (3). Indeed, opening lines' intertwined nature with "intention"¹¹ is a genre related-indicator, which of course is highly preliminary in the meaning-making process: "[...] the designation of a beginning generally involves also the designation of a consequent intention. The beginning, then, is the first step in the intentional production of meaning" (Said 5).

Where do opening lines obtain this potent from? The nonlinear development that beginnings encourage¹² and the "discontinuity" they bring¹³ have been mentioned before, regarding the power of narrative beginnings. Said, merging these two qualities, further comments on the "discontinuity" quality of beginnings interrupting linearity as such:

Thus whatever work is in fact produced suffers from radical uncertainty at the beginning; it is highly unconventional; it possesses its own inner dynamic; it is a constantly experienced but strangely impalpable whole partially revealing itself in individual works; it is haunted by antecedence, difference, sameness and the future. (226-227)

Thus, the "radical uncertainty" which is bound to a plurality of hypothetical developments in the narrative - a similarity to Miller's afore-mentioned "paradox of beginnings"¹⁴ and to Kierkegaard's "the subject is still free" - is where opening lines draw their potential of seduction for the reader. Ontological, literary theoretical, and cognitive gaps as integral elements of this uncertainty will be approached in three theory chapters.

From narratological standpoint, in the context of openings, the subjects of *syuzhet* (or *sjuzhet*) and *fabula*, *paratext* – including titles -, and *point of view* will be discussed. Richardson's theory of what constitutes the beginning of a narrative proposes three distinct sorts of beginnings:

[...] one in the narrative (*syuzhet*), one in the story as reconstructed from the text (*fabula*), and one in the prefatory and framing material provided by the author that circumscribes the narrative proper (authorial antetext). There is also what may be called an "institutional antetext" that frames (or attempts to frame) the book before it is read. (113)

¹¹ See Bittner reference in the section The Genre Effect.

¹² See Richardson referring to Said's theory of beginnings in the section Prose and Short Story Beginnings.

¹³ See Said in the section Before the Big Bang.

¹⁴ See Miller in the section Before the Big Bang.

As Richardson later states, there is no ambiguity related to the syuzhet, “it is the first page of the narrative proper” (113). Although he is right in claiming that syuzhet (in comparison to fabula) is easier to pinpoint as it is place-bound, the clear-cut definition of syuzhet to the ‘first page’ of the narrative proper is nevertheless a vexingly vague approach. It is certainly the first lines of the narrative; yet, framing it with the first page, which also essentially varies according to book editions, is not a reasonable measurement. Additionally, the first page of a short story and the first page of a novel, in terms of the narrative development, cannot be equalized either, meaning that a page as an evaluation measurement can neither be unified for all genres nor for individual works. Fabula, which can appear at different stages in the narrative, is the ‘story’ level of the narrative (Neemann 158). It can take place simultaneously with syuzhet as well as at a later part. Antetext seems to be another terminology for paratext in Richardson’s terms, which is approached below.

Paratext is another narratological element intrinsic to opening lines: Gerard Genette, famously, takes the paratext as the means by which a text makes “a book of itself” (Richardson 12), referring to the authority it preserves. “A book of itself”, nonetheless, is essentially a novel-centered consideration. Short stories, similar to poems and unlike novels, have the tradition and length-related availability to be published, e.g., in literary journals and various other forms prior to “a book of itself” publication. Their presence does not, as the novels’, depend on or correspond to an autonomous book concept with front and back covers.

The paratext Genette refers to has a factual paratextual element dimension such as author’s age, gender, race, sexual orientation, etc., comprising two sub-categories: peritext (preface, titles, postscripts) and epitext (interviews, essays, correspondence). According to Genette there never existed a text without a paratext (Richardson 12).

Titles are one of the most outstanding paratextual elements receiving theoretical interpretations. Peter Rabinowitz stresses how different titles create different expectations; while Jacques Derrida opposes the demarcation of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ with an analysis on the term “frame”, and instead hybridizes inside and outside as a frame which is “an outside which is called to the inside of the inside in order to constitute it as inside”; Jerrold Levinson thinks of titles as an *essential* part of an artwork, John Fischer sees the purpose of titles in acting as a hermeneutical guide for

interpretation, and lastly, in Hazard Adams's terms, a title is at the same time a synecdoche of the work, a gestalt perspective, and a token of authorial power (Richardson 12, 13). Titles, as the first lexical items that readers face, are highly effective in framing the text, creating expectations, and thus in the initial shaping of meaning.

Point of view (PoV), as the last narrative element to underline in the context of openings, entails meaning-determining qualities by positioning reader's perception to a certain angle. It can be seen as a contract the reader makes with the narrative: A narrative begins and progresses with PoV.

The typology of PoV shows varieties: Boris Uspenskii, i.e., divides them into four distinct levels – ideological, phraseological, spatiotemporal, psychological –, while Norman Friedman has an eight-term classification (Prince 442, 443). In my analysis section, I will not apply an in-depth analysis of PoV, therefore my choice has been to use the classical, frequently cited categorization as distinguished by Franz Stanzel: third-person omniscient narration (authorial), third-person narration (the personal or figural), and the first-person narration (Prince 443).

PoV also refers to the distance and emotional interaction between the reader and the text. Peter Stockwell asserts that “[c]haracters that are directly presented (where the reader is presented with the direct viewpoint of or on the character) are likely to generate a closer connection than characters which are presented indirectly, where the readerly gaze is averted or distracted by other prominent features or other characters” (109). This definitely has an effect on the speed and the intensity of ‘reading in’ the character's mind, thus might offer a fast connection with the character (110), which, naturally plays a role in the meaning-making process.

1.2.2.2 *A Typology of Beginnings*

James Phelan stresses that generalizations about how *novels* begin or end, depending on a particular period, are difficult to establish (97). The theoretical material on types of beginnings is further limited to the genre novel. A functionalist approach to beginnings for the sake of grouping and coherence has the significant risk of overlooking diversity. Nevertheless, there are some categorizations made on the foregrounding types of

beginnings, based unsurprisingly on the beginnings of novels. In this section a brief overview on these classified types will be given.

Cuddy-Keane sees opening lines, as an “unknown, alien space” for which the reader should prepare: “[...] beginning a book means entering into an unknown, alien space, and most narrative beginnings consequently focus on techniques for providing an introduction or initiating the reader (immediately, or gradually) into both story and discourse in the text’s first words” (96). This explains some of the ‘introductory’ opening traditions before modernism.

In the history of literature, there have been prototypes of both introductory as well as ‘sudden’ opening lines. Richardson offers a brief overview, starting with a *non-chronological* beginning that challenges the fixed beginning point in the story (fabula) as in *Tristram Shandy* (1759-1767) by Laurence Sterne (2). A common, ancient art of beginning is ‘*in medias res*’, which opens into the middle of an action, famously as in the *Iliad*. Another type of beginning, a *linear* beginning, with its chronologically ordered line of narration, has an opposite structure to the reversed line of narration of an *in medias res* opening.

Before the rise of modernism, most authors framed the opening of their texts by creating a sense of beginning as in Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones* (1749), in which the first two chapters serve as a prelude (Richardson 4), an example of what Cuddy-Keane refers to as a technique of providing an introduction. One of the common types of beginnings in the 19th century has been identified as an ‘externalized view’ by Richardson, where the omnipotence of the perspective is withheld, as in Turgenev’s *On the Eve* (1859), and another common type in that century is the rather direct access to a depicted character, with a focus on a single person, as in William Thackeray’s *Pendennis* (1850) (4).

These generalized approaches take a different turn with the arrival of modernism. Modernist texts begin with seemingly random opening lines into the middle of an action, which often seems like an ‘ordinary’ beginning with no conflict, exactly like Mrs. Dalloway’s deciding to buy flowers herself (Richardson 4-5). Phelan similarly mentions the focus on one character with some exceptions:

Modernist novels unlike their predecessors, it might be said, typically begin by plunging the audience inside the consciousness of a single protagonist. But exceptions abound: on the one hand, Jane Austen’s *Persuasion* (1818), hardly

a modernist novel, quickly takes us into Sir Walter Elliot's consciousness, while E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924) opens with the heterodiegetic narrator's description of the city Chandrapore. (97)

Beginnings can be opened with internal monologues as well as external descriptions, including classic landscape portrayals. Flashbacks and stream of consciousness are part of the internal narrative perspective.

In postmodern narratives, the opening of texts often contains a "paradoxical manner", as with Samuel Beckett's "Birth was the death of him" in *Fizzles* (1976) or the narrator of Flann O'Brien's early proto-postmodern text *At Swim-Two-Birds* (1939) stating that "[o]ne beginning and one ending was a thing I did not agree with" (Beckett and O'Brien qtd. in Richardson 5). Deconstructive, unnatural, and unconventional beginnings can be regarded as other possible motives for beginnings in the postmodern narrative period.

As to Le Guin's short story openings used in this thesis, if a categorizational initiation is necessary, they definitely do not show evident qualities of postmodernism, and can be regarded as texts of the modernist period. The openings vary among classical, external descriptions (e.g. "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas") as well as right-into-the scene beginnings (e.g. "Imaginary Countries", "Ether, OR", "Brothers and Sisters").

1.3 URSULA K. LE GUIN: SHORT STORIES vs. GENRE-TIFICATION

[...] as great scientists have said and as all children know, it is above all by the imagination that we achieve perception, and compassion, and hope.

*Ursula K. Le Guin*¹⁵

I found the country, drew the map [...]

*Ursula K. Le Guin*¹⁶

¹⁵ *Language* 58.

¹⁶ *Earth* iii.

Ursula K. Le Guin (1929-2018), among the most respected and renowned contemporary American writers, although mostly known for her feminist, Taoist, and political SF as well as her fantasy books¹⁷, has indeed written myriads of poems, short stories, librettos, essays and pieces of literary criticism, as well as children's stories and screenplays. Having produced works of great imaginative and critical power on such a broad scale of literary fields, Le Guin, in an interview, reacts to being categorized as a SF author by stating that she prefers to be known as a "novelist" instead of a "SF writer", and mentions her wish to be discussed in literary rather than genre terms (Phillips). Related to the invention and application of genres to make life easy for lazy readers, lazy critics, and sales departments (Le Guin, *Outer* vii), the author expresses her misfit, or rather the system's essential misfit: "[...] the whole vocabulary — "realism", "science fiction," "genre fiction," and the rest of it — doesn't give even a remotely adequate description of what I write. Or of what many other serious writers are writing. We need a whole new discourse on fiction" (*Outer* x).

Thematically, Le Guin often works with subjects that have alternative political extensions: Gender, sexuality, nature, religion and ethnography are some of the major themes underlying her work. Possibly the most significant key term encompassing all these remarkable issues is the striking quality of 'imagination' she merges these subjects with. This inescapably leads to frequently uttered literary statements such as "[i]t wouldn't surprise me if future literary critics read Le Guin as an important ancestor, the writer who brought imagination into realist American literature" (Phillips).

For the purpose of the central question of this thesis, which focuses on the relationship between gaps and meaning-making process within the space of opening lines, without limiting the investigation to a specific genre, Le Guin, under whose name works of a broad range of genres are to be found, possesses a nonpareil exemplary value. Independent of whether one is reading one of Le Guin's works of realistic or unrealistic fiction, her highly remarkable writing skills present narrative structures at a surprising and engaging pace of telling.

Le Guin narrates her short stories on a thin line between a quasi-real world and some place more imaginary. Her fame as a "SF author", as a paratextual element,

¹⁷ Three of her most renowned SF and fantasy works: *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), *The Dispossessed* (1974), and the *Earthsea* volumes (1968, 1970, 1972, 1990 and 2001).

nevertheless plays an influential role in the reading experience by causing expectations related to the image the reader will likely have formed of her.

In relation to the 'imaginary' landscape she has, e.g., constructed for her Orsinian short stories – some of the stories she included in the two volume collection used as primary source for this work are from *Orsinian Tales* (1976) -, she stresses the point of an “in-between line”: “Orsinia was the way, lying between actuality, which was supposed to be the sole subject of fiction, and the limitless realms of the imagination. I found the country, drew the map [...]” (*Earth* iii).

In the fiction of Le Guin, there is not only a fusion of genres, but also of disciplines. Bittner explains this as follows: “Le Guin uses different genres; but in another sense, those genres are merely distinct, though not radically different, constellations of moulds of understanding. [...] Just as artist and historian in Le Guin collaborate in *Orsinian Tales*, artist and scientist work together in her science fiction” (Bittner 34).

In this regard, the potential of not exactly knowing - and occasionally not being able to classify it easily either - what one may encounter in a Le Guin text - realistic vs. imaginary, scientific vs. mythical - has the unrivalled trait of a reading experience concerning the expectations of the reader. Bloom underlines this quality of reading Le Guin by stating that she “achieves a kind of sensibility very nearly unique in contemporary fiction. It is the pure storyteller’s sensibility that induces in the reader a state of uncertainty, of *not knowing what comes next*” (Bloom 2). The ever-circulating interactive relationship among literature, science, and philosophy, as the underlying structure throughout this thesis, is thus examined in the works of an author whose works similarly do not treat these subjects separately.

By producing works on a wide scale of genres, Le Guin not only challenges the comfort-zone expectations of the conservative reader but also the common categorization and labeling of texts attitude, frequently to one selected field. The fact that in the case of Le Guin it is difficult to foresee in which direction¹⁸ the narrative

¹⁸ Referring mainly to realistic and non-realistic modes as well as varying sub-layers related to anthropology, politics, and taoism among others.

might proceed - and it often proceeds in multiple directions - contributes to the quality of “openness” of her texts, a trait Umberto Eco also alluded to.¹⁹

In 2012, Le Guin published a two-volume collection of her short stories under the title of *The Unreal and the Real: Selected Stories*, sorted and divided by Le Guin herself. The first volume, *Where on Earth*, is *closer* to a realistic mode, while the second one *Outer Spaces, Inner Lands* is *closer* to science fiction. The key term here is ‘closer’, blurring the clear categorizations. Le Guin, in the introduction to the first volume, foresees the possible trouble and warns that “[s]ome people will identify the first volume as ‘mundane’ and the second as ‘science fiction,’ but they will be wrong. All the science-fiction stories are in the second volume, but not all the stories in the second volume are science fiction by any definition” (Le Guin, *Earth* ii). Similarly, the first four stories in the first volume are ‘realistic’ stories *but* located in an Eastern European country called “Orsinia”. During the selection, Le Guin, in addition to the criteria of ‘Do I really like this story a lot?’, decided to consider the ‘overshadow’ factor. She underlines that “[l]uck, fashion, literary awards, and other uncontrollable factors play a part in when and whether a story gets noticed” and stresses that she decided to include some stories partly to bring them back to light (Le Guin, *Earth* ii).

The opening lines used in the analysis parts of this thesis are all from this two-volume short story selection by Le Guin. More specifically, with the exception of one story, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas”, all take place in the first volume.

¹⁹ Umberto Eco (*The Open Work*, 1962, rev. 1976 – English translation 1989).

2 THE ONTOLOGY of GAPS in the PHENOMENOLOGY of READER EXPERIENCE

The beginning is not fictive. It cannot be placed in the control of a writer or reader. We should note that the Greek verb 'to read' is anagnoskein, a compound of the verb 'to know' (gignoskein) and the prefix ana, meaning 'again'. If you are reading, you are not at the beginning.

Anne Carson²⁰

Perhaps our question -Where are we when we think?- was wrong because by asking for the topos of this activity, we were exclusively spatially oriented -as though we had forgotten Kant's famous insight that "time is nothing but the form of inner sense, that is of the intuition of ourselves and of our inner state.

Hannah Arendt²¹

The unread story is not a story; it is little black marks on wood pulp. The reader, reading it, makes it live: a live thing, a story.

Ursula K. Le Guin²²

²⁰ *Eros* 152

²¹ *201*

²² *Edge* 198

From the late 18th and early 19th century onwards, a growing separation occurs among the disciplines, leading them both to institutionalization and homogenous structures. What Terry Eagleton later describes as “a myopic obsession with categorizing facts” related to the rise of rigid positivism of that era (47) is perfectly portrayed by Jonathan Swift in *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726). In the “Voyage to Laputa” chapter of the novel, Lemuel Gulliver visits an island — the floating island —, where he encounters a scientist whose skin, having been extracting sunbeams from cucumbers in the last eight years, appears to have transformed to the same pale color as his work shirt. Swift’s satire was a brilliant, early signal of time’s progression towards those “myopic” ages of positive sciences to come, which Edmund Husserl would later on, try to overcome with his foundation of the phenomenological method. Marjorie Nicholson, in her remarkable works on microscope and English imagination, as well as science and imagination, asserts that the Lilliput and Brobdingnag chapters would not be able to be written before the invention of microscope (and telescope), which opened the prospect of smaller and larger worlds in mind (Nicholson qtd. in Tippet 51), an example for the inevitable cause-and-effect relation between science and literature. This significant change, resulting in disciplines and science becoming more specialized - as Pol Vandeville argues today -, has ultimately caused us to lose the meaningful connection with works labeled as ‘works of imagination’: This condition, namely the isolation of disciplines’ into rigid and homogeneous frameworks, has had outcomes in literature as well (Vandeville 11); throughout its own institutionalization, literature earned its own share of more clearly defined aesthetic criteria and theories within its own territory of literary criticism and academia. Referring to the previously heterogeneous quality that arts, science, politics and philosophy had in common, the French philosopher Diderot (1713 - 1784) comments:

The wise man was once a philosopher, a poet, and a musician. Those talents degenerated when they were divorced from one another; the sphere of philosophy became narrower; ideas deserted poetry; songs lost their force and energy; and, deprived of these organs, wisdom could no longer speak to the peoples with the same charm. (Diderot qtd. in Vandeville 11)

Nonetheless, the fact that these disciplines within the process of their institutionalization have gained their own, autonomous territory does not and cannot invalidate their hybrid relations to each other. In the context of this study, an interdisciplinary approach that sets up a dialogue amidst *phenomenology*, *literary*

theory and *cognitive science* will be applied, not for the sake of a multi-perspectival methodology per se, but primarily since all three constitute a powerful example of the ever-circulating relationship of literature with non-literary disciplines and vice versa. Literature, in other words, has always inspired, and been inspired by, philosophy and science. The literary work of art, as the object in the framework of this study, will serve as the foundation for understanding the interaction among philosophy, literature and science. This three-dimensional perspective, mirrored in the structure of this study, will help to provide a tangible and encompassing insight into the mechanism of these interactions.

As for Ursula K. Le Guin whose texts are approached by three theories in this thesis, she has not only produced works of different genres but also merged different genres as well as disciplines: “Le Guin uses different genres; but in another sense, those genres are merely distinct, though not radically different, constellations of moulds of understanding. Just as artist and historian in Le Guin collaborate in *Orisnian Tales*, artist and scientist work together in her science fiction” (Bittner 34).

Zooming in for a close-up of the stage that philosophy and literature — in particular phenomenology and literature — share, allows one to observe the common ground of each discipline engaging itself with the same inquiry. Roman Ingarden, the main theoretician of this chapter, is a unique figure for the meeting point between the disciplines of philosophy and literature. The phenomenological quality of literature in the sense that it delves into the deeper levels of the imaginary and offers the experience of these levels through consciousness (Popa 11) is only one, albeit key point that binds these two disciplines together. Phenomenology, expanding into different other disciplines is generally defined as a complex program influencing many fields of knowledge e.g. aesthetics, psychology, psychiatry, ethics, anthropology (Farina 50).

Ingarden, having studied Husserlian phenomenology as a student of him and developed the perspective of phenomenology in a new field, employs the phenomenological toolkit established by Husserl, while developing his own theory of ontological investigations of the literary work of art. This is the reason that the introduction to Husserlian phenomenology above is considered as a necessary point of departure prior to a focus on Ingarden. Robert R. Magliola refers to this intrinsic relationship between Husserl’s phenomenology and the ontology of the literary work by

describing the latter as based upon basic principles of phenomenological epistemology (3).

In the following sub-chapter, having gained a basic understanding of the Husserlian methodology that is the birth of phenomenology, Roman Ingarden's phenomenological approach to the literary work of art will be examined. More specifically, having illustrated his theory regarding the ontological of literary work, concepts of *spots of indeterminacy*, *concretization* and *filling out* will be addressed to.

2.1 PHENOMENOLOGY

The philosopher, as the unpublished works [of Husserl] declare, is a perpetual beginner, which means that he takes for granted nothing that men, learned or otherwise, believe they know.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty²³

2.1.1 Edmund Husserl and Phenomenology

At the dawn of the 20th century, reaching the aftermath of the WWI, phenomenology emerged and was established through the works of the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1858-1938) within the ruins of the positivist era of philosophy in Europe. Rather than a school of unified philosophers, it stemmed from the personal doctrine of Husserl and was transformed within other approaches into various branches such as Realist Phenomenology (Roman Ingarden, Alexander Pfander, Nicolai Hartmann), Existential Phenomenology (Martin Heidegger, Hannah Arendt, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Paul Ricoeur, Jean-Paul Sartre, Emmanuel Levinas), Hermeneutical Phenomenology (Hans-Georg Gadamer), and Transcendental Phenomenology (Oscar Becker, Alfred Schutz).²⁴

Husserl speaks of a philosopher's being a "perpetual beginner"²⁵ (Husserl qtd. in Merleau-Ponty xvi) and similarly of phenomenology being a "philosophy of beginnings"

²³ xv.

²⁴ See e.g. Waldenfelds 11.

²⁵ "The philosopher [...] is a perpetual beginner, which means that he takes for granted nothing that men, learned or otherwise, believe they know. It means also that philosophy itself must

(Husserl qtd. in Smith 3). The term 'beginning', here, refers to the essential question of phenomenology, namely how it is that the world comes into our perception, how consciousness makes any knowledge possible at all. Ingarden, as a disciple of Husserl, also believes that "empirical sciences such as psychology, sociology, and empirical literary research should be founded upon the essential cognition (Wesenserkenntnis, Husserl) of ontology and phenomenology" (Zima 66).

Husserl's own description of phenomenology in the article he prepares for Encyclopedia Britannica (1927) is:

The term 'phenomenology' designates two things: a new kind of descriptive method which made a breakthrough in philosophy at the turn of the century, and an a priori science derived from it; a science which is intended to supply the basic instrument (Organon) for a rigorously scientific philosophy and, in its consequent application, to make possible a methodical reform of all the sciences. (Husserl, "Phenomenology"²⁶)

In this description the term "method" is significant. As seen in the twice-used case of the term "method" within the small descriptive paragraph by Husserl above, phenomenology is a methodological concept rather than a theory. This assertion indicates its applied quality, which leads us to the issue of subject-object relation in Husserl. An interaction and application between phenomenology and literature –and arts- is, essentially possible because phenomenology is always object dependent. Within the integrality of subject-object relationship, the perception is always the perception of something.²⁷ It engages with the mechanisms of perception, comprehension, consciousness, and imagination. Despite the fact that all these subjects are subjective and psychological subjects, Husserl's phenomenology "involves *a switch of interest* – away from the world, and towards our own conscious life in which such a world presents itself to us. Such a redirection of mental focus is not a matter of engaging in psychology, since psychology, too, concerned with what exists in the world" (Smith 3).

not take itself for granted, in so far as it may have managed to say something true; that it is an ever-renewed experiment in making its own beginning; that it consists wholly in the description of this beginning [...]" (Husserl qtd. in Merleau-Ponty xv-xvi).

²⁶ <<https://tr.scribd.com/doc/60798124/Husserl-Encyclopedia-Britannica-Article> >

²⁷ "Vielfach wird behauptet, Phaenomenologie sei eine Methode. Dies trifft nur dann zu, wenn man unter Methode kein neutrals Werkzeug versteht, das auf vorgegebene Sachen anzuwenden ist, sondern buchstaeblich einen Weg, der den Zugang zur Sache eröffneth" (Waldenfelds 30).

The method of Husserl, referred to as Transcendental Phenomenology, is an attempt to investigate the relationship between the mind and the world, between consciousness and comprehension. As a philosophy of knowledge, it is a search for an “objective” explanation to the question of how the world emerges into consciousness.

Nevertheless, a clearly outlined definition of phenomenology is challenging to maintain all the more paradoxical:

[...] because in a question like ‘what is phenomenology?’ it is implicitly assumed the existence of a judging subject remaining outside and separated from the object of investigation. On the opposite one of the first assumptions of phenomenology is that subject and object are linked by an inseparable and original relationship, in the sense that there can be no world without a subject, nor the subject without world. (Farina 50)

Similarly, Said, having commented on the too controversial and too technical nature of Husserl’s course of development, explains which new turn it has contributed to the subject of ‘interpretation’:

Interpretation, a major task in both Husserl’s and Heidegger’s enterprises, is thus committed to a radical undermining of itself, and not only because its goals are pushed further and further forward. For also its point of departure, no longer accepted as “naïve” – that is, as merely given, or “there” - stands revealed to the scrutiny of consciousness; as a result, the point of departure assumes a unique place as philosophy itself, “essentially a science of true beginnings, ... *rhizomata panton*” as well as an example of the science in action. (Said 48-49)

Despite the overall challenge the subject raises against its own description, and the complexity of studying Husserl systematically²⁸, below the focus and priority will be held on Husserl’s closely related, almost intertwined, concepts of consciousness and intentionality, subject-object relationship, phenomenological reduction, time-consciousness and imaginary variations.

2.1.2 Principles of Phenomenology

Initially, in his attempt to achieve objective grounds, Husserl equates the ‘idea’ of philosophy with the idea of “rigorous science”: One of his most seminal works entitled as “Philosophy as Rigorous Science” was published in 1910. More clearly, he claimed

²⁸ “Wie bereits angedeutet, war Husserls schriftstellerische Produktion enorm umfangreich, weshalb es unwahrscheinlich ist, dass jemals eine einzige Person alles, was er schrieb, gelesen oder gar in eine systematische Interpretation einbezogen haben sollte” (Zahavi 2).

that “a commitment to a life of reason for philosophy is nothing other than rationalism through and through” (Husserl qtd. in Smith 4).

Farina puts the complex Husserlian mechanism of objectivity (or “rationalism”) through subjective experience in an accessible formulation:

Facing the limits of scientific knowledge, viewed from a naturalistic and objective point of view, Husserl claims the idea of a rigorous science that allows to understand the cognitive phenomenon in all its complexity, bringing it back to its subjective sources. The intent of Husserl was to recover the original and “pre-reflective” sphere from which scientific knowledge derives; he wanted to rediscover which was the origin of those concepts and categories that science uses without questioning them and without subjecting them to critical analysis; his intent was to free knowledge from false problems created by our habits of thought and language. (52)

In Husserl, the world itself is not mental but is dependent on minds (Simons 39), and this perspective is likely to cause as many ambiguities as various interpretations. It is difficult to reach a unanimous understanding of Husserlian consciousness, but there is agreement at least in what consciousness does not achieve in Husserl: It does “not creat[e] the world in the sense of ‘causing’ it to be” (McKenna 8).

In Husserl, the meaning of a linguistic expression is speaker’s intention related, and this intention should be grasped by the receiver; only then the relationship between the meaning and the individual act of understanding can be achieved (Kertscher 139).

Rigorous-science approach of phenomenology, in other words the objectivity as based on cognitive immanence, a setting particularly favorable for a methodology that does not adopt any psychological or individual-oriented approach in its methodology, is also maintained in Ingarden’s reader experience phenomenology. Ingarden, as will be shown in the subsequent section, retains the “objectivity” trait of a phenomenologist as an epistemologist working on ontology.

2.1.2.1 *Consciousness, Intentionality and Phenomenological Reduction*

Husserl's consciousness, which is a pre-condition for the world's being there for the individual, consists of an intrinsic trait: Intentionality²⁹. Unlike its first possible association, intentionality here does not refer to the conscious act of intending, but to various states of mind. It is famously described as a *constant* consciousness "of" something. It might help for a better understanding, if an emphasis is placed on the term 'constant'. Thus, the necessary separation between the concepts of a deliberate intendedness of mind and, an intrinsic quality of human perception - as a basic term of phenomenology - is underlined. This 'ofness' of something is in Husserl's words *formulated as* "Universally it belongs to the essence of every actional cogito to be consciousness of something" (Husserl, *Ideas* 73)³⁰. Smith interprets this by saying that intending an object (intendedness as another term for 'ofness' of consciousness) means to "mean" an object in ways of perception, memory, thought, anticipation, desire etc. (65). To be "intended" within phenomenological terms is not to be the object of conscious wish: "it is to be constituted, built up, through a series of acts [...]. Intentionality thus characterizes a certain isomorphism between consciousness and its world [...]. It is also the relationship that Merleau-Ponty once described as an "embrace of the world" (Merleau-Ponty qtd. in Butler ix-x).

In the subject matter of directedness, as the next step the ancient subject-object duality in philosophy surfaces, since "directedness" occurs solely between an object and a subject. Object here, in analytical philosophical tradition, signifies an entity occurring to the cognition of a subject. The original sense of object is summarized - through its German equivalence for object 'Gegen-stand' - by referring to anything "becoming" cognized, "becoming" an object to a cognizing subject (Smith 33). Thus a subject is, in a constant state, directed towards something, an entity, a thought, which then might imply that being is in fact 'actualized' through intendedness, and as a result of the nature of intendedness through an object.

As for, phenomenological reduction, phenomenology holds that the perception relying upon previous knowledge instead of experiencing the object anew constitutes an

²⁹ Husserl adopts the term „intentionality“ from Franz Brentano, an Austrian psychologist and philosopher who used the term for the first time (See Zahavi 1).

³⁰ "Allgemein gehört es zum Wesen jedes aktuellen cogito, Bewusstsein von etwas zu sein" (Husserl, *Ideen* 73).

obstacle for perception. This is called “natural attitude”, and a rejection of this attitude is necessary for the phenomenological experience of an object. This attitude can be altered through “phenomenological reduction” or, to use a colloquial term, through leaving the ‘comfort zone’ of perception. Smith formulates this as “turning away of attention from things in the world and towards our subjective experience” (Smith 66).

2.1.2.2 *Time-consciousness and Imaginary Variations*

“Time-consciousness” is another fundamental element of abandoning the natural attitude and constructing the individual objectivity with the temporal time. It is achieved by abandoning the “natural attitude”, which relies on an understanding of an object’s independent existence - taking place within time - (Farber 338).

The concept and understanding of Husserl’s “time-consciousness” is significant for the phenomenology of reading. Farber supplies a visual and simple enough example for this: When we look at a piece of chalk and then, when we close our eyes and open them again, there are two perceptions of the chalk, despite the thought of seeing the very same object. The two experiences of seeing the chalk and of closing the eyes and seeing it in one’s mind do not imply a division on the nature of the object but on experience. In summary, it is a “duration” on the object’s part and a change in the phenomenon, which is to mean that in a very essential way, “the experienced content is objectified and the object is constituted out of the material of the experienced contents through meaningful apprehension” (Farber 339). This approach is present in each moment of a reading experience and makes the reader, symbolically, a great phenomenologist as well as making the text a great source for the experience of the essence of a phenomenological object.

The last key concept to Husserl’s phenomenology, following the purpose of rendering a relevant overview before examining the phenomenology of reader experience, is his “imaginary variation”. The “imaginary variation” includes varieties of constitutions and perspectives, within the temporary and unique quality of time and situation in which the object is approached. Butler reviews the imaginary variations of Husserlian phenomenology as such:

Husserl made clear that it was only through an imaginary experimentation that the essence of the object might be known. Such an experiment of imaginary variation not only takes time, enumerating the variety of perspectives by which an object might be constituted and known, but it also lays out the temporality of the object itself, the sedimentation of its features, the specific time of its unfolding. The object known through imaginary variation is not the same entity as the actual object, and yet the actual object is revealed as a possible permutation or adumbration of the object in the course of its imaginary travels. Thus, the point of such a phenomenological thought-experiment is not to fix the actuality of the object, but to render its actuality into a possibility: to show the contingency of *this* appearance within the temporal horizon of the object as a unity of its own possibilities. (xii)

As seen, “imaginary variations” is very closely related to time consciousness, similar to the intrinsic relationship between consciousness and intentionality. The essence of phenomenology is directed, very clearly, not to a fixation of meaning but to its various possibilities and validities within the temporal quality of time. The point of multiplicity of meanings, “enumeration of the variety of perspectives” is an utterly remarkable notion Husserlian phenomenology introduced to Reader Response Theory, which would later, not only but remarkably in Wolfgang Iser’s theories, be one of the central theory concerns.

Husserl’s phenomenology, towards the middle of the 20th century, became influential most famously on existential phenomenology in Germany and France, but it also influenced, primarily through Roman Ingarden, various literary schools of criticism two of which are Reader Response Theory and the Geneva School of Critics.

Ingarden’s theories of “spots of indeterminacy”, “concretization” and “filling out, which are to be examined in detail in the following sub-chapter, constitute a unique example of the phenomenology and literary theory interaction.

2.2 ROMAN INGARDEN’S ONTOLOGY OF LITERARY WORK and PHENOMENOLOGY OF READING EXPERIENCE

Roman Ingarden’s investigations are renowned, though in a very specific scholarly community, for being one of the first systematic and comprehensive phenomenological accounts of what constitutes a literary work (Vandeveldt 22). He is not only a key theoretician for merging phenomenology and literature but also for foregrounding the cognitive aspects:

Before the emergence of narratology and cognitive theory, Ingarden's discussion of the textual organization and the readerly filling out of blanks, which is a remarkable point of departure in approaching textual gaps - therefore in approaching the concept of meaning making -, already deals with issues taken up by recent cognitive approaches (Bernaerts 5).

Historically, it can be well claimed that Ingarden's phenomenology of reading experience has preceded the discussion of the meaning-making and 'gaps' both for Reception theorists and for cognitive literary studies. He, nevertheless, in his initiation does not include the relativistic and subjective aspects of the meaning-making process.

Roman Ingarden (1893 - 1970), a key figure in developing the phenomenology of the literary work of art, is an unparalleled theoretician within the history of philosophy and literary theory interaction despite his living in the shadow value. In the words of Mitscherling, "[n]o author writing before or after Ingarden has even approached the depth and rigor that we find in his analyses of the ontology of the work of art, and the immense scope of his ontological project remains similarly unique" (137). The concepts Ingarden pioneered in the phenomenology of reading, from a retrospective point of view, played an immense role for the emergence of Reception Theory and indirectly future cognitive approaches, as Ingarden insistently kept the focus on the intrinsic qualities of the literary work and the cognition (reception) of it.

The work of literature, according to Ingarden, is phenomenologically given as something transcendent, but not in a straightforward way. Levin elaborates on in his foreword to Ingarden:

It is an entity that has, to begin with, a certain physical reality, since it is a syntactic construction of word sounds. But, the literary work, which is constituted through various acts of consciousness (for example, time-constituting process of reading) as an aesthetic object is ultimately a formation of meanings on the basis of which a fictional world is imagined and brought into transcendent being. Thus, the aesthetic object, [...] from an ontological point of view, belongs to the domain of ideal transcendence. (Levin xxx)

Thus, the perceived version of the work is the "transcendental" in Ingarden's terms, and "it is only through the reading of the sentences of a novel that, for example, the given word sounds and the sense they convey touch one another in a playful dialectic" (Levin xxx).

2.2.1 Principles of the Theory of Roman Ingarden

In his monumental works *The Literary Work of Art* (1931 originally in Polish; English translation 1973) and *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art* (1937 originally in Polish; published in English 1974), Ingarden approaches both the question of the ontology of the literary work and the phenomenology of the reading experience by focusing fundamentally on the essential qualities and constraints of a literary work of art. He makes a clear distinction between the ontology and the phenomenology of literature: Defining ontology as “an inquiry into the essence of things”, and phenomenology as “an inquiry into the perception of things”, he develops and works on both concepts in literature systematically (Zima 66). Ingarden theorizes a phenomenological move towards the literary text as-an-ontological-fact: “[*ontologically seen*] as an *intentional object*, the phenomenological argument runs, a literary text contains many indeterminacies that cannot be eliminated” (Zima 69). “Nevertheless, this systematic study in these two major books by Ingarden is highly theoretical and has two aspects in common: Their focus on the essence or general structure of works of art and on the potential or ideal reader and their complementary refusal to analyze individual texts in detail or to take reactions of empirical readers into account (Zima 66).

While dealing with the question of whether there are any objective ways of seeing a work and its effect as literary, the kernel of his focus on ontology is the ‘essence’ of the work. Levin, in his foreword to *Literary Work of Art* summarizes Ingarden’s understanding of the ontology (essence) of a literary work of art as its having the foundations in the “unquestionable evidence of our universal literary experience” (xxiv). Thus, for Ingarden, the literary experience is the sign, the proof, of the work’s ontological existence. Related to the distinctive experience of the literary text, Levin offers his convinced insight:

[...] certain features of literary work of art - certain features of it as a distinctive kind of being with a distinctive mode of givenness - and certain features of the experience of such objects (e.g. intrinsic to the temporal process of reading a novel) cannot be noticed and rendered explicit outside the focus of a phenomenological illumination. (xxxi)

Regarding the essence, one of his ontological-phenomenological questions is “What are the essential properties, the invariant logical conditions, of that mode of being which the literary work of art uniquely possesses?” (Levin xvi). In contemplating this and related questions, Ingarden’s work, however, retains its outmost ‘philosophical’ frame and does not supply his theory with well-applied literary examples that might have concretized his approach. Ingarden alludes to this aspect of his theory in his preface to the second German edition of *The Literary Work of Art* in 1959 with the following disclaimer: “I am quite conscious of the fact that for literary critics this book would be much more accessible and plastic if I have devoted a series of concrete analyses to individual works of art. But I had to abandon this since the book would have become unmanageable” (xxvii).

While, on the one hand, not developing a subject-centered angle from which the semiotics of the literary work are actualized upon the socio-cultural or psychological circumstances of the reading experience, Ingarden in another way argues that there are as many concretizations of the work as there are reading experiences, since the literary work has undetermined objects (“indeterminacy” in Ingarden’s more prominent term) and these objects require imaginative specification (Bundgaard 175). This complex picture can be well seen as a shortcoming of Ingarden’s theory, despite the remarkable insights it brings into the perception of literary texts. Zima rightfully claims that some of his concepts such as ‘indeterminacy’ could have been defined more concretely along with a linguistic, semantic or semiotic approach (e.g. polysemy), and underlines how contradictory the way he neglects the socio-historical dimension of literature emerges: “The neglect of socio-historical dimension leads to a contradiction in Ingarden’s approach. From an ontological point of view, the literary work appears autonomous and unchanging, from a phenomenological point of view, however, it appears as an object of varying perceptions, concretizations and evaluations [...]” (69).

This ever-changing socio-historical lack of dimension in Ingarden’s theory is to be improved in Reception Theory; Wolfgang Iser later “proposes a re-orientation of Ingarden’s approach by taking into account the active part of the reader and the historical dimension of indeterminacy” (Zima 70).

Ingarden acknowledges the relationship between the author and the work, however prefers to keep the two possibly separated. The subjective perception of the literary

work by the reader in detailed and analytical way, as well as the author's creative process or autobiographical elements, is not part of the body of theory in Ingarden:

First of all, the author with all his vicissitudes, experiences, and psychic states, remains completely outside the literary work. In particular, however, the experiences of the author during the creation of the work do not constitute any part of the created work. It may happen –and one should not dispute this- that there are various close relations between the work and the psychic life and individuality of the author. [...] and that the work thus carries the more or less pronounced traces of his total personality and in his way “expresses” it. But all these factors in no way change the primary and yet frequently unappreciated fact that the author and his work constitute two heterogeneous objects, which, already on the basis of their radical heterogeneity, must be fully differentiated. Only the establishment of this fact will allow us to expose correctly the manifold relations and dependencies existing between them. (22)

The reader becomes a co-creator as the intentional codes produced by the consciousness of the writer are experienced in the consciousness of the reader (Mischerling 139). The reader in Ingarden, although limited due to the central question's being the ontology of literary work of art in Ingarden's theories, does have a role in the actualization (concretizing acts) of the literary work, while the literary work gives itself to various potentialities in the reader (Vandevelde 22). These potentialities emerge from the gaps that are essentially there due to the literary work being a “fictional object” as opposed to a “real object”, which is an ontological categorization. The condition of being a fictional object necessitates indeterminacies. The literary work of art, argues Ingarden, has “indeterminacies” which is synonym to ‘gaps’ in this context, details of which will be given in the related sub-section below.

Thus, Ingarden's approach, as explained above, begins with the ontological description founded upon the distinction between “real objects” and “fictional objects”, an ontological distinction between the real and fictional world: Whereas objects in the real world possess an infinite number of properties, qualities, and perceptual attributes, which are a priori accessible for experience and inquiry, fictional (or purely intentional) objects possess only those properties that are explicitly mentioned in the artwork (Bundgaard 171).

Prior to the elaboration of the specific Ingardenian elements of meaning-making, namely “places of indeterminacies”, “concretization” and “filling out”, a brief overview to Ingarden's “physical book”, especially to the “represented objectivities” and

“schematized aspects”, which contain a great similarity to ST that will be examined in the Cognitive chapter, will be given for a bottom-up approach.

The “physical book”, which differs from the ‘actualized’ (filled out and concretized) literary work, consists of four (heterogeneous) strata: linguistic sound formations (word sounds), meaning units (words, sentence meanings), schematized aspects, and represented objectivities. (Ingarden 29-34). Out of these strata, “represented objectivities” and “schematized aspects” are significant as they contain essential elements with ST. The notion of schematized aspects comes into play for Husserl and Ingarden when, as consciousness intends to an object, only some aspects of that object present themselves to consciousness: Mitscherling exemplifies this simply with the case of looking at a table from above: The table would be there with its aspect of table-top (fulfilled), while the aspect of table-bottom would be unfilled. Drawing a parallel between the top vs. bottom aspect of a table and a literary work of art, Ingarden argues that the reader has to fill those aspects that are left (intentionally) unfilled (138). The process of filling these spots is possible through the points that are given by the author; the presented, filled aspects lead the reader towards the unfilled aspects, which are “schematized”. This activity of filling, in turn, is defined as “concretization” (Ingarden, *Literary* 252). Thus, “schematized aspects” is closely related to “concretization” which is reviewed below. To actualize concretization, existing “represented objectivities” are used – a term that corresponds closely to ST (Cook 177) -. Ingarden approaches “represented objectivities as “If, for example, the action of a novel takes place in Rome, the reader will provide details from a ‘represented objectivity’ of Rome (Cook 176).

This nature of a text, i.e. rendering only limited access to the characteristics of entities included in the work, led Ingarden within schematicity to conceive of three significant concepts, namely ‘places of indeterminacy’, ‘concretization’ and ‘filling out’. These concepts would be famously influential on Hans-Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser’s developing their theory of reader’s experience.

2.2.2 Spots of Indeterminacy, Concretization and Filling Out

2.2.2.1 Spots of Indeterminacy

As previously examined, the ontological condition of being a fictional object, i.e. an intentional object, contains intrinsic qualities of indeterminacies.

“Spots of indeterminacies” in a literary work of art stems from Ingarden’s distinction between real world objects (actual objects) and fictional world (intentional or represented) objects in a literary work. The limited, ‘incomplete’ state of a literary work which initially exists through the intentionality of its author, contains “blanks” and “ontologically irremovable places of indeterminacy” which can never be fully realized and therefore contain potentials of meaning (Ingarden 249), and this ontological trait gives rise, in the phenomenological view, to reader’s “filling out” the blanks. Thus, spots of indeterminacy and filling-out process are internally related features in the phenomenology of reader experience. Such spots of indeterminacy, indeed, allow us to understand the literary work as being constantly in need of further supplementation by its reader, although this supplementation is also never fully complete (Ingarden 251). This hypothesis refers, significantly, unlike the structuralist claim of an underlying and internally fixed meaning to be discovered in the text, to the nature of meaning containing gaps that can never be fully filled, never fully determined.

The reader in Ingarden, however, is a prototype reader who is a passive observer filling in gaps by completing a preconstructed scheme or programme, and Iser would later on criticize this passive attribution of “Ingarden’s concept of *concretisation* which does not allow for creativity of successive readers whose divergent perspectives invariably lead to the emergence of competing concretisations” (Zima 71).

When applied to the specific case of opening lines, the spots of indeterminacy of a literary work of art, although existing throughout the text, are due to the lack of narrative context at the beginning quite high. On the reader’s side, this high rate of blank spaces necessitates much more cognitive effort to contextualize the text into the basic frameworks of time, place, characters, plot – i.e., a general understanding of what the narrative is about.

The thing phenomenology brings to literary analysis is that it deals not only with the “objective” structure and its properties but also with the “properties”:

[...] generally ascribed to the work, which acquire their ontological origin within the subjective conditions of our mode(s) of access. I have in mind, here, such matters as the way a novel's objective ordering of sentences can create suspense and prepare for a moment of "revelation" and the ways in which an objective ordering of words and sentences will be readjusted to the temporal conditions of its readings, so that the experience itself will assume a certain aesthetic structure and receive thereby a qualitative texture and rhythm that live and fade with the receding of the moment. (Levin xxvii)

This comment focused on how the reading moment and reading conditions readjust the "objective ordering of words", therefore the meaning, is noteworthy since it signals at the same time that the ways the spots of indeterminacies are filled out are numerous and unique as it belongs to a life of a moment, that occurs and fades away.

Ingarden, below, exemplifies "spots of indeterminacy" by referring to the beginning of a narrative:

If, e.g., a story begins with the sentence: An old man was sitting at a table, etc., it is clear that the represented "table" is indeed a "table" and not, for example, a "chair"; but whether it is made of wood or iron, is four-legged or three-legged etc., is left quite unsaid therefore - this being a purely intentional object - not determined. The material of its composition is altogether unqualified, although it must be some material. Thus, in the given object, its qualification is totally absent: there is an "empty" spot here, a "spot of indeterminacy". (249)

Thus, Ingarden argues that the mind always *completes*: As it is almost impossible to describe something with its all possible aspects and qualities, there are continuously empty spots in the text that the reader constantly and variously fills out during reading.

And the filling out is performed according to a schematic formation: The represented object is projected as a concrete entity, but contrary to real objects it is not "an unequivocally determined individual"; rather it is a "schematic formation with spots of indeterminacy of various kinds and with an infinite number of determinations positively assigned to it (...)" (Ingarden, *Literary* 251). A well-formulated interpretation by Bundgaard reads as "Hence, reading consists in - most often automatically, unconsciously - putting flesh to the schematic formations that are represented in literary artworks (...)" (174). This completion - in Bundgaard's terms the automatic and unconscious process of putting flesh - is, according to Ingarden, made up of two sub-processes: "concretization" and "filling out".

2.2.2.2 *Concretization and Filling Out*

Concretization has been formerly and briefly mentioned in the schematized aspects section. As no character in a work of fiction can ever be exhaustively presented by an author - no character, that is to say, can ever be portrayed as fully and completely determined as an actual human being - the manner in which this concretization is to proceed can be only be schematically determined by the literary work through its stratum of schematized aspects (Mitscherling 138) The epistemological explanation of this characteristic in the literary work is the impossibility of a writer's describing anything in all aspects. Thus, the concretization must be schematically determined. Ingarden puts this as follows:

In a word, the literary work itself is to be distinguished from its respective concretizations, and not everything that is valid for the concretization of the work is equally valid for the work itself. But the very possibility that one and the same literary work can allow any number of concretizations, which frequently differ significantly among themselves, has its basis, among other things, in the schematic structure of the object stratum of a literary work [...]. (252)

Concretization is readers' representation of the actually mentioned objects, events, and their properties (Ingarden 252). In the sentence e.g. 'The woman was reading on a velvet armchair', the reader concretizes the act of reading, the subject as a woman, and an armchair covered by velvet. Concretization also includes default properties that are intrinsic in the entities: "woman" includes in its concretization a head, legs, arms etc.

In contrast to concretization, "filling out" consists of completing the non-stated elements in a given representation - what Ingarden also calls "the variables" - : These variables are various understandings such as the size of an armchair mentioned, the hair or the age of a woman that are not mentioned in the text, and these varieties are dependent on the actual world experience of the reader.

Briefly, the perception of fictional world relies ontologically on the perception of the non-fictional world, a theory that not only reception theorists but also ST in cognitive science would be focusing on.

Filling out does not only include the sensual, perceptive i.e. the phenomenal gaps - as mentioned in the examples above - in the text but also the indirectly referred intelligible relations (Bundgaard 177) such as the relationship quality between characters or the assumptions for a character's way of reaction as high-order filling out. The key point is what Ingarden above mentions, namely that the filling out is perception related, and this analogy is not only productive but also constitutive as Peer F. Bundgaard explains with an accessible example: "[...] when I open my eyes and thereby access the natural world of forms, shapes, and qualities, I have a full experience: although perception is aspectual or adumbrational (i.e. I only see certain aspects of things at a time), the qualitative properties of things are given immediately to me in their exact individuality (178).

2.3 ANALYSIS

2.3.1 The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas³¹

With a clamor of bells that set the swallows soaring, the Festival of Summer came to the city Omelas, bright-towered by the sea. The rigging of the boats in harbor sparkled with flags. In the streets between houses with red roofs and painted walls, between old moss-grown gardens and under avenues of trees, past great parks and public buildings, processions moved.

The challenges of meaning-making process in opening lines is well evident in this title. When analysed syntactically, the title with two unknown reference points (the ones, and Omelas) offers a wide space of indeterminacies. Omelas is a proper name, initially semantically empty without referent apart from any potential onomatopoeic allusions. "Ones", as a pronoun without referent, is equally empty except that it refers to people (not things, or animals). That leaves the verb phrase "walk away" which has a clear meaning, making it the only solid semantic ground in the title; indeed, it allows the reader to narrow down the proper name and infer that Omelas is likely a place - city, region, country; though potentially a person too -, as a result of the „relevancy“ point Ingarden indirectly refers to. Some associations in the process of reading, due to their contextual and logical irrelevancy, are automatically to be omitted. Thus, „the ones“

³¹ Outer 1.

and „Omelas“ contain spots of indeterminacies that need to be filled out by the reader. The perception of something uniquely new –„Omelas“- causes a logical reduction of the options within a context of relevancy: cognition, through its analogous link to the nonfictional world, develops fillings out by making „relevant“ bridges among the words „walk away“ and „the ones“.

To proceed with one of the ontological aspects, namely the sound aspect of the “physical book” qualities with a reference to Ingarden’s four sub-categorizations of physical book, the sound aspect of the title and the opening sentences of Le Guin’s story illustrates, a highly rhythmic and phonetic layer. This rhythmic dimension consists, in the title, of the repetition of vowels “o” and “a” as well as the consonance between “the ones” and “Omelas”. The alliteration in the title, which keeps its presence in the opening lines of the story as well, creates an aesthetic consciousness, which Ingarden significantly refers to as one of the inert qualities constituting the literary work of art. The repetition of initial consonant sounds in closely occurring words, namely alliteration, and assonance, i.e., repetition of similar vowel sounds in closely occurring words, make an outstanding phonetic quality in this opening. Le Guin, by use of these techniques, intensifies the sound aspect of the aesthetic experience of the literary work of art.

The language, displaying has aesthetic sound qualities, is in complete harmony with the content the story initiates: A lyrical depiction of a scene. As Besson claims the rhythm and sound enhance the semantic value of words (13), so does Le Guin’s rhythm of words strengthen the semantic content she delivers. Below is the depiction of the iambic meter in the lines creating the rhythm:

___ U ___ U ___ U ___ U _____, U ___ U _____ U _ U

With a clamor of bells that set the swallows soaring, the Festival of Summer came to

U

the

___ _____, ___ U _ U ___

city Omelas, bright-towered by the sea.

Le Guin regarding the sound aspect of a text, underlines the significance of it while asserting that

[t]he sound of the language is where it all begins. The test of a sentence is, Does [sic] it sound right? The basic elements of language are physical: the noise words make, the sounds and silences that make the rhythms marking their relationships. [...] [Y]ou may realize that much of the meaning has come to you through the sound and the rhythm of words. (*Craft* 1, 8)

Thus, the iambic meter as a strong linguistic sound formation creates a distinctive territory of the story-world, a representative sentence for the fictional realm, in the opening line.

Despite the rhythmic sound quality of the text, and despite its start with a rather traditional way of narration as opposed to e.g. an *in medias res* beginning, the major narrative elements are not kept in their highest indeterminacy level from the first sentence onwards: the unknown referential 'gap' that the term "Omelas" contain in the title is concretized in the opening line with the word "city". Although the term "city" determines Omelas, the knowledge of the reader from non-fictional world, cannot locate the city "Omelas" within a certain geography; thus, it keeps a definite representational gap.³²

The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas begins with a description of a summerly, bright, colourful, joyful scenery. With purely descriptive opening lines, the phonological sound of the text, that is the density of same and similar sounded vowels and consonants, creates a rhythmic flow in which the reading moves the way the words, and people move in the first lines.

Furthermore, these two long opening lines of *Omelas* stimulate visual and auditive sensations: This feature, while causing the story to rise essentially upon receptory sensual perception, at the same time, for the very same reason, results in the emergence of a wide area of spots of indeterminacies to be filled out. „[A] clamor of bells that set the swallows soaring“ as the opening phrase has two auditive referents (bells, swallows) that makes the reader to begin the story with the representations of these audio experiences. „Swallow“ and „swallow soaring“ have a global representation, which requires a visual and auditive experience of these elements in the non-fictional world for the filling-out. The representation of the type of „bells“, on the other hand, can vary from e.g. musical instruments to church bells.

³² The city Omelas is a fictive city created by Le Guin.

It is summer and there is a festival in the city by the sea: a setting is achieved. The fact that we cannot figure out the city from the non-fictional world experience or knowledge³³ keeps the representation of the city unfulfilled: Where is it stated; is it a touristic city, an industrial harbour city or a remote, exotic city?

Similarly, the reader, right at the opening, is supplied with the time information that it is summer, however, the 'gaps' related to the particular characteristics of a summer – the start of a Scandinavian summer or a golden-coloured August time around Ecuador – remain open for the filling out process.

As for the "relevancy" subject Ingarden touches upon within the concretization issue, in my understanding, the concretization of the "bright-tower" in the context of a city by the sea leads towards the representation of a lighthouse. To exemplify it with another approach: If in the first sentence an indication of a place with science-fictional or fantastic elements was to take place, e.g. 'a festival of an AI crowd, made of mostly black and metallic grey material with some glass-alike but intransparent element at joints, gathered in "Omelas bright-towered by the sea", then the possible representation of "bright-tower" in this futuristic context may not directly be related to a typical lighthouse.

The language of the short story proceeds by offering the reader visual experience elements e.g. "rigging of the boats in harbour", "sparkled with flags". The shape and colour of the flags are another example for indeterminant places: these will be, again, filled out by the imagination of the reader.

This is a subtle construction of a short story opening, aimed at direct visualisation of the scenery: Following a gradual setting-up of the scenery in the first two sentences through visual and auditive receptory descriptions, which help to visualize the scenery, the third sentence supplies, within the tangibly improving setting, a further detailed description.

Red roofs and painted walls intensify the sight-related representation of the scenery. The degree of red, for example, is indeterminant as well as the type of roofs and the

³³ Playfully, the word Omelas is the reverse order anagram for Salemo in Italy.

colour(s) of the painted walls. “Old moss-grown gardens” and the “houses” as well are, in terms of their representative referents, open to various fillings out.

In this opening, the linguistic sound element is one of the outstanding traits of the transcendental ontology of the text. The rhythm of the text helps words to proceed just like the “processions” mentioned to be moving in such an intensity that it is almost with the reading of each word, the experience of this “procession” is made by the reader, word by word similar to a physical, step by step experience of the description in the non-fictional world.

Lastly, to approach the story with general phenomenological terms, the trait of literary work’s being imagined makes it belong ontologically to the realm of transcendence. In the process of reading, readers are in the “objective temporal” (see the chalk example in the theory section). During reading process what happens in terms of temporality is a duration on the object’s side, and a change in the phenomenon which is the perception of the object. The temporality in reading a story, similar to the chalk example, opens up a plural experience of the object, namely the text. The opening lines offer the first moments of the experience of this temporal time within the ordinary time.

The reading of a literary text, in the phenomenological consideration, is to be seen as a new experience both with the unique linguistic, semiotic and semantic formulations of the work and through the rejection of natural attitude it demands. This rejection, in reading a Le Guin story, would include e.g. the condition to approach her story through a rejection of a genre knowledge gained from experiences, such as the expectation of a science-fiction story in Le Guin context. Thus, paratextual knowledge about the author or other works by the author should be put into brackets (“phenomenological reduction”) in order not to constitute an obstacle for the phenomenological perception of the work.

Spots of indeterminacy are explained to be the intrinsic traits of the ontology of the literary work of art. The title and opening lines are the place where concretization and filling out, as the traits of phenomenology of reading, begin to emerge and thus the experience of the phenomenology of a transcendental object.

Words are „concretized“ differently by each reader, depending on the readers’ own representation of the mentioned words. This multifariousness, nevertheless, is preceded

by the words on the paper. The meaning, while having limitations linked to the written words, varies nevertheless in constant degrees and layers depending on the reader's representation of the words and the relevancy factor the work establishes. The essence of phenomenology is directed, as stated in the theory section, not to a fixation of meaning but to its various possibilities and validities within the temporal quality of time.

3 THE IMPLIED READER ON A HORIZON: RECEPTION THEORY

*If truth is that which lasts, then art has
proved truer than any other human endeavor.
What is certain is that pictures and poetry
and music are not only marks in time but mark
through time, of their own time and our, not
antique or historical, but living as they ever
did, exuberantly, untired.*

Jeanette Winterson³⁴

*The 'stars' in a literary text are fixed; the lines that join them are
variable.*

Wolfgang Iser³⁵

³⁴ The opening epigraph in Winterson

³⁵ *Reader* 282

3.1 ON the EMERGENCE of RECEPTION THEORY

Reception Theory established by Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss³⁶, known also as Constance School of Receptive Aesthetics, is a version of Reader Response Theory emerging in the end 1960s in Germany. Focusing essentially on the aspect of how the reader's consciousness contributes to the meaning-making process, it stems from the principles of phenomenology and hermeneutics. Russian Formalism, Prague Structuralism, from the hermeneutic tradition the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) and most remarkably Roman Ingarden are the precursors of this school of thought (Holub 14).

Reader Response Theory and Reception Theory have terminologically been often brought close to each other. Regarding the difference, Holub comments that there is a variety of positioning under Reader Response Theory with hardly "any commonality of effort" (xiii). Reception Theory, by contrast, is a collective undertaking with a social, intellectual and literary developmental reaction in West Germany; there is in fact a lack of mutual influence between these two schools, apart from Iser receiving a great notice in both parties (Holub xiii).

The faculty of readership, reader's consciousness and meaning-making processes have become central subjects in the literary theory with the emergence of Reader Response Theory. Although based on different theoretical foundations, reader response theorists would argue that the meaning of a text does not have any objective existence for being simply dependent on the reader (Selden 109) or as Abrams and Harpham formulate:

Reader-response critics turn from the traditional conception that a text embodies an achieved set of meanings, and focus instead on the ongoing mental operations and responses of readers as their eyes follow a text on the page before them. In the more drastic forms of such criticism, matters that had been considered by critics to be features of the literary work itself (including narrator, plot, character, style, and structure, as well as meanings) are dissolved into an evolving process, consisting primarily of diverse expectations, and the violations, deferments, satisfactions, and restructurings of expectations, in the flow of a

³⁶ "The later Romanist Jauss trained the existing of Francophone foreign Nazi sympathizers SS Grenadier Division "Charlemagne" and participated as "First Lieutenant" to the "anti-partisan" in the Balkans, that is possibly on the massacre of Soviet and Yugoslav partisans."
<http://archyworldys.com/rise-and-fall-of-hans-robert-jauss/>.

reader's experience. (299)

Thus the long philosophical history of the subject-object polarity, in the context of meaning's objective existence does not adopt itself polarized definitions in RT. In the theories of Gadamer, having preliminary influence on Reception Theory, the meaning of a text is not limited to the author's intentions or a fix paradigm within the text because "[a]ny object we study can never be separated from our subjectivity" (Selden 128).

RT is closely related to phenomenology and hermeneutics: "Whereas Jauss depended at first on hermeneutics and was particularly influenced by Hans-Georg Gadamer, the major impact on Iser has been the work of Roman Ingarden, from whom Iser adopts his basic model as well as a number of key concepts" (Holub 83). In the following sections, the phenomenological and hermeneutical influential components on the evolvement of the RT concepts that are examined in this thesis are to be reviewed.

3.1.1 The Influence of Phenomenology and Ingarden

Iser, along with Jauss, develops the phenomenological analysis of the literary work of art, concretely proposed for the first time by Ingarden. Ingarden's concepts of *indeterminacies*, *filling out*, *concretization* and *schematized aspects* are subtle parts of RT (Iser, *Reader* 274). Improving Ingarden's filling out process, Iser agrees that the cognitive participation of the reader to the process of meaning-making is inevitably related to the gaps, and theorizes the missing aspects such as the inevitability and necessity of the participation of reader's subjective history to the act of meaning-making as opposed to the Husserlian 'rigorous' scientific bracketing. The "acts" or "actions", Iser with reference to Ingarden uses that make half of the literary work, are actualized mostly through concretization thus making concretization, as did Ingarden, the main element in the act of reading (*Reader* 274).

Ingarden's main concern, focused on the intrinsic structure of the literary work and became highly influential on RT, has causally led towards the emergence of the subject *cognition*, therefore of the reader; however, "[n]either the New Critics nor reception theorists, though, appear to have been interested in the larger philosophical issues that attracted Ingarden to this subject" (Holub 24).

3.1.2 Hermeneutical Circle: Whole and Part, Back and Forth, Text and Reader

The question of meaning and interpretation, which later becomes one of the central questions of the literary theory, contemporary schools of philosophy and cognitive science, has previously been throughout the long philosophical and theological history of hermeneutics approached.

Hermeneutic Circle, in this context, is reviewed both for the contribution Heidegger and Gadamer has made to the RT and for this tradition's 'whole and part' attribution that is particularly important while approaching the opening lines.

The Circle principally refers to the relationship between the reader and the text, and to the cycle of understanding between a part and a whole. According to hermeneutics, as the reader reads the first line of a text, the emergence of an opinion related to an imagined or supposed whole takes place: This sense of the whole is one of the elements that causes the reader to keep reading further, which in return changes the supposed whole; the circularity of this interpretative involvement commuting between a part and a preconception of the whole can also be seen as an interaction between the present and the past or to adopt RT terms, between the historical horizon of the reader and of the text, relatedly of its author, which causes then the meaning of the read sentence to be always in continuous state of movement (Fry 30-31). Regarding the gaps, as Bernaerts et al indicate, the hermeneutical tradition address to them by the hermeneutic circle, which asserts that the hermeneutic reading, owing to the endless loop it entails between the content of a text and the consciousness of the reader, indeed never ends (8).

The whole is part- and the parts are whole dependent: Continuously they make references to each other. This movement of back and forth between the whole and the parts, between the imagined 'future-whole' and currently perceived 'present-part' has a distinctive character during the opening lines. The distinctiveness is there as no "backward" movement to a previous referential moment on the printed material is possible, meaning that in the opening lines there is an additionally expanded gap for readers both to rely more on their own subjective histories and assumptions while constructing the supposed whole, and to modify these assumptions according to the emerging narrative information in the upcoming lines.

3.1.2.1 *Martin Heidegger*

Martin Heidegger (1889 -1976), one of the most influential names on both Gadamer³⁷ and through a line of philosophical influences on the RT, asserts that interpretation is something the subjects are already always surrounded with:

In every case [...] interpretation is grounded in *something we have in advance* – in a *fore-having*. As the appropriation of understanding, the interpretation operates in Being towards a totality of involvements which is already understood [...]. In every case interpretation is grounded in *something we see in advance* – in a *fore-sight*. This fore-sight ‘takes the first cut’ out of what has been taken into our fore-having, and it does so with a view to definite way in which this can be interpreted.³⁸ [...] Whenever something is interpreted as something, the interpretation will be founded essentially upon fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception. (Heidegger 191)

His “fore-“ concepts theory is indeed the fundamental philosophy on which Gadamer constructs his discussions of ‘prejudice’ and ‘preconceptions’ that are to contribute to the RT’s key notion of “horizon” of understanding. Distinctively here, as opposed to Husserl, the subjective realm becomes an internal part of the interpretation process:

An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us. If, when one is engaged in a particular concrete kind of interpretation, in the sense of exact textual Interpretation, one likes to appeal [beruft] to what ‘stands there’, then one finds that what ‘stands there’ in the first instance is nothing other than the obvious undiscussed assumption [Vormeinung] of the person who does the interpreting. (Heidegger 191-2)

“Interpretation” is the “the appropriation of understanding”(Heidegger 191), and his definition of “meaning” is directly bound to the “fore-“ concepts mentioned above: “That which can be Articulated [sic] in a disclosure by which we understand, we call “meaning”. [...] *Meaning is the “upon-which” of a projection in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something; it gets its structure from a fore-having, a fore-sight, and a fore-conception*” (193).

³⁷ Heidegger’s involvement in Nazi regime causes later Gadamer to distance himself from him (Albert 16).

³⁸ “The idea seems to be that just as the person who cuts off the first slice of a loaf of bread gets the loaf ‘started’, the fore-sight ‘makes a start’ on what we have in advance – the fore-having.” (Trans. note in Heidegger 191).

Interestingly, in their empirical research cognitive psychologist and literary theorist Marisa Bortolussi and Peter Dixon (*Psychonarratology*, 2003) focus on how the textual cues are interpreted by readers according to their prior knowledge and convictions (conviction here including also the intentions of readers) (Bortolussini and Dixon qtd. in Bernaerts et al 9).

3.1.2.2 *Hans-Georg Gadamer*

The line of argumentation inevitably progresses towards Gadamer (1900-2002) who is not only a grand influence on Iser and Jauss, but as Hans Albert states, who can well be considered as one of the most influential German philosophers (15). Holub formulates a similar thought for Gadamer's contribution to the "interpretation" subject as "[t]here is perhaps no contemporary theorist more concerned with the situated nature of our interpretations than Hans-Georg Gadamer" (36).

Following his doctoral dissertation, Gadamer gets closely engaged with Husserl and Heidegger readings, especially with Heidegger's analysis of the "hermeneutic situation" (Schmidt 3). The central RT term "horizon" is one of the concepts Gadamer improves by working on the concepts Heidegger's philosophy introduce.

The linguistic meaning, along with the truth of it and the methodology applied to get a meaning, is at stake in Gadamer, for linguistic meaning is not accessible to the receiver as, ontologically speaking, a 'real object' is. Linguistics theories on meaning approach to it

as something merely expressed or designated by linguistic signs, thus referring to an object given in an internal experience, have been called objectivistic. According to objectivistic theories of meaning, the function of linguistic signs is to designate, make explicit, or communicate what is given as an ideal object. Hence the main problem is to explain how ideal objects can guarantee determination of linguistic meaning in the constantly changing and varied situations of their application by speakers. (Kertscher 136)

Husserl's theory of meaning is a paradigm of the objectivistic approach, and Gadamer works on an antiobjectivistic conception of language and understanding through the "horizontality" of all understanding (Kertscher 136). In his "The Phenomenological Movement" (1963), Gadamer underlines how Husserl disregards language as a

philosophical element, and he asserts that it is the limitation in Husserl's view on language that inspires Heidegger's philosophy of language (Kertscher 137).

Within the context of this thesis, another vital input to the discussion of meaning-making is his assertion that prejudice and preconception function positively as opposed to being a hindrance to the process of meaning-making (e.g. by Husserl); prejudice in Gadamer, stemming from the historical reality of the subject, offers on the contrary a condition for the possibility of understanding (Holub 41). At this point he takes a different turn than the other hermeneutic scholars, a point that brings Gadamer close to Jauss and his "historicity" notion, similar to Ingarden and Iser's principal unity on the concepts places of indeterminacies, concretization and filling out.

3.2 A CLOSE-UP to RECEPTION THEORY

In this part, prior to its sub-sections, Reception theoretical definitions of literary work, meaning, reading-process and implied-reader will take place.

Iser describes the literary work in two sub-categories, the *artistic*, referring to the text created by the author, and the *esthetic*, referring to the realization accomplished by the reader; he then claims that literary work is neither identical with the text nor with the realization of it, but lies halfway between the two (*Reader* 274). As for the meaning(s), he approaches as follows:

[...] the interpreter's task should be to elucidate the potential meanings of a text, and not to restrict himself to just one. Obviously, the total potential can never be fulfilled in the reading process, but it is this very fact that makes it so essential that one should conceive of meaning as something that happens, for only then can one become aware of those factors that precondition the composition of meaning (*Act* 22).

While for Iser the meaning of a text is an event of construction and not an object to be found inside the text, for Jauss, as a Friedrich Schiller devotee, it is dependent on the history and literature relationship, put differently, on the text and the historicity of the reader relationship. He asserts that "[l]iterature and art only obtain a history that has the character of a process when the succession of works is mediated not only through the producing subject, but also through the consuming subject -through the interaction of author and public" (Jauss qtd. in Holub 57-58). Jauss situates literature in a larger

context which does not minimalize (or put into the Husserlian brackets) the effects of the sociological, political aspects of the era that influence the reception in general, which means that as time goes by the reception of a work changes depending on the individual history of the reader, and on the social, political dynamics of the era:

The aesthetic implication lies in the fact that the first reception of a work by the reader includes a test of its aesthetic value in comparison with works already read. The obvious historical implication of this is that the understanding of the first reader will be sustained and enriched in a chain of receptions from generation to generation; in this way the historical significance of a work will be decided and its aesthetic value made evident. (Jauss qtd. in Holub 58)

In his approach, literature has a bridging function between past and present, and can only within this line be read meaningfully: the asset such a methodology brings is that “it enables us to comprehend past meanings as part of present practices” (Holub 58). As in hermeneutics, the reading process in Reception Theory “always involves viewing the text through the perspective that is continually on the move, linking up different phases [...]” (Iser, *Reader* 280).

Below, as in many parts of his theories, Iser refers to Ingarden’s concept of “indeterminacy”, and its vital function for the meaning production:

Although it is clear that the acts of comprehension are guided by the structures of the text, the latter can never exercise complete control, and this is where one might sense a touch of arbitrariness. However, it must be borne in mind that fictional objects constitute their own objects and do not copy something already in existence. For this reason they cannot have the total determinacy of real objects, and indeed, it is the elements of indeterminacy that enable the text to ‘communicate’ with the reader, in the sense that they induce him to participate both in the production and the comprehension of the work’s intention. (Act 24)

The components of the experience of reading in RT are an evolving process of anticipation, frustration, retrospection, reconstruction and satisfaction (Iser, *Reader* 280). Hence, unlike the Husserlian and Ingardenian phenomenology, psychological aspects of reception participate in the theory of meaning-making. With these aspects, Iser invents a model reader:

[The implied reader] embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect —predispositions laid down, not by an empirical outside reality, but by the text itself. Consequently, the implied reader as a concept has its roots firmly planted in the structure of the text; he is a construct and in no way

to be identified with any real reader. [...] The concept of the implied reader is therefore a textual structure anticipating the presence of a recipient without necessarily defining him: this concept restructures the role to be assumed by each recipient [...] (Act 34).

The implied reader's responses are led by the textual structures; the hypothetical implied reader and the actual reader coexist. Below Iser explains the way implied reader functions in detail therefore worth quoting in full:

[...] the fact that the reader's role can be fulfilled in different ways, according to historical and individual circumstances, is an indication that the structure of the text allows for different ways of fulfillment. Clearly, then, the process of fulfillment is always a selective one, and any one actualization can be judged against the background of the others potentially present in the textual structure of the reader's role. Each actualization therefore represents a selective realization of the implied reader, whose own structure provides a frame of reference within which individual responses to a text can be communicated to others. This is a vital function of the whole concept of the implied reader: it provides a link between all the historical and individual actualizations of the text and makes them accessible to the analysis (Act 37-38).

Iser's theories of readership, while underlining the active part of the reader in the meaning-making process, has nevertheless "a focus [...] on the historical dimension of the actualization of meaning potential" with less engagement with the individuality of readers, and thus possesses less agency seen from the upcoming contemporary reader models (Reichl 123, 124). Furthermore, Reichl also points out that he foregrounds the novel as the most reader-centered genre (Reichl 122), with the argumentation that it is the novel which forces its readers for an active meaning-making in the process (Iser, *Reader* xii), an approach, which allows one to observe the novel-centralizing attitude of the theorists once more.

The reading process in RT is not a linear process that moves gradually towards a destination of resolution. It is rather, similar to the circular movement of interpretation in hermeneutics, a recursive process where the reader is "in a dynamic state of self-correction":

If we view the relation between text and reader as a kind of self-regulating system, we can define that the text itself as an array of sign impulses (signifiers) which are received by the reader. As he reads, there is a constant 'feedback' of 'information' already received, so that he himself is bound to insert his own ideas into the process of communication. [...] Thus the reader's communication with the

text is a dynamic process of self-correction, as he formulates signifieds which he must then continually modify. It is cybernetic in nature as it involves a feedback of effects and information throughout a sequence of changing situational frames; smaller units progressively merge into bigger ones, so that meaning gathers meaning in a kind of snowballing process. (Iser, *Act* 67)

The influence of the hermeneutic thought can be well observed in the above cited “smaller meaning units merging into bigger ones” phrase. The snowballing process, while being similarly non-linear but circular, includes self-correcting backward movements, an approach more psychological compared to hermeneutics.

In opening lines, these “self-corrections” are to go through a transformation in great degrees: The large narrative gaps cause a density of “small units’ being transformed into bigger ones” during the opening lines, which results in a condense, active cognitive process of assumptions, preconceptions and modifications (self-correction).

Having reviewed the selected basics of RT, in the following sections the focus, regarding the meaning-making and gaps relationship, will be on the horizon of expectation, gaps, gestalt and schema theories.

3.2.1 Reception Theory on Gaps

Concerning the gaps, Iser takes few steps further than Ingarden’s ontological investigations. Analyzing the psychological aspects involved in the reading process such as pleasure and frustration, he centralizes imagination, which is gap-dependent, in the process:

If the reader were given the whole story, and there were nothing left for him to do, then his imagination would never enter the field, the result would be the boredom [...]. A literary text must therefore be conceived in such a way that it will engage the reader’s imagination in the task of working things out for himself, for reading is only a pleasure when it is active and creative. In this process of creativity, the text may either not go far enough, or may go too far, so we may say that boredom and overstrain form the boundaries beyond which the reader will leave the field of play. (*Reader* 275)

Hence an analogy between imagination and participation emerges as “[...] it is only by activating the reader’s imagination that the author can hope to involve him and so realize the intentions of his text” (Iser, *Reader* 282) as well as the risk of the reader’s

quitting the reading process when encountered with too few or too many gaps.

The reading experience, in a quasi-psychoanalytical manner, is further explained as:

The manner in which the reader experiences the text will reflect his own disposition, and in this respect the literary text acts as a kind of mirror; but at the same time, the reality which this process helps to create is one that will be *different* from his own [...]. Thus we have the apparently paradoxical situation in which the reader is forced to reveal aspects of himself in order to experience a reality which is different from his own. (Iser, *Reader* 281-282)

Consequently, according to Iser, meaning-making necessitates the participation of one's own 'reality' and 'imagination' in order to *fill in*³⁹ the unwritten parts (gaps) of the text to arrive at the new reality (experience) of fiction: "[...] the written part of the text gives us the knowledge, but it is the unwritten part that gives us the opportunity to picture things; indeed without the elements of indeterminacy, the gaps in the text, we should not be able to use our imagination" (*Reader* 283). Thus indeterminacies, i.e. gaps, and imagination are intrinsic elements for the realization of the literary work.

A reference to the cognitively improved theory by Iser, stressing how each sentence contains a "hollow section" and the type of the "reader's mental response"⁴⁰ to it, reads as:

It is clear, then, that throughout the reading process there is a continual interplay between modified expectations and transformed memories. However, the text itself does not formulate expectations or their modifications; nor does it specify how the connect ability of memories is to be implemented. This is the province of the reader himself, and so here we have a first insight into how the synthesizing activity of the reader enables the text to be translated and transferred to his own. This process of translation also shows up the basic hermeneutic structure of reading. Each sentence correlate contains what one might call a hollow section, which looks forward to the next correlate, and a retrospective section, which answers the expectations of the preceding sentence (now part of the remembered background). Thus every moment of reading is a dialectic of pretension and retention [...]. (*Act* 112)

Consequently, the "hollows" by causing expectations, pretensions and retentions create reading motivation for a future horizon that is essential for the act of reading. While the reader oscillates between the past and future, in a constant backward and forward movement, expectation - followed by its causal elements of self-correction and

³⁹ The term "to fill out" as used by Ingarden is "to fill in" in Iser.

⁴⁰ See Bernaerts citation below.

modification Iser previously mentioned - governs this dialectic that reading process is founded upon. Particularly in opening lines, since the narrative-whole lacks there the greatest, the possible presuppositions (imaginings) regarding the rest of the text are not yet excessively limited, a state recollecting Kierkegaard's "subject's still being free"⁴¹. Accordingly, beginnings contain potential for myriads of presuppositions regarding the whole, i.e. narratologically a strong substitute for the rest of the narrative.⁴²

Iser's pioneering cognitive aspects, while serving already as a link to the upcoming chapter, are highlighted as:

Not unlike cognitive studies, Iser's reception theory offers a model for understanding of the reader's mental response. This is why his ideas are often integrated in that context. Iser's approach, however, operates in a more abstract level of theorization than the cognitive approach. Instead of dealing with concrete cognitive processes or empirical readers, he adopts a broad phenomenological view - this is the term he himself uses - on the reader's experience. (Bernaerts et al. 6)

The gaps (Leerstellen) can be filled in various ways, with no final and correct reading, and they will in fact remain, up to some extent, open: "[...] one text is potentially capable of several different realizations, and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential, for each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his own way, thereby excluding the various other possibilities; as he reads, he will make his own decision as to how the gap is to be filled. In this act the very dynamics of reading are revealed." (Iser, *Process* 55).

Lastly, to be seen in detail in the Gestalt chapter, gestalt-forming as one of the prerequisites to form a meaning of the literary work surfaces through the gaps of the text. It is through gaps that that the reader actively, creatively participates in the text and can construct a meaning.

⁴¹ See 1.2.2.

⁴² Amos Oz similarly, however from an authorly perspective with a gestalt approach, thinks in terms of craftsmanship and states that it is the first lines that maintain which kind of "contract" the writer (and text) establishes with the reader (See Richardson 7).

3.2.2 Horizon

“Horizon” has already been a familiar term in the German philosophical circles: Gadamer used it as “the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point” (269), in a similar context both Husserl and Heidegger used it; neither is the use of it with “expectation” new: both the philosopher Karl Popper and the sociologist Karl Mannheim used the term long before Jauss (Holub 59). It was, nevertheless, Gadamer who contributed an evolutionary literary term to the literary theory that was to become one of the central concepts of RT.

Jauss’ use of “horizon” has definitional ambiguities: not only he does not attempt to define it, he also uses the term in various compound phrases e.g. “horizon of experience”, “horizon structure”, “material horizon of conditions” (Holub 59). It can be speculated that “horizon of expectation” in Jauss alludes to “an intersubjective system or structure of expectations, a ‘system of references’ or a mind-set that a hypothetical individual might bring to any text” (Holub 59). Horizon in Jauss becomes a measurement for the value of the work, a device to measure and approve the ‘canonicity’ of a work. Nevertheless, his theory of horizons asserts that in different eras people read and write according to the paradigms of the eras, which means that the meaning of a text can change within the dominant horizon of expectation of a specific era (Selden 127). Holub himself attempts to find a definition for horizon of expectations as “an intersubjective system or structure of expectations, a ‘system of references’ or a mind-set that a hypothetical individual might bring to any text” (59).

Yet, in another attempt, one can also interpret the horizon as an imaginary line where reader’s mind meets the text’s mind: “[a]s it is part of a larger textual and cultural tradition, the text ‘expects’ a certain knowledge of its reader, who, in his or her turn, comes to the text with his or her tradition or prejudices. Interpretation is the complex meeting point of the textual horizon with the readerly horizon”, and the point where the readerly horizon meets with the textual horizon is a point of “fusion of horizons”– (Bernaerts 5). Jauss values the “objectification” of the horizon, which ideally is maintained through the works that parody or reflect on the literary tradition e.g. *Don Quixote*, *Tristram Shandy* (Holub 59). The ideality of these works come from the quality they have to “evoke the reader’s horizon of expectations, formed by a convention of genre, style, or form, only in order to destroy it step by step” (Jauss qtd.

in Holub 60), and thus the literary horizon is objectified. Nevertheless Jauss, with this methodology, cannot escape the positivist-historicist paradigm he struggles with; hence, he attempts to build his version of horizon not on psychologism but on an objectivist model (Holub 61).

As for opening lines, they are the physical borderline where a readerly horizon intersects a textual horizon. In this fusion, the peripheries between *subject* and *object* cease as mentioned before, which also discloses the philosophical understanding of 'language' by Gadamer that sheds more light to the scenery of "horizon". Language, therefore understanding, is a "mode of being" rather than a closed system (Gadamer 340), and his hermeneutical ontology takes being as language: "[...] from the basic ontological view, according to which being is language, ie [sic] self presentation, as revealed to us by the hermeneutical experience of being" (Gadamer 443). Thus, since *being* has a "fundamental linguistic quality" in Gadamer, an indivisible relationship between language and the world is established (Chamberlain 7). It is with the first lines that the identity of a text and a reader begin merging with each other. If the text and the reader merge into one another, then an ontological question emerges for the reader, even more enigmatically during opening lines: *Who am I?*

Isak Dinesen's⁴³, opening lines of *The Last Tales* offer an unparalleled example for this phenomenon:

"Who are you?" the lady in black asked Cardinal Salviati. The Cardinal looked up, met the gaze of her wide-open eyes and smiled very gently.

"Who am I?" he repeated. (Dinesen 3).

The question remains as a unique and open question special to literature. Iser asserts that the reading process, along with its anticipation and retrospection process, "transforms the text into an experience for the reader" (*Reader* 281). Seen as a whole, *horizon* is a complex layer where not only the text meets the reader but the philosophical concepts of identities merge into each other as well.

⁴³ The pseudonym for the Danish author Karen Blixen (1885-1962).

3.2.3 Gestalt

“Gestalt” is a process that includes picturing, anticipation, retrospection and grouping:

The “picturing” that is done by our imagination is only one of the activities through which we form the ‘gestalt’ of a literary text. We have already discussed the process of anticipation and retrospection, and to this we must add the process of grouping together all the different aspects of a text to form the consistency that the reader will always be in search of. [...] This “gestalt” must inevitably be coloured by our own characteristic selection process. (Iser, *Process* 58-9)

Iser clearly defines that the text begins to exist through gestalt groupings:

As meaning is not manifested in words, and the reading process therefore cannot be mere identification of individual linguistic signs, it follows that apprehension of the text is dependent on gestalt groupings. If we may borrow a term from Moles, we can define these gestalten elementally as the “autocorrelation” of textual signs. [...] The gestalt coherency might be described in terms used by Gurwitsch, as the perceptual *noema* of the text. This means that as each linguistic sign conveys more than just itself to the mind of the reader, it must be joined together in a single unit with all its referential context. The unit of the perceptual *noema* comes about by the way of the reader’s acts of apprehension: he identifies the connections between the linguistic signs and thus concretizes the references not explicitly manifested in those signs. The perceptual *noema* therefore links up the signs, their implications, their reciprocal influences, and the reader’s acts of identification, and through it the text begins to exist as a gestalt in the reader’s consciousness. (*Act* 120-121)

Having explained above the mechanism of “gestalt”, consisting of signs’ implications, reciprocal influences, and the reader’s acts of identification, Iser then refers to the states of openness and closeness for gestalt: an open gestalt is a gestalt that can, in various directions, move towards being closed by a process of selection (*Act* 122). The process of an initial gestalt’s getting closed occurs by the *selection* of a gestalt to close the first one: the closing of a gestalt can only be there “when the significance of the action can be presented by a further gestalt. [...] a gestalt can only be closed if one possibility is selected and the rest excluded” (Iser, *Act* 123). This mechanism is so ruling that Iser claims that even the plot of a text develops through gestalt-forming (*Act* 123). Gestalt-forming is founded on the coherence factor, put differently, “consistency comes about through gestalt groupings” (*Act* 124) where the expectations, illusions and reciprocal modifications of the reader are all part of the process.

Thus the factors of consistency-building, relevancy, selection of meaning,

expectations, illusions and relatedly participation become components of the meaning-making process. It is indeed “[t]hrough gestalt-forming, we actually participate in the text, and this means that we are caught up in the very thing we are producing. This is why we often have the impression, as we read, that we are living another life” (Iser, *Act* 127). This insight can also be read through the “Who am I?” question mentioned in the Horizon section.

3.2.4 Schema

Iser underlines the ‘simplifying’ tendency of the reader’s perspective with a cognitive reference, quoting a passage from the prominent semiotician and literary scholar Juri Lotman:

The reader is interested in gaining the necessary information with the least trouble to himself... And so if the author sets out to increase the number of code systems and the complexity of their structure, the reader will tend to reduce them to what he regards as an acceptable minimum. The tendency to complicate the characters is the author’s; the contrastive black-white structure is the reader’s. (Lotman qtd. in Iser, *Act* 125).

This economy-principle orientation of the reader is part of the schema theory, which Gestalt psychology demonstrates to regulate everyday perception of subjects (Iser, *Act* 90-91). Schema relies upon “the tendency of our minds to classify and register our experience in terms of the known” (Iser, *Act* 90). As a filtering process through which the data is grouped together for the perceiver (Iser, *Act* 90), schema is not only based on the economy (reduction) principle, but is also dialectical and essential for its ‘negating’ quality:

When something new is perceived which is not covered by these schemata, it can only be represented by means of a correction to the schemata. And through the correction, the special experience of the new perception may be captured and conveyed. Here we have not only a renunciation of the idea of naive, imitative realism but also the implication that the comprehension and representation of a special reality can only take place by way of negating the familiar elements of a schema. Herein lies the functional fecundity of Gombrich model, for the schema embodies a reference which is then transcended by the correction. While the schema enables the world to be represented, the correction evokes the observer’s reactions to that represented world. (Iser, *Act* 91)

When the received data does not form a conventional schema, and when “the

correction violates a norm of expectation [...], the act of representation creates its own conditions of reception. It stimulates observation and sets to work the imagination of the observer, who is guided by the correction to the extent that he will try to discover the motive behind the change in the schema" (Iser, *Act* 91-92). Seen this way, schema and correction form a dialectical process, meaning that when previous codes a perceiver has do not constitute a schema, the new data the perceiver encounters creates an awareness of the situation, and finds its way to belong to the process of meaning making through negating it. A schema, founded upon previous experiences and knowledge of the perceiver (Reichl 44), is a system that is highly active during the opening lines. As a method, Reichl notes that "while in much of cognitive psychology, schemata [...] have been replaced by more flexible alternatives [...], literary scholars dealing with cognitive studies, such as Peter Stockwell, find the term "schema" still convenient for their purposes" (47).

3.3 ANALYSIS

3.3.1 Brothers and Sisters⁴⁴–

The injured quarrier lay on a high hospital bed. He had not recovered consciousness. His silence was grand and oppressive; his body under the sheet that dropped in stiff folds, his face were as indifferent as stone. The mother, as if challenged by that silence and indifference, spoke loudly: "What did you do it for? Do you want to die before I do? Look at him, look at him, my beauty, my hawk, my river, my son!"

The influential philosophers on RT such as Heidegger and Gadamer would claim that meaning-making begins prior to reading the first lines; from the perspective of narratology it begins with the paratextual elements such as knowledge about the author or the story. Nevertheless, beginning with the syntactic elements, the title activates a typical family schema where visualization of women and men siblings emerges. The details of this visualization are to be completed by the reader oneself through prejudices, preconceptions and assumptions, namely through the readerly horizon.

The experience of reading in RT is a continual process of anticipation, frustration,

⁴⁴ *Earth* 1.

retrospection, reconstruction and satisfaction that is accompanied also by self-correction and modification elements. In this particular opening, with the authority of the title, the reader already creates the assumption that the rest, i.e. the supposed whole, of the story will refer to a family-related subject, hence the circular hermeneutical relationship between the parts and the supposed whole already begins.

Interpreted from Jauss' aspect of change of horizons, and with the merging of the reader's horizon, a hypothetical reader of this century with a gender politics approach, might as well question whether the title order in which the male sibling comes before a female sibling has any indication for the rest of the narrative. As socio-cultural conventions change from period to period, the ways of writing and reading change in return as well. The generalization in the title with the plural form creates, according to a conventional schema, the presupposition that it indeed implies the relationship between brothers and sisters. Thus, schematic thinking fills in a dimension of the title that is not mentioned, namely 'relationships' - an example to the fusion of horizons -. The arrival at 'relationship' is maintained through gestalt-grouping. What, nevertheless, definite is that the title directs one to the expectation of brother and sister characterization in the story.

Consequently, readers' own presuppositions, historical horizons and the historical period's paradigms supply the reader with various interpretative devices to fill in the gaps of the text. This is the point where the reader interacts - communicate - actively and individually with the text.

With a trait of a modernist story beginning, the story opens up directly into the middle of a suspense-evoking scenery: a quarrier on a hospital bed. As a craftful short story writer, Le Guin places right in the opening words some narrative gaps: what happened and who is the person lying there? As the mind traces a back-and-forth movement in combining the new information within a relevancy framework, it is a probable interpretation to assume that the pronoun 'he' to emerge in the second sentence stands for a brother within a gestalt thinking. Here, the backward movement of meaning-making process to correlate, and the tendency to construct a relevant whole can be clearly observed. The sentence, on the other hand, offers a wider semantic level with a socio-economical schema, too: A quarrier as a working class person.

The way Ingardenian and RT concretization and filling in functions can be observed in the following questions, emerging reading the first lines: Where are we? One of the possible fillings in is 'a city' as hospital in its gestalt-grouping eliminates villages and rural landscape. How old is the person? Possibly not that old, due to the first schematic image the term "quarrier" creates which is more of a younger worker than an older one.

All these meanings and presuppositions thus surface through filling in the narrative gaps by gestalt thinking. One of the open gestalt elements, by reading that the person lying in bed is a *he*, is therefore closed. The words "injured", "hospital bed", "not recovered consciousness", in the third sentences "silence", "oppressive", "face [...] as indifferent as stone" form a consistent gestalt. All these descriptions due to the literary work's ontology as an intentional object possess gaps to be filled in by the reader. The approach of RT can be resembled to a compass: while one part, through its spike, is fixed on each word on the page, the other part is flexible and moving, interdependent on the reader's horizon.

The word "grand" has a grand gap inside since it is an indefinite quantity indicator. Leaving the imagination of the amount of silence to the reader, the actual realization of meaning-making takes place. Porter Abbott, quoting three stanzas from *Paradise Lost* describes the powerful effect of the gap on John Milton's "unusual weight". He asserts that in the lines "Then with expanded wings he steers his flight/ Aloft, incumbent on the dusky Air / That felt unusual weight" the immensity of the weight would not be delivered with this effect if Milton wrote clear immense numbers or descriptions: "If narrative comes alive as we fill in its gaps, it also gains life by leaving some of them unfilled" (Abbott 85).

It is the second time that the conjunction "and" following the title appears: "grand and oppressive". Physically being still close to the title, the attention goes up to the title and back to this phrase, identifying some similar, repetitive patterns. Stylistics in the literary work is part of the meaning, therefore here a new gestalt question might arise: Can these adjectives be substitutes for "sisters and brothers"? Can they be some key words about the relationships between sisters and brothers? Taking one step back to the noun that these adjectives describe, one can then ask whether the "silence" can be a potential key term for brothers and sisters in this story? As mentioned in the theory sections, specific narratological gaps (i.e. lack of plot, character and setting

information) in openings lead to a multiplicity of open gestalt questions, since the information constraining the line of the narrative is at its utmost ambiguous stage.

The arrival of the mother character into the scene, another consistency bringing gestalt, supports the open gestalt of the family plot the title has initiated, and strengthens the assumption that the person in bed is his son. These first lines, in terms of reading experience, results in then satisfaction, as opposed to frustration of expectation while half-way approving the first assumptions of the reader. Hence proceeds the construction of meaning-making on a line of consistency-building. The mother's questions "What did you do it for?", "Do you want to die before I do?" open up other multiple gaps. What is it that he did? The use of the term "die" clusters with associations more serious than losing consciousness, and intensifies the suspense. The opening scene, briefly, is created visually with atmospheric and emotional layers around it. Narrated from a third person point of view, some writerly gaps, creating suspense, are placed delicately and the expectations of the reader are supported consistently and schematically by the end of the paragraph. As the scene opens up in a hospital, the reason of which is not known, the mind, while figuring out gradually who the characters are, is engaged with the pre-stage of the opening scene, namely the reason for the hospital setting.

3.3.2 Unlocking the Air⁴⁵

This is a fairy tale. People stand in the lightly falling snow. Something is shining, trembling, making a silvery sound. Eyes are shining. Voices sing. People laugh and weep, clasp one another's hands, embrace. Something shines and trembles. They live happily ever after. The snow falls on the roofs and blows across the parks, the squares, the river.

This is history. Once upon a time a good king lived in his palace in a kingdom far away. But an evil enchantment fell upon that land. The wheat withered in the ear, the leaves dropped from the trees of the forest, and no thing thrived.

This short story opening by Le Guin represents an unorthodox example. The title,

⁴⁵ *Earth* 59.

unlike in the previous story, does not initiate a clear schematic thinking. Nonetheless through the associative groupings this phrase activates, the presupposition and expectation that a relief or a sort of freedom might be to occur in the rest of narrative take place. The title as a suggestive title, is open to multiple interpretations.

The first sentence, declaring itself as a fairy tale, is a surprising statement as no 'real' fairy tale begins with the assertion of being a fairy tale. A violation of genre structure takes place in this opening, both for the short story and for the fairy tale, which as a result causes a 'surprise' element - one of by Iser highly valued qualities of a literary work -, and relatedly an engaging effect in the reading experience - so long as it does not lead to the "frustration" of the reader as Iser warns -.

Apt to the fairy tale terminologies, the story begins with the anonymous "people" in lightly falling snow - an aestheticized picture suiting a fairy tale image -. Are these people characters-to-be or are they the audience to the main characters to come? Within the context of a conventional fairy tale, one is to expect a king, queen and the folk. What to expect from a fairy tale that lives in a short story? Conventionally thinking, they might be the folk. Gestalt thinking, in this interpretation, starts treating the narrative in a quasi-fairy-tale way, and makes the selection of the meanings accordingly. The second sentence, while having a more anonymous subject (something), adds a sound aspect to the meaning so visibly that three gerund suffixes compound with the ending of a noun, i.e. the subject "*something*". What is that something? How does "silvery" sound like? This sentence contains vast empty places, causing difficulty to fill in the indeterminacies in a schematic direction. Hypothetically, under such circumstances of obscurities, the mind might apply an economy of understanding, and might reduce the meaning of the sentence simply to 'Something is moving'.

The descriptive elements, similarly, lack in the next two brief sentences ("eyes", "voices"). The simplicity of language is a fairy-tale quality, nevertheless the knowledge of reading a short story and additionally the conflictive opening line keep distorting this fairy-tale image being constructed. Under the given circumstances of the opening line, i.e. "this is a fairy tale", these obscurities, despite being in an internal (the declaration "this is a fairy tale") and genre-related (the reader expects to read a short story) conflict, are not frustrating the 'semi' expectation that this story has or does something

with fairy tales, which might also be a parody of fairy tales. An intentional gap is created that motivates one, through its surprise element, to read further.

The adverbs are also used in a fairy tale context: “lightly falling snow” and “they live happily ever after”. These are happy descriptions; eyes shining and voices singing read like a happy celebration. Yet, the combination of “laugh and weep” causes a moment of consideration. Why is weeping included in a happy scene? There is another gap here to be filled in variously: the break of a spell over a country, the wedding of star-crossed lovers or another enormously emotional ground. One can observe the structure Iser claims as “[e]ach sentence correlate contains what one might call a hollow section, which looks forward to the next correlate [...]” (*Act*, 112). In the vagueness ‘weeping’ introduces, the selection of gestalt is maintained within the relevancy borders of a (quasi-) fairy tale context: One imagines an emotionally overwhelming and merry occasion that people celebrate with tears.

The reader then encounters a variation of the second sentence in a different tense, with the last descriptive quality lacking, the only unchanged word in both sentences being “something”. Yet, ‘something’ is left unclear, just like the plot of the story. That thing, which is not mentioned, makes us move to the next sentence. The next sentence, a typical closing sentence in fairy tales, signposts the end: “they live happily ever after”. However, the narrative does not end there. A descriptive sentence follows “*The snow falls on the roofs and blows across the parks, the squares, the river*”. Is this a soft zoom out? Or a soft zoom in into the next paragraph?

Throughout these opaque descriptions, what surfaces as a *fact* is that it is winter time, a happy event is taking place in an aestheticized setting where parks, squares, and a river exist.

This paragraph, acting in a micro scale (vocabulary, syntax) like a fairy tale in a pretentious way, violates the conventional expectation of the reader, and the conventional short story opening paradigm. According to Jauss, such a horizon is an ideal one, in which a parody of or a reflection on a literary tradition takes place, “evok[ing] the reader’s horizon of expectations, formed by a convention of genre, style, or form, only in order to destroy it step by step” (Jauss qtd. in Holub 60). Regarding the genre violation, as Suvin in the second chapter asserts,

“we ‘naturally’ expect certain specific meanings when we encounter well established conventions and usages. When a story begins “once upon a time,” we “naturally” form a whole system of expectations, which are in a sense the genre itself. [...] Genre is, in Hirsch’s words, “an anticipated sense of the whole” (Suvin qtd. in Bittner 6-7).

This is history. Once upon a time a good king lived in his palace in a kingdom far away. But an evil enchantment fell upon that land. The wheat withered in the ear, the leaves dropped from the trees of the forest, and no thing thrived.

The second paragraph of the short story, cited above, is included in the analysis, because it demonstrates an unconventional progress: Acting like *another beginning*, as if alternative to the first one, the first line of the second paragraph creates a negation with the first line of the first paragraph: a negation between the fairy tale and history. Reading “This is history” causes a recursive movement back to the line “This is a fairy tale”, and makes one think about the difference –and similarity- between a fairy tale and history. With the second paragraph that pretends to be *another beginning*, the reader’s expectations modified by the first paragraph are re-modified. This re-modification, however, necessitates another modification soon as the rest of the “history” paragraph appears even more fictive than the first paragraph because the characters access and the plot begins to gain more detail.

These genre-referring changes (fairy tale vs. history) that are themselves self-contradictory cause difficulty for the ‘consistency search’ of the reader. In a receptive reaction to these opening paragraphs, the mind’s struggle to bring patterns of consistency together, or even bringing inconsistencies together to reach a consistent pattern of inconsistency, is highly evident.

The decision making mechanism (gestalt) in the process of meaning making, according to Iser, has been rather unconscious with the ‘traditional’ texts, while modern texts often intentionally exploits this feature: [modern texts] are often so fragmentary that one’s attention is almost exclusively occupied with the search for connections between the fragments; the object of this is not to complicate the ‘spektrum’ of connections, so much as to make us aware of the nature of our own capacity for providing links (Iser, *Reader* 280).

At this very moment, another violation happens, when the next sentence begins with “once upon a time” and proceeds with “a good king lived in his palace in a kingdom far away”. This is with no doubt a fairy-tale discourse: once upon a time, a good king (good and bad as typical traits in fairy tales), a palace, far away (a typical distance indicator in fairy tales) are all components of fairy tales. Nevertheless, a confusion arises, questioning the constructed and language-dependent nature of fiction and non-fiction: History as a story, history as a fairy tale.

In the following sentence, “wheat” and “forest” create a coherent gestalt grouping similar to “parks, squares, river”. A dark description, in opposition to the merriness in the first paragraph, is achieved with infertility elements that an evil enchantment causes.

Although both paragraphs demonstrate a structurally repetitive pattern within the paragraphs themselves and there is a gestalt coherency within the paragraphs excluding the first lines, there is a certain gap that the understanding curiously aims to fill in: the reader still does not have a tangible clue of what the plot is to be about.

This short story opening constitutes a great example for both Iser’s hypothesis that reading consists of the violations of expectations very well, and Jauss’ claim for an ideal horizon, which destroys the reader’s horizon of expectation shaped by a convention of genre step by step.

4 INTO THE GAPS of the MIND: COGNITIVE THEORY

*Tony came in and said he was cooking fish fingers, he said they
tasted okay if they were fried, a curious thing to remember, all memories are curious,
for that matter, the mind as a think of an image Two days I was ill, I
must have thought of Wendy a lot,
then I was full of her [...]*

B. S. Johnson⁴⁶

[...] all human knowledge is uncertain, inexact, and partial.

Bertrand Russell⁴⁷

⁴⁶ *The Unfortunates*

⁴⁷ 527

4.1 THE EMERGENCE OF COGNITIVE THEORY WITH THE INFLUENCE OF INGARDEN and RECEPTION THEORY

The mind has been a subject of interest since the earliest philosophies.⁴⁸ This interest, first at the turn of the 20th century and in its second half, progressed gradually in philosophy, psychology and later in literary theory through phenomenology, Freudian theory and reader response theories. However, phenomenology as well as literary hermeneutics and literary theory lacked empirical evidence on a large scale. The cognitive turn began to remedy the shortcomings of this field.

In the second half of the 20th century, ‘cognitivism’ – based on computational approach to the mind – and generative grammar models initiated a new field of investigation into language and cognition; following cognitivism, linguocentricism in narrative theory often tended to disregard the context and instead focused on the text as an isolated object, neglecting the aspects of reception (Jaen and Simon 2). Structuralism, which took a major turn then, approached readers as “universal, aggregate, hypothetical entities responding in unison” (Bortolussi and Dixon qtd. in Bernaerts et al. 7), disregarding the factor of reception in the reading process as well. It was through RT that a multi-faceted and comprehensive insight into the discussion of meaning-making was achieved, soon leading to the emergence of empirical studies. During the 1980s several literary scholars⁴⁹ pioneered cognitive literary studies by relating narrative theory to empirical research conducted on the cognitive process of text-comprehension. During the 1990s an interaction between the positivist reductionism mentioned above and other disciplines emerged – not to underestimate the significant role of the relativistic post-structuralist theories in this (Jean and Simon 2, 3). Regarding the cognitive turn to *narratology*, a two-wave⁵⁰ model can be adhered to; the first wave importing mostly insights from the cognitive sciences, and the second wave maintaining a subtle awareness of the unique quality that literary works present to cognitive research (Bernaerts et al. 9).

⁴⁸ In the western philosophical tradition, verbal art and its reception are discussed as early as Plato’s *Republic* (c. 380 BC) and Aristotle’s *Poetics* (c. 335 BC) (Jaen and Simon 1).

⁴⁹ Norman Holland, Reuven Tsur, T.A. Van Dijk, and W. Kintsch among others.

⁵⁰ Early pioneers of cognitive literary studies include Holland 1998, Turner 1991, and Tsur 1992. The ‘second wave’ begins in the mid-90s referring mainly to Spolsky 1993 & 2001, Turner 1996, Crane 2001, and Richardson 2001. Highlights of the 2000s include Herman 2002, Hogan 2003, Palmer 2004, Zunshine 2006 & 2010, and Richardson 2010 (Hart xi).

While, on the one hand, the underestimating attitude classical narratology held towards psychological, social, and historical aspects is counterbalanced gradually by theories like Iser's "implied reader", Stanley Fish's "affective stylistics", Paul Grice's "cooperative principles", and Roland Barthes' "readerly text", cognitive science on the other hand discovers the 'storied' nature of perception and sense-making (Jahn 67). In this broad context, cognitive scientist and linguist Mark Turner (*The Literary Mind*, 1996), among other researchers, locates the roots of typical human mental processing in *literary processes* and claims that the cognitive process in humans is based on narrative devices like metaphors, stories, and parables (Turner qtd. in Bernaerts et al. 9). Research in psychology⁵¹ also suggests that human thinking in general is organized around stories (Jaen and Simon 15). All of these insights open up an extensive research field for cognitive narratology.

Within this interdisciplinary map, as it were, the impact and significance of Ingarden's work in relation to cognitive theory (CT) is enormous: "In seeking a foundation for literature in perceptual and cognitive qualities that are universal, and in retaining qualitative judgement as a fundamental activity in literary critical studies, Ingarden sought to integrate literature within a general cognitive ecology" (Tabbi 79). In discussing this development, Bernaerts et al. include Gadamer and the hermeneutic tradition right beside Ingarden:

Before the emergence of narratology and cognitive theory, Ingarden's discussion of the textual organization and the readerly filling out of blanks already deals with issues taken up by recent cognitive approaches. Hans-Georg Gadamer, another key figure in the hermeneutic tradition, uses the term "horizon" to frame the meeting between the mind of the reader and the demands of the text. (5)

The so-called horizons meeting, a major subject in RT, had introduced the concept of *open text*⁵², indicating multiple interpretation possibilities in which no *complete* filling-in the blanks was possible, so that each reading becomes individualized, free of a 'meaning-in-itself' approach and in that respect unlike the structuralism or linguocentricism of the era. Referring to the – in cognitive terms – *pioneering* but "abstract" theories proposed by Iser, Bernaerts et al. define the cognitivist approach as

⁵¹ By, e.g., Jerome Bruner (1986) and Theodora Sarbin (1986), qtd. in Richard Gerrig (2005) (Jaen & Simon 15).

⁵² Another seminal figure in the discourse of reception and multiplicity of meaning is Umberto Eco (*The Open Work*, 1962, rev. 1976 – English translation 1989).

hovering between phenomenology and neurology:

Not unlike cognitive studies, Iser's reception theory offers a model for the understanding of the reader's mental response. That is why his ideas are often integrated in that context. Iser's approach, however, operates on a more abstract level of theorization than the cognitive approach. Instead of dealing with concrete cognitive processes or empirical readers, he adopts a broad phenomenological view [...] on the reader's experience. (6)

It was with cognitive narratology that the hypotheses began to be 'concretized' and stunning insights were gained, such as the afore-mentioned "storied" nature of perception. The completing and coherence-seeking pattern of *gestalt*, which was explained in the previous chapter under Iser's approach, is the pattern that grew into ST in cognitive research. Today, cognitive narratology continues to blend concepts of narratology with concepts from disciplines such as psychology, philosophy of mind, linguistics and neuroscience, integrating positivist and humanistic approaches towards a multidimensional understanding of human reception.

4.2 COGNITIVE PRINCIPLES OF GAPS and MEANING-MAKING

4.2.1 Consciousness: A Patchwork, Composed of Gaps

Significantly, 'gappiness' does not only exist on the textual level, as Ingarden claimed for intentional objects. Consciousness and perception themselves reveal a gappy nature. Daniel Dennett in *Consciousness Explained* (1991) stresses the fact that consciousness is "gappy and sparse"; similarly, Ellen Spolsky in *Gaps in Nature* (1993) underlines that lacunae exist not only in literary interpretation but in the processes of the brain as well (Dennett and Spolsky qtd. in Bernaerts et al. 3). In literature, the gappy, fragmented nature of consciousness can be well observed in works employing stream of consciousness, famously in the writing of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce (Tabbi 79) or outstandingly in post-modern works as in B.S. Johnson, long before scientific findings proved it. In Johnson's *The Unfortunates* (1969) the physical and typographical level of the text contain large spaces in between words such as "Tony we first met because it must have been connected with staying the night or nights at the university union", which are in fact brilliant metaphors for the mind of the reader that also *enable* the reader to see different things and construct new narrative connections (Bernaerts et al. 2).

It is typical of human perception to have limited perceptual and epistemic access to objects. Dealing with gaps in understanding the world is “the daily business of all human minds” (Spolsky qtd. in Auyoung 65). If filling-in-gaps as a major constituent of meaning-making is not only due to the nature of the ontology of literary work and therefore limited to it, but exists in perception per se perpetually, then it is highly plausible that there should be a cognitive skill facilitating this act:

In one experiment, cognitive psychologists tested the identification of objects represented only by a partial set of features (Biederman 1987; Biederman 1995). They began with complete line drawings of objects such as a penguin or an airplane, each composed of nine total components. When subjects were given a subset of just two or three components, the partial image was sufficient to prompt rapid identification of most objects. When three or four components were provided, object recognition became almost 90 percent accurate. Here it is important to note that *recognition takes place in the absence of the object's additional components* [emphasis added]. When presented with a partial image, perceivers do not ‘fill in’ missing features until the image can be identified. Rather, *they must first recognize what the partial image represents* [emphasis added] in order to know which additional features might be appropriate to supply. (Auyoung 65)

This experimental result does not only underline that recognition occurs in the presence of a partial picture with high accuracy, but also stresses the necessity of a mental representation for recognition. This schematic feature of human cognition also helps to understand, recognize, and categorize human emotions. In literature, for instance, Tolstoy mastered the skill of displaying one significant element to guide the reader to a deeper understanding of an emotion: “Tolstoy himself is distinguished for relying on the ‘language of gesture’, in which one ‘glance, one wrinkle, one quiver of a muscle in the face, may express the unutterable’” (Merejkowski qtd. in Auyoung 64).

The results of experimental studies, such as I.A. Richards’ experiment (1929) in which he asked Cambridge undergraduates to read and afterwards comment freely on 13 poems without identifying authorship, demonstrates “reliance on ‘stock experiences’” (Richards qtd. in Potter 16). This view is compatible with the theoretical formulations of Heidegger’s “fore-“ concepts, reviewed in the previous chapter.

CT, similar to the results of cognitive psychologists in the above-cited conclusion by Elaine Auyoung, approaches these perceptual gaps as an intrinsic element of

narratives that the mind requires for processing. Likewise, Bernaerts et al. recognize the paradox in this with their profound definition:

The dynamics and interpretation of narratives depend on the absence of information and on discrepancies between the reader's knowledge and the knowledge possessed by narrators and characters. As narrative theory teaches us, narratives come into being through the interaction between minds and narrative gaps. In brief, there is a profound awareness among theorists of mind as well as theorists of narrative that the construction and interpretation of narratives as coherent wholes paradoxically require gaps, empty spaces, and hidden information. (3)

A comprehensive cognitive narratological approach in which this "interaction between minds and narrative gaps" takes place is the theory known as 'text-world'. This theory suggests that humans understand and process fictional discourse by the ability of constructing detailed mental representations in their minds (Gavins 596), which functions by completing the missing parts using, in cognitive terms, schemata. It is through the mental representations of things described in a sentence or a number of sentences that language users draw inferences about those things, explicitly mentioned or implicitly existent in the discourse.

The next step, regarding both the gappy and complementary nature of perception and of meaning-making, is ST, which will be discussed below.

4.2.2 Meaning-making in Cognitive Terms

Meaning-*making*, Reichl underlines, is something the reader is actively involved with and therefore implies a constructive cognitive activity (16). Since, in the context of this thesis, the type of meaning-making takes place in the interaction between a text and a reader, the basics of this interaction, i.e. how this relationship functions, will be discussed in this section. To begin with basics, a subtle definition concerning perception and the "act of interpretation" is provided by Elisabeth Freund:

In one mode or another, the swerve to the reader assumes that our relationship to reality is not a positive knowledge but a hermeneutic construct, that all perception is already an act of interpretation, that the notion of a 'text-in-itself' is empty, that a poem cannot be understood in isolation from its results, and that subject and object are indivisibly bound. (Freund qtd. in Reichl 17)

There is an inherent human capacity to 'complete' the parts with a whole 'gestalt' that

can be recognized on multiple layers, varying from word recognition to complex levels of comprehension (Reichl 35). Following the hermeneutic and RT aspects to evaluate further in cognitive terms, Auyoung, in an attempt to define comprehension, draws an intrinsic analogy to memory as an actualizing element of comprehension: In doing so, she refers to the still-influential model of three memory categories developed by Teun van Dijk and Walter Kintsch: 1) “The surface code”, which consists of the exact wording and syntax of a text, and often fades very quickly. 2) “The text base” refers to the explicit propositions formulated in the text; without a reference to wording and syntax, this level remains in the memory a little longer; however both types are categorized under “shallow comprehension”. 3) “The referential situation model” is engaged with the state of affairs alluded to by the text. Auyoung asserts that situation models are extremely valuable for the understanding of the literary experience since comprehending a text is essentially made possible, as also mentioned in the previous section, through mental representations (61, 62). The situational model, having sparked debates regarding the way it functions (Auyoung 63), can be seen as an extensive category also for ST due to the inclusion of relationships between situations and characters. Eventually, Auyoung stresses that the mental representations, which she regards as mandatory elements for understanding, are fragmentary and underdetermined (63). This important qualification also indicates of the need for flexibility in schema theory, a point Reichl also indicates as necessary (47).

Following this hypothesis, referring to both the filling-in process of the reader and ST, Auyoung states that “it is the construction of situation models that accounts for the reader’s commonly reported phenomenal experience of creatively ‘filling in’ something that the text itself does not provide, since the reader comes away from the text with mental representations that resemble something other than words on a page” (63). This explanation stresses how decisive one’s own mental representations are to the meaning-making process, which will be connected to ST later in this chapter.

4.2.2.1 *Reading and Cognition*

To define reading, Reichl highlights the following definition by Fokkema and Ibsch (2000) as satisfactory: “Reading is a cognitive and emotive process conditioned by social and cultural conventions. It is an individual activity within a systemic setting” (19). During the reading experience, the mind of the reader is engaged with myriads of

dynamic and complex cognitive processes such as word recognition, sentence parsing, semantic comprehension, constructing associations, inferences about characters' intentions, and assumptions regarding authorial intentions (Bortolussi and Dixon 23). According to Jackendoff's (1987) model of the reading process, the perception of the text follows firstly a line of various modules such as letter recognition, phonological and syntactic analysis, before a 'conceptual representation'⁵³ takes place (Jahn 69). These modules already entail the process of filling-in:

The human mind compensates for the fact that it cannot possibly process every detail of a situation, and fills in the gaps between isolated statements to produce a coherent whole (Emmott 1997: 113), a process that is sometimes also referred to as "gapping" (Spolsky 2005). Thus, reading is an activity that is based very much on prior knowledge and on memory [...]. (Reichl 35)

The role of "prior knowledge" has already been highlighted in the chapter on RT. Memory, as defined above, is the network combining prior knowledge with the text read. An essential analogy between gaps and memory, the realizing components of the reading process, is drawn by Reichl with reference to the British psychologist Frederic Bartlett's pioneering work on memory (1932). Bartlett demonstrated that much of perception is memorizing, i.e. the perceptual gaps are to be filled from memory (35). In particular, and specifically with regard to readers' memory, psychologists⁵⁴ have shown that readers can be quite inattentive to what they read, not focusing on all the details given in a text, thus concluding that the "depth of processing" is often shallow (Emmott et al. 40-41).

Regarding the reading process and schematicity, Bundgaard also asserts that "there is a fundamental analogy between the way things are given in perception and the way things are represented or described in literary artworks, and thus between perception and reading experience" and makes a connection to schematicity by stating that "in both domains, i.e. also in perceptual experience, objects are mainly given as schematic entities" (179).

⁵³ Conceptual representations, being a key term for the theory of reading, are maintained by various ways: by motor actions, e.g. laughing or crying, by allowing one to 'sound' the words of the narrator and/or characters as well as the production of visual imagery (Herman 69).

⁵⁴ Ferreira et al. (2002), A.J. Sanford (2002), A.J. Sanford and Sturt (2002), A.J. Sanford and Graeser (2006) (qtd. in Emmott et al. 41).

4.2.2.2 *Opening Worlds*

In the late 1970s, a number of experiments⁵⁵ strikingly demonstrated that in the initial phases of sentence recognition, humans do indeed test a range of multiple options before a commitment to a single reading reaches conscious awareness (Jahn 68). This suggests that there are, at the very moment of encountering a sentence, particularly an opening sentence, multiple options (schemata) are scanned rapidly, an intense cognitive process taking place while the reader figures out relevant schemata.

Another experiment, conducted by Louise Rosenblatt over 25 years, gave important insights into the determining effect of paratext in meaning-making. Distributing poems without any writer or other identifying information,⁵⁶ Rosenblatt asked graduate students to write down whatever comes to their mind as soon as possible after beginning to read. The result is that “readers respond actively to short texts ‘shuttling back and forth’ to ‘reinterpret earlier parts of the text in the light of later parts’” (Potter 18). In the case of opening lines, since there is no previous sentence that readers can resort to – excluding the title –, the meaning-making structure besides being highly dependent on the assumptions and presuppositions of the reader as discussed in the previous chapter, is at the same time also re-organized, according to the experiment’s results, with new words and phrases. The observed “shuttling back and forth” is, arguably, frequent during opening lines, essentially due to as-yet-unestablished schematicity. The removal of contextual information in the experiment leads to feelings of helplessness in the readers (Potter 17), underlining the importance of contextual and paratextual elements in literary reading.

This experiment’s results also indicate another important insight in terms of memory’s alert state during the experience of reading opening lines. It seems that readers have a relatively alert cognitive process of “shuttling back and forth” at the openings in trying to untangle relationships between characters, identifying minor and major characters, linking pronouns to characters, and identifying time and place.

Another method, known as the *continuation experiment* in psychology, offers helpful evidence in supporting the hypothesis above. In this method, the participants are given

⁵⁵ Numerous experiments have been conducted by David Swinney and his collaborators.

⁵⁶ A similar experiment was previously conducted by Ivor Armstrong Richards (1929).

an initial data – e.g. a word, a phrase, a sentence –, and are then asked to write down a continuation to that part. When focused primarily on the meaning-making process and ST, it can be suggested that due to the lack of syntactic, semantic and narrative elements that are necessary to *frame* a narrative and to supply a context, the continuation to a first sentence (reminding us of Kierkegaard's statement "[...] because the subject is still free") would entail more variations in interpretation, i.e. in schemata, compared to a later stage of a narrative, when the plot and framing of the narrative are already settled.

Openings, charged with expectations, contain patterns of knowledge and function as the first steps to comprehension. Moreover, "[openings] influence the way and the thing people perceive" (Quendler 337) and thus play, as significant junctures in a narrative, a significant role in the meaning construction. ST, being based on the principles introduced above, is discussed below.

4.3 SCHEMA THEORY

Forming beliefs, statements and thoughts as well as meaning-making itself are all based heavily on the "filling-in" of limited and partial perception. As Auyoung underlines, "[w]e are constantly faced with the cognitive challenge of having to form beliefs about objects, persons, and situations that are represented to us only in limited ways" (63).

ST, a sub-discipline of CT, is founded on the principles of gestalt psychology (Cook 4). I will begin with two intertwined cognitive elements related to it, namely memory and pattern recognition. Similar to Bartlett's conclusion above, Bortolussi and Dixon also assert that the most important reading-related process is memory (23). Reichl, including the memory factor into her definition, underlines that pattern recognition is a memory-based process that links new input with previous knowledge, which indeed constitutes the basis of ST:

[...] humans are innately equipped to seek and find patterns and impose order on what they see. Pattern recognition, defined as the way "we recognize environmental stimuli as exemplars of concepts already in memory" (Leahey and Harris 2001:146), concerns all levels of information processing and is also the basis for problem-solving [...]. (33-34)

The use of the term “schema”, historically, goes back to Kant, nevertheless the idea of schema, more specifically the theory that discourse fills in the default elements, may be indebted to Husserl’s theory of the “manifold”⁵⁷ (Cook 15, 16).

Ingarden also uses the term noticeably in his “schematized aspects”. The third and fourth stratum of literary work in Ingarden’s view consists of “schematized aspects” and “represented objectivities”⁵⁸, which together, according to Cook, resemble ST (176). Re-phrasing successful representation as being dependent on the representation of previous experience (which includes memory and pattern recognition skills), Cook not only draws an analogy to Ingarden but also to the concept of “horizon of expectations” in RT (176). He furthermore claims that “[...] Ingarden’s work and its continuation in reception theory has certain elements in common with the approach [he is] advocating [...]” (175). Thus, Cook’s work constitutes a salient contribution in this chapter, for he is one of the few theorists highlighting the degree of similarity and development among these three theories, asserting that Ingarden’s central arguments are as valid today as eighty years ago (177). This is even more pertinent in the context of ST, recalling Ingarden’s claim that “only a detailed analysis of both the individual strata and the kind of connection arising from them can disclose the peculiar structure of the literary work” (*Literary* 33). In an attempt to pinpoint a shortcoming of Ingarden’s theory of filling-out, Peer Bundgaard, a contemporary Husserl and Ingarden scholar working on both cognitive narratology and phenomenology, argues that perception is goal-driven, thus not everything is filled out; there are also empty spots in a text that the mind does not fill-out depending on their purpose in the narrative (Ingarden 183,186).

As for the definition of schema, Jean Mandler provides a succinct summary:

A schema provides a type of information that is useful in guiding comprehension and a base information upon which to construct the inferences that are necessary to understand connected text. A schema also provides a retrieval mechanism in the form of temporally guided search plans, as well as a *reconstructive mechanism to fill in gaps in memory* [emphasis added]. (Mandler qtd in Quandler 339)

Above, the intrinsic gap-filling mechanism of schema in meaning-making process is clearly identified. According to ST, the mind is stimulated by either (or both) some

⁵⁷ “The sum of the particulars furnished by sense before they have been unified by understanding” (Holub qtd. in Cook 16).

⁵⁸ See Chapter 1 for more details.

linguistic items or by the context – a general term for the stimulation is “triggering”⁵⁹ – and thus activates a schema (Cook 11). Cook’s explanation sheds further light on the way this mechanism operates: “[...] a new experience is understood by comparison with a stereotypical version, of a similar experience held in memory. The new experience is then processed in terms of its deviation from the stereotypical version, or conformity to it”, a theory that supplies a striking method in AI research and the understanding of texts (9). The leading schemata are evoked in relation to other schemata (Cook 222), a claim that indeed bears principal similarity to Saussure’s theory of language based on differences.

Bundgaard, while focusing on the schematic nature of perception, divides the schematicity of perception into two sub-sections: intentional and attentional. Intentional schematicity of perception attends to things according to some of their qualities: an apple as an object of certain shape, size, as red, as a fruit or as an edible thing, if one is hungry. As John Searle claims, in perception people aspectually shape the object of experience according to the properties that people intend (Searle qtd. in *Ingarden*, 179-80). This approach is essentially a further elaboration of Husserl’s claim that perception is intentional⁶⁰. Regarding attentional schematicity, while referring to Ingarden’s theory of indeterminacies, Bundgaard claims that the perceived object is indeed individualized in perception (180). Relevancy is a significant factor in attentional schematicity: experiments⁶¹ show that humans do not notice and register changes in an object that are not task-relevant⁶² (181).

Within this context, Bundgaard remarkably claims that readers, because of the schematic nature of perceptual experience, may keep their filling-out *general* and *vague*, unless the text does not lead them otherwise, i.e. *specifically* and *in detail*. The degree of this is eventually a significant medium for the meaning-making process (182) by guiding the reader on which aspects to focus on.

To exemplify the application of ST briefly, let us examine a narration of four sentences below:

⁵⁹ A term used by Jacques Pitrat (Cook 11).

⁶⁰ See *Consciousness and Intentionality* in Chapter 2

⁶¹ See the Canadian cognitive scientist and philosopher Zenon Pylyshyn’s “multiple object tracking” (MOT) (2000).

⁶² This fact is called “inattention blindness” by Kevin O’Regan and Daniel Simons (reference).

I woke up at seven forty. I made toast and a cup of tea. I listened to the news.
And I left for work at about eight thirty. (Cook 12)

ST asserts that the 'default elements' of the schema are filled-in, which in cognitive terms is the response to the question of 'gaps' (unmentioned qualities and elements) being filled in:

When the sender of a message judges an interlocutor's schema to correspond to a significant degree with his or her own, then it is only necessary to mention specific features which are not contained in it [...], other features (like getting out of bed and getting dressed) will be assumed to be present by default, unless otherwise stated. (Cook 12)

People often fill-in details that are not stated in the text but obtained from the relevant schema (Bartlett (1932) qtd. in Cook 12); for instance, a reader's reply to the question of what the character in the example above had for breakfast might be that he *ate* toast, which is not mentioned in the text: "This mental ability to 'read in' details is particularly relevant to literary narrative, in which readers are given points of reference and left to fill in the gaps 'from imagination'" (Cook 13). A second example below refers to opening lines. Many narratives in their openings use the definite article, which in fact does not relate to a previous indefinite noun and thus does not possess a default element either, such as the opening line of François Mauriac's novel *Therese Desqueyroux*:

L'avokat ouvrit une porte.

(The lawyer opened the door) (Cook 13)

Cook explains that this creates the effect for the reader, although the schema is in fact unknown, that he continues reading *as if* a relevant, familiar schema is shared with the narrator and/or characters, which creates a degree of involvement and "drives the reader forward to construct the necessary schema as quickly as possible" (Cook 13). Therefore, use of a definite article in the opening line is a motivational 'maneuver' the writer performs, creating the illusion that the reader is familiar with this fictional dimension while causing readers to find themselves thrown right into the middle of the scenery.

From a semantic perspective, the way homonymy and polysemy function in the context

of particularly opening lines, with reference to W.G. Lehnert (1979), indicates how meaning-making dependent on the activated schema leads to one interpretation among many others, known also as “expectation-driven understanding” (Cook 12-13).

There is, however, an abundance of terminologies within the broad confines of ST, resulting in a highly confusing discourse. Cook argues that new terms introduced are often approximate redefinitions of old ideas, therefore creating an unnecessary chaos, such as Marvin Minsky’s “frame”, “global concepts”, “scenarios” or “encyclopedic entries”, which are roughly synonyms to schemata (20). His suggestion for dealing with this confusion is to agree on a general term that ideally has some sub-categories – his own sub-categories to be discussed below are “world shema”, “text schema”, and “language schema”. He adopts the term “schema”, which is Reichl’s choice as well after drawing attention to the confusing range of definitions where sources display conflictive definitions of schemata, frames and scripts (47).

While generally enabling, schema – as a further link to Iser’s constructive approach to readers’ judgements and subjective histories in the interpretation process – can also become a potential obstacle to understanding, since “the mind must build new schemata and adjust existing ones if it is to adapt to new experience” (Cook 10).

4.3.1 SCHEMA REFRESHMENT

Schemata, while helping meaning-making in cases of high inflexibility, can also hinder or prevent it. As humans often go through new situations and need to adapt to them or experiment with them, unchanging schemata can at times become unhelpful (Cook 182). By now, along with three theories and disciplines, the relevancy-centered function of, chronologically, “filling out”, “gestalt” and “horizon” and “schemata” have been discussed. However, in some cases the interaction between the perceiver and schema can be reciprocal and dynamic. Cook puts this as follows:

While any interaction with new experience or text may be of this kind, and may effect changes in schemata while simultaneously using them in processing, there may also be experiences and discourses whose primary function is to alter schemata [...]. Many works, which are regarded as literary may stimulate this kind of relation. (183)

The change and reorganization of schemata are similarly recognized as a need of human beings in the work of Bartlett and Roger Schank (Cook 188). However, both Bartlett and Schank in their research of the way ST functions focus only on the fabula of the texts they use (e.g. the discussion of why *West Side Story* reminds the participants of *Romeo and Juliet*), disregarding syuzhet; furthermore, Schank neither focuses on the role of language nor on text structure (Cook 189). While in short story openings, it can often be the case that fabula and syuzhet are not identical, remembering the brief description that fabula is the beginning of the story whereas syuzhet is the beginning of its telling (Richardson 7), it is at least certain that one's meaning-making process begins with syuzhet.

Experimenting and 'learning by playing' in direct interaction with the unfictional world and unfictional people is not always possible due to the importance of consequences for individuals; thus, "[...] change is best effected through a kind of linguistic experience which, though it may describe interaction with other people or the environment, is not itself part of that interaction" (Cook 189-190). This approach, while drawing a line between spoken language (a direct interaction with people) and written language (offering more 'freedom' and experimentality in interaction) crucially highlights how literature uniquely takes an active role in schema refreshments. Regarding schema refreshment, significant concepts to bear in mind are deviation and three sub-categories of schema: world schema, text schema and language schema.

Deviation, as mentioned previously, has a tendency to occur due to readers' expectations (thus it is never absolute) and is defined by its binary position to "normality", in which neither would *mean* without the other (Cixous and Clement qtd. in Cook 129, 198). In a given text, there can be degrees of both "deviance" and "normality" (Cook 202). Deviations in literature are often judged positively: "A predictive structural approach cannot cope with deviant though coherent discourse" (Cook 46).

Regarding sub-categories of schema established by Cook, which I will refer to during the analysis section, Cook defines world schema as the schematic organization of knowledge of the world (15). Regarding world schema, e.g., a series of experiments⁶³ demonstrated that on the question of describing their houses or flats, almost all participants began the description with the entrance, following the rooms branching off

⁶³ By C.Linde and W.Labov (1975).

the entrance, and returning to the hallway when they were done (Cook 15). This clearly suggests a set pattern.

Text schema, in contrast, is the typical ordering of facts in both real and fictional worlds, which are in interaction (Cook 15). However, this interaction can result in certain text type's imposing their own organization on the world schema: An example of this is the narration of a murder in the cases of either reporting it to the police or as a mystery story, in the latter of which the initial event would come at the end; thus, Cook asserts that various text schemata can be imposed on a single world schema (15).

Lastly, language schema in interaction with text schema can display deviations or normality according to the text type. Cook's insight into the interaction between these sub-categories is given below:

A reader's feeling that the text structure or linguistic choices of a given discourse are normal or deviant derives from a comparison of its text structure (T) and its language (L) with the reader's pre-existing text schemata S(T) and language schemata S(L). The interaction of these interactions creates the illusion of a 'world' in the discourse (W), which can then be compared with the world schemata of the reader, yielding a judgement as to the normality or deviance of that illusory world. [...] The 'world' of the discourse, however, can only come into being through the interaction of its language and text structure with the language schemata, text schemata, and world schemata in the reader. (201)

Mental exceptions aside, each reader has schemata on all levels, namely S(W), S(T), and S(L). A given text contains language and text structure (L,T). All these levels are interactive. However, it is impossible to deliver a complete description of how schema refreshment is effected by language and text structure. Cook explains the reasons for this impasse as follows:

Firstly, the description must involve a description of the relevant pre-existing schemata of a specified reader. As such, the description remains speculative and open-ended (the number of potential readers, or of schemata employed by any particular reader, being virtually infinite and inaccessible). Secondly, it is in the nature of the literary beast to be unpredictable. Predictions are schematic. Schemata are predictive. Yet the effect the theory seeks to describe is schema disruption. What could be predicted would not be disruptive. (199)

Therefore, although a schema is accessible for definitional approaches, schema disruption can be challenging to pin down. The result of the interaction of S(W) with S(T) and S(L) may change or add to existing schemata, or lead to new ones (Cook

202-203). A deviant text structure indeed introduces new combinations of meaning-making, which were not present in the pre-existing schemata before. When schemata change, an interaction starts again with the new schema form, according to Cook, which explains part of the joy people still can obtain in re-reading texts (205).

The judgements Cook mentions above are subject to constant change during the reading process, on re-reading and within as well as between readers (Cook 202). This conclusion is highly similar to the points made in the hermeneutic circle part of the thesis.

Cook, throughout his own approach to schema, stresses the power of written text and language being able to change world schemata: “The suggestion that changes in text and language schemata can affect world schemata, or that world schemata implies a degree of belief in linguistic relativity, in that it sees S(W)s as being potentially affected by language and text, and vice versa” (205-206). It is through this interaction between the text and existing schemata that meaning is achieved. Therefore, the meaning-making process is a mechanism that is open to changes, especially through literary devices. This implicitly suggests an answer to the title of Richard J. Gerrig’s article “Why Literature Is Necessary, And Not Just Nice” (35).

4.4 ANALYSIS

Beyond the conceptual points elaborated in the theory section specific to opening lines, several points must be stressed regarding the analysis section.

Opening lines as the framing narrative activate schemata, create expectations depending on those schemata, and – in turn depending on those schemata – either bypass the details or add details that are not mentioned in the text but by default belong to the schemata of readers. Meaning-making, during the opening lines of a narrative, is not only a semantic process on the word and sentence level, but significantly also on the contextual level. As there are no previous text-based reference points, titles and opening line(s) arguably rely heavily on the readers’ own associative schemata, more so than a reading experience in which some degree of framing information has already been communicated. Conducting experimental research based on the ‘continuation experiment’ mentioned in the theory section, in which the

continuation results between a text approached from opening lines and from a later stage are compared, would be one of the evaluative approaches to measure this. The interpretative results in this section, based on my mental representations only, due to the *focused* attention factor directed to the selected opening lines, entail the possibility of over-interpretation and excessive filling-in. This condition would naturally produce results that, in practice, should not be evaluated as test-results given several established insights, such as readers' general tendency to have a low level of attention or fill-in either vaguely or even not at all according to the relevance of the data for the context.

In cognitive analysis, each reader, due to the variation of their own individual schemata, would have varying degrees of different interpretational access to each text. It should be underlined that the interpretations dependent on various schemata in this section are 'absolute' only for me as the interpreter, although it is quite likely that many of them would be shared by other readers.

During the analyses, the schemata (e.g. b/v/j) that certain words (e.g. "X") and phrases from the story opening activate will be given in the structure of "X": b/v/j. In the schematic context, the terms normative and normal will be used as synonyms.

4.4.1 Half Past Four⁶⁴

A New Life

Stephan blushed. A fair-skinned man, bald to the crown, he blushed clear pink. He hugged Ann with one arm as she kissed his cheek. "Good to see you, honey," he said, freeing himself, glancing past her, and smiling rather desperately.

Le Guin's sub-titling of the story suggests further sub-titling in the story structure, i.e. perhaps several but at least one more sub-title. This knowledge is based on previous textual schemata that the reader has become familiar with, where a subtitle under a heading signals that another subtitle will emerge later. Thus, the textual schema activated by the sub-title fills-in a structural assumption while creating expectation.

⁶⁴ *Earth* 249.

This two-titled structure is an illustrative example for displaying schema functioning and filling-in of the default elements: The semantic and narrative gaps to fill-in are highly evident between two titles due to the lack of syntactic elements that would allow one to narrow down the associative schemata.

“Half Past Four”: time/ afternoon/ rush-hour/ a minor incident (e.g. encountering somebody, having an afternoon coffee) or major incident (e.g. death, birth)

In the title a specific time is mentioned, but the agent(s) and the action are not; therefore, the perception fills-in and relies on the thought that at half past four something *happened to someone*.

“A New Life”: beginning/ change / birth

With the inclusion of the subtitle, the filling-in is constructed as ‘a new life must have begun at half past four’, linking two phrases to each other in a relevant manner and adding the verb per default.

Stephan blushed.

“Stephan”: male/ common first name in English

“blushed”: pink/ standing still/ an encounter/ a revelation

The story opens up the fabula level through third-person narration. A male character is introduced in a blushing scene. The mental representation for the character Stephan, e.g., would be different in each reader, as well as the filled-in assumption(s) activated for the blushing.

A fair-skinned man, bald to the crown, he blushed clear pink.

“A fair-skinned man”: white man

“Bald to the crown”: middle aged/ poor/ royal crown

While the man’s skin color is described, his height and other physical traits are to be filled-in by the reader’s mental representations. The use of “crown” demonstrates an example for how perception selects one meaning out of others in cases of polysemy. There is no kingdom-associated context at this point in the text. The characterization of

Stephan is, conversely, kept quite simple in a way that creates a stark opposition to a hypothetical character whose name would be King Stephan. “Bald to the crown”, while stating that he has lost all his hair, which is the initial meaning, in a second layer activates a sub-meaning associatively referring to a royal crown and implies that he has also lost “the crown”. Here, while one meaning stands out, the relationship to the other is kept bound by implication, enriching the unstated but implied meaning of the text.

The second part of the sentence reinforces the meaning of the first sentence, stabilizing, repeating, and visualizing it so that the “blush” of Stephan does not fade out of the weak memory of the reader.

He hugged Ann with one arm as she kissed his cheek.

“Ann”: female/ common first name in English

“He hugged Ann with one arm”: semi-distance & semi-closeness/ familiarity

“as she kissed his cheek”: comfortable and close greeting/ familiarity

If the sentence had been formulated as “He hugged Ann”, the mental representation of hugging as an act generally performed with two arms would have been supplemented by default. However, as Le Guin describes the hugging specifically as happening “with one arm”, the schema of typical hugging is replaced by a specific type of hugging that draws increased attention. How close are they? “One arm” draws attention to the familiarity level of these two characters.

“Good to see you, honey,” he said, freeing himself, glancing past her, and smiling rather desperately.

“‘Good to see you, honey,’ he said”: familiarity/ closeness

“freeing himself”: relief/ repression

“glancing past her”: pensiveness

“smiling rather desperately”: something’s being hidden/ inwardness

Following the “one arm” hug, the appearance of the word “honey” intensifies the mind’s search in figuring out the degree and type of relationship these two characters have. Since the story begins with a focus on the two characters’ encounter with no external

description, along with the title implications of a “new life”, not knowing whether both of them are to be the major characters in the story, I take for granted that they are until the contrary is implied. This zoomed-in-on scene between a male and female character with a “blush” effect mentioned begins to fill-in the scene contextually. The word “freeing” activates a schema of repression and limitation.

According to both world and text schemata, blushing, greeting somebody and speaking words of welcoming all follow a normative trajectory, which nevertheless does not avoid the curiosity regarding the blush, which will accompany the reader to the next sentence, and the next. In terms of world, textual, and language schemata, all three levels perform on the normality end of the scale as opposed to deviant.

4.4.2 Ether, OR⁶⁵

For the Narrative Americans

Edna

I never go in the Two Blue Moon any more. I thought about that when I was arranging the grocery window today and saw Corrie go in across the street and open up. Never did go into a bar alone in my life.

“Ether, OR”: Either or

The story begins with a deviation in language schema, both in the title and dedication line. The deviation in the title occurs in three layers: on the morphological, orthographical, punctuational and stylistic level.

Firstly the title, despite the missing letter “i”, the comma in between and the capitalization of “or”, is linked to the expression “either or” in the reader’s memory, as if it were an oddly type-set anagram of “either or”. The comma and the capitalization of the second word make the title stylistically interesting as well as semantically, despite

⁶⁵ *Earth* 233.

its blank referent, a case similar to the use of the word “Omelas” in the title of Chapter 1. In the normative textual schema, when two nouns are placed side by side in a title, they are often divided and interrelated by the conjunction “and” instead of a comma. “Ether, OR” with its deviation on the language level creates awe and interest.

For the Narrative Americans

“Narrative Americans”: history/ white supremacy/ story-telling tradition

Similarly, the dedication is a deformation and re-arrangement of an idiomatic phrase. “For the Narrative Americans”, a word-play constructed on a deviation of “Native Americans”, activates the schema of Native Americans, while drawing self-reflective attention to the *textual narrative* to follow. The meaning-making of “Narrative Americans” depends on its reliance on the established term ‘native Americans’. Perception thus fills-in “Native Americans” in the meaning-making of “Narrative Americans”, while drawing an analogy between native and narrative. More specifically, this schema refreshment creates a new way of thinking, a link between Native Americans and narratives.

“Edna”: Mount Etna/ female name / place name

The subtitle, similar to the previous story opening, initiates a holistic schema regarding the rest of the story. In contrast to the prior example of two adjacent titles and the semantic link created between them, in this example the heading and the subtitle lack any outstanding referent and thus do not offer any semantic unification.

Schemata are organized through knowledge and experience. The first schema this term activates is Mount Etna (through phonological pattern recognition), the active volcano in Italy. To arrive at this schema, my perception plays with letters and relates an “unidentified” word to another, similarly patterned word from my memory, i.e. Mount Edna. Alternatively, person and place name schemata emerge.

Through the “shuttling back and forth” movement of meaning-making, namely while re-considering the subtitle in the context of the dedication, my schema of the Italian Mountain is backgrounded due to the contextual assumption that the story should in some ways be related to Native Americans and must thus take place in America.

Therefore, the initial schema surfacing through pattern-similarity (i.e. Mount Edna) fades out, as it does not seem to be very relevant, once considered in light of the dedication line.

I never go in the Two Blue Moon any more.

“I never go in the Two Blue Moon any more”: anger/ disappointment/ repentance

“Two Blue Moon”: café, pub

The story beginning with first-person narration in present tense, an indicator of fabula taking place, provides a schema of emotions: The schemata actualized by “never” and “any more” are related to anger, disappointment or regret. This is an emotionally loaded opening line, creating the expectation that a full-blown narration is to follow. There is a small grammatical deviation, as those two words are often used in future tense, i.e. ‘I will never go in the Two Blue Moon anymore. The next grammatical deviation is the missing plural “s” in “Two Blue Moon”, which is read as the proper name of some sort of café or pub.

I thought about that when I was arranging the grocery window today and saw Corrie go in across the street and open up.

“I thought about that when I was arranging the grocery window today”: working in a grocery shop

“saw Corrie go in across the street and open up” : female character/ a friend, an acquaintance working in Two Blue Moon / conflict with Corrie

The cause-and-effect relationship between thinking about not going into Two Blue Moon anymore when seeing Corrie initiates some relationship-related schemata to emerge, such as a conflict.

Never did go into a bar alone in my life.

“Never did go into a bar alone in my life”: timidity/ pressure

This sentence also shows a language deviation, this time indicating qualities of spoken language, by the omission of the grammatical subject. The narration seems to have qualities of spoken language, creating the impression that the character is narrating

the story ‘verbally’ to the reader. The first-person narration might suggest that Edna stands for the female person narrating, a trait of perception trying to combine the new with the previous in a coherently fashion.

Thus, in the space of three sentences two characters, a setting, some emotional density, and a hypothetical conflict are all transmitted as the platform upon which the rest of the story would progress.

4.4.3 Imaginary Countries⁶⁶

“We can’t drive to the river on Sunday,” the baron said, “because we’re leaving on Friday.” Two little ones gazed at him across the breakfast table. Zida said, “Marmalade, please,” but Paul, a year older, found in a remote, disused part of his memory a darker dining-room from the windows of which one saw rain falling. “Back to the city?” he asked. His father nodded.

“Imaginary Countries”: unreal/ fictional places/ utopia/ imagination

Beginning with a location-centered title, the title activates schemata of utopia and imagination in general terms.

We can’t drive to the river on Sunday,” the baron said, “because we’re leaving on Friday.

“We”: other characters / audience

“can’t drive”: negation/ disallowance/ authority/ car

“to the river on Sunday,”: nature

“the baron said,” : king & queen / old-fashioned / fairy tale

“because we’re leaving on Friday”: departure

The opening line, indicating a third-person narration, begins right in the middle of a scene by means of a direct speech of ‘the’ baron, a feudal nobleman, showing coherence with the ‘fictionality’ implication the title created. Although there probably still are barons nowadays somewhere, in my world schemata, this title belongs more to

⁶⁶ *Earth 73.*

the fictional realm than the real. Thus, my perception, due to the combination of the words “imaginary” and “baron”, fill-in the expectation of a story that takes place in an imaginary realm.

The opening line uses a definite article, in a characteristic move exemplified in the theory section, for a character who was not mentioned before: “the’ baron”. This creates the impression of a certain familiarity with the character. Beyond the motivational influence it embodies for the reading experience, this litero-linguistic device makes the transition of the reader from the non-fictional world to the fictional one smoother. The use of the pronoun “we” makes the reader fill-in the presence of other characters or audience around the baron.

“The two little ones gazed at him across the breakfast table.”

“The two little ones”: baron’s children

“gazed at him”: silence/ surprise

“across the breakfast table”: indoors/ morning/ dining room/ having breakfast

The schema activated with “the two little ones” is that of the close family, making them the baron’s children, while perception fills-in this information by drawing links between them sitting at a breakfast table until not stated otherwise. Another evident filling-in in this sentence is how sitting at a breakfast table is perceived with its default element of the character’s *having* breakfast. “Breakfast table”, additionally, helps the reader fill-in that the story takes place indoors, and that it is possibly morning hours, all offering an initial setting for the story. The scene in which the breakfast table is set is thus filled-in as ‘dining room’ instead of, e.g., a ‘kitchen’ due to the link to the baron. Thus, the reference point breakfast table leads the reader to fill-in an entire interior setting for the story, in particular a dining room.

Le Guin reinforces the breakfast-table scene visually by adding “marmalade” in the following sentence – similar to her repeating the blushing of Stephan with the color pink in the previous story.

Zida said, “Marmalade, please,” but Paul, a year older, found in a remote, disused part of his memory a darker dining-room from the windows of which one saw rain falling.

“Zida”: one of the little ones/ a girl

“but Paul, a year older,”: older brother

“found in a remote, disused part of his memory”: memory/ distance

“a darker dining-room from the windows of which one saw rain falling”: daydreaming/ gloom/ isolation

Le Guin, compressing the story masterfully without squandering an unnecessary word, concretizes “the little ones” by name in the second sentence. While Zida asks for marmalade, the view of omniscient narration zooms in on her one-year-old brother Paul’s thoughts, where the description of a darker dining room is given; the comparative suffix “-er” functioning as a confirmation for the dining-room setting of the breakfast table. The combination of “darker” and “rain” paints a gloomy and isolated picture, in contrast to the river (nature) imagery obtained before. Could this be a city? The phrase that is intended to be filled-in with a more complex level of interpretation and attention is “in a remote, disused part of his memory”. This phrase suggests further meanings, such as Paul not having visited that darker dining room for a long while now and disliking it there – for the simple reason that he does not have any engagement in his mind with that place. While drifting in Paul’s thoughts, the reader becomes closer to him as a character with this zoom-in.

“Back to the city?” he asked. His father nodded.

“Back to the city?” he asked: nature vs. city/ living in the city before

“His father nodded”: baron is the father

In these last schemata, while the schema nature vs. city is confirmed, the word “back” fills-in the meaning that they have come from the city. Lastly, the schema relating the baron and the two little ones as father and children at a breakfast table is confirmed. Thus, Le Guin masters creating time, setting, character introspection and interaction, and relational ties as the initial and subtle framework.

4.4.4 Texts⁶⁷

Messages came, Johanna thought, usually years too late, or years before one could crack their code or had even learned the language they were in. Yet they came

⁶⁷ *Earth* 185.

increasingly often and were so urgent, so compelling in their demand that she read them, that she do something, as to force her at last to take refuge from them. She rented, for the month January, a little house with no telephone in a seaside town that had no mail delivery.

“*Texts*”: written language

The one-word, generalized, ordinarily simple title does not imply anything about the type of texts it refers to, except for the only clear schema being ‘written language’.

Messages came, Johanna thought, usually years too late, or years before one could crack their code or had even learned the language they were in.

“*Messages*”: text messages/ technological device / hand-written notes/ metaphor/ refugees

“*usually years too late, or years before*”: a large span of time

“*crack their code*”: coded / decrypt / translation / language

“*the language they were in*”: foreign language

The schematic organization for “messages” in today’s high-tech culture initiates the filling-in of the “messages” in digital terms. The linear reading of “texts” and “messages” links these words. It is the third person omniscient narration through which we end up – and really begin the story – being in Johanna’s mind. “Years too late” and “years before” causes a world-schematic ambiguity, which then opens up a new schema for “messages” in a metaphoric sense. Is the term being used in a rather metaphoric sense, implying something highly significant? Within this ambiguity, in which the terms “texts” and “messages” themselves become ‘coded’, the meaning-making process gains a dynamic quality in trying to find and select an initial schema for the type of texts and messages.

Thus, the opening sentence itself acts like a code that needs to be cracked by the reader by not offering a clear schema. There is a great amount of ambiguity regarding the type of codes, how they arrive, how they are cracked, and their placement and movement in time. This enigmatic referential state, also causing a new schema to emerge (i.e. messages as a metaphor), leads the reader to the second sentence looking for more information. In terms of language schema, however, there is a

coherent composition in the use of the words and phrases “texts”, “messages”, “crack their code”, and “learn the language they were in”.

Yet they came increasingly often and were so urgent, so compelling in their demand that she read them, that she do something, as to force her at last to take refuge from them.

“increasingly often”, “urgent”, “compelling”, “demand”, “read them”, “do something”, “force her”: pressure/ demanding

“force her at last to take refuge from them”: causality/ escape/ action

The second sentence, still keeping the schemata of “texts” and “messages” unclear, offers a coherent *pressure* schema by use of the words “increasingly often”, “urgent”, “compelling”, “demand”, “read them”, “do something”, and “force her”.

Is the demanding nature of these coded “messages” on Johanna so much that she has to escape from *them*? Who are they, and what are they asking for? Within the ongoing search for a relevant context for the story under the looming presence of “messages”, today’s political discourse intervenes with the ambiguity, supplementing a schema for “refugees” and a call for help. Thus, in the previous stage, metaphorically schematized “messages” are now within a new schema constellation and concretely schematized as tangible, real messages from people who have to flee. Is Johanna working for an aid organization? Is she attempting to take refuge from refugees? It is all puzzling or, with reference to Kierkegaard as discussed in the first chapter, the signified of “messages” is still broadly free.

As observed, the presence of an indefinite referent causes a multiplicity of schemata, which might be interpreted variously by each reader until a more definite context regarding “texts” and “messages” lead to one schematicity.

“She rented, for the month January, a little house with no telephone in a seaside town that had no mail delivery.”: Winter / escape/ sea-shore/ call and mail avoidance

With reading the third sentence, the rather abstract context of the storyline is partly concretized: It is wintertime, and she escapes to a sea-shore house where there is no

telephone and mail access. The use of “delivery” causes the selection of the analogue mail delivery schema instead of a digital mail service schema.

4.4.5 The Diary of the Rose⁶⁸

30 August

Dr. Nades recommends that I keep a diary of my work. She says that if you keep it carefully, when you read it you can remind yourself of observations you made, notice errors and learn from them, and observe progress in or deviations from positive thinking, and so keep correcting in the course of your work by a feedback process.

“*Diary*”: first person narration/ inner thoughts and feelings

“*the Rose*”: a female character/ a ‘special’ character

The title introduces a typified textual schema, creating the expectation for a first person narration to follow. The definite article, this time present in the title, while corresponding to previous insights into the use of the definite article, also causes the presumed character “Rose” to step out as a special Rose among others. Due to the capitalization of the initial of Rose and contextual elements (“diary of”), the polysemic nature of the word rose is directed towards the schema of the female name.

“*30 August*”: diary entry date / end of summer

By reading the entry on this date, within the textual schema of a dairy, the reader fills-in the schematic assumption that on the following pages there will be further date-entries chronologically ordered from 30 August onward. The year is missing in the date, which might easily be filled-in by the reader with a contemporary year, as long as no reference to a specific past or future time is given.

In this example, before the opening line of the story, the main character, the typology of the text to follow, and the time in which the narration takes place are all introduced.

Dr. Nades recommends that I keep a diary of my work.

⁶⁸ *Earth 83.*

“Dr. Nades”: physician / academic degree / authority

“recommends”: hierarchy/ help

“a diary of my work”: job

The opening line, in terms of language schema, is consistent with the register of the diary as a genre; textual and language schemata are normative here. Dr. Nades, as yet of indeterminate gender, can be filled-in depending on the readers’ own schemata both as a female or male character. “A diary of my work” in combination with the character bearing a “Dr.” title opens up a work-life related schema. “Dr. x recommends that I do y” also activates a schema about hierarchical structures in which Rose is positioned at a lower level.

She says that if you keep it carefully, when you read it you can remind yourself of observations you made, notice errors and learn from them, and observe progress in or deviations from positive thinking, and so keep correcting in the course of your work by a feedback process.

The next, long sentence, written as if spoken in one breath – presumably imitating the original pace of the sentence as spoken by Dr.Nades –, alongside its simple register that fills-in some characteristic traits about “the Rose”, has work-life related terms reinforcing the schema opened in the first sentence: “carefully”, “observations”, “notice errors”, “learn from them”, “observe”, “progress”, “deviations”, “feedback process”. This interrelated web of terms supports the work-schema introduced in the opening lines, filling-in an assumption that the context of the story is to be work-related, which functions to set a thematic frame for the story.

In a nutshell, the text schemata in all of Le Guin stories examined in the analysis section expose typical literary prose schemata, showing no deviant features. Le Guin’s language schemata in stories do not show deviation either – except for the “Ether, OR” title –, as postmodern and experimental literature – in contrast to modernist narratives – frequently does in their paradoxical opening manners.

5 CONCLUSION

*A journey, for example,
Begins with a voice*

*Calling your name out
Behind you.
This seems a convenient arrangement.*

*How else would you know it's time to
go?
On the other hand,
Who is it?*

*And what do they want?
So too a friendship
Begins before the first meeting*

Anne Carson⁶⁹

So too does meaning-making. It too begins before the meeting with the opening line.

My aim in this present thesis was to investigate how gaps and meaning-making processes interact with each other, not limited to but particularly in the process of reading literature. I approach the issue through a multi-perspectival methodology that merges Phenomenology, Reception Theory and Cognitive Theory, covering a time-span that begins at the turn of the 20th century with Husserl and Ingarden, and ends with contemporary cognitive studies. This investigation, on the analytical level, was exemplified with eight short story openings by Ursula K. Le Guin.

The significant role beginnings play not only in narrative theory but in meaning-making processes was thus discussed and examined on theoretical and analytical levels. Focusing on openings – indeed, on the openings of short stories, the short story being the condensed genre that it is – proved a fruitful decision for the present investigation. In the context of the short story genre, Le Guin's openings proved to have such finely

⁶⁹ Glass 75

weaved texture that the analyses showed an initial contextual frame for the rest of the story to emerge within three to five sentences.

To my great surprise, the investigation of this question from the three different theoretical approaches discussed in thesis revealed, among other things, a striking similarity between the theoretical knowledge produced in the different disciplines. This relates to the subject of enquiry, namely the relation between gaps, being perceptual, narrative as well as contextual, and meaning-making. This central interest was maintained in a framework of subtle references, each theory building on previous theories, allowing me to follow a clear line of argumentation. The fact that the discourse of these varying disciplines did not show irreconcilable terminologies also played a remarkable role in this result.

To elaborate on this gradual line of investigation more concretely: Ingarden's original theories did not only offer a unique insight into the ontological status of literary works of art, but defined the gaps that were addressed as ontologically inherent to the literary work of art. His claims about the "ontologically irremovable places of indeterminacies", "concretization" and "filling-out" theoretically opened up the entire discussion of gaps and the filling-in activity. An outstanding shortcoming of the Husserlian phenomenology that Ingarden's theories stemmed from was the "reductionist" approach that also avoided 'psychologism'. The crucial input of Reception Theory while refining Ingarden's definitions was to argue how meaning-making could not be realized without the cognitive participation of subjects' own historicity, an argument that stood against the *rigorosity* of the science Husserlian phenomenology intended to achieve.

The contribution of this theory was to reinforce the subject matter by the indivisible considerations on the historicity of the reader and to point out that meaning-making could only be achieved with the participation of two "horizons" – the famous metaphor used to refer to the combination of one's presuppositions, judgements, previous knowledge as well as experiences –, that of the reader and of the text. Thereby, the place of the plurality of meaning as well as the use of imagination of the reader – and the creativity underlying the activity of meaning-making – entered the discourse of the relationship between gaps and meaning-making.

Nevertheless, no matter how the theory introduced the crucial point of the historicity of the reader and therefore the wide horizon of the meaning-making activity, the abstract model of the “implied reader” did not go beyond an assumed generalization of the subject of reception. Cognitive Theory, on the other hand, going one step further than Ingarden, provided the empirical insight that the “irremovable” gaps were not specific to the literary work but constitutive of human perception as such. Building on this insight, Schema Theory – divided into the sub-categories of world, language and textual schemata with two evaluative criteria of deviation and normality – asserted how human perception, as an innate mechanism, completed missing parts in any kind of perception. In cognitive narrative theory, this mechanism describes how meaning and context were achieved.

The Cognitive Sciences, as a rising field these days, can be seen as a platform rather than a singular discipline, inhabited as it is by countless, varying approaches and disagreements. Considering its rapid growth and research efforts to, precipitating a rapid change of knowledge, the choice of Schema Theory might be seen as old-fashioned, however, with its subtle point of view and close ties with previous theories linked to the whole argumentation of the thesis, it was a complementary choice.

There were, however, some obstacles encountered during the cognitive analyses of openings. The claim that gaps are task-relevancy-oriented and that thus not all the gaps in a text are filled-in as well as the notion of schema refreshment were difficult to pinpoint in the short story examples. There are a few reasons for this: Methodologically speaking, cognitive approaches benefit from the sum of results from multiple participants as opposed to a single reader, which was not possible to realize in this thesis.

Secondly, the task-relevancy mentioned by Bundgaard would be more applicable in experimental settings, in which the reader does not have to focus on the text for writing an analytical section. A further reasoning for this can be made in terms of text types. It is conceivable that task-orientation is more pronounced in some literary genres than in others. Detective fiction, for instance, might be a more ideal text type to measure and evaluate task relevancy.

Regarding schema refreshment, the story openings by Le Guin analysed in this particular chapter, which were very schema-compatible, all displayed an indeviant, normative text, language and world schema structure – except for the textual and language deviations in the story title and the dedication line of “Ether, Or”. This resulted in a difficulty to illustrate schema refreshment empirically. However, despite its practical incompatibility with the analyzed texts, schema refreshment as an important part of the schema theory had to be included in the theory section.

In an attempt to achieve a holistic view on all theoretical discussions, it was argued that meaning-making could not be separated from the activity of gap-filling. Gaps as indivisible elements of perception were examined to be filled-in by schemata as a result of readers’ cognitive acts, which are strongly shaped by their personal histories as well as basic cognitive elements, such as memory and pattern recognition, together resulting in specific mental representations. Especially in the context of Ursula K. Le Guin’s stories, the creativity-bound quality of meaning-making should not be understressed either.

It can finally be claimed that cognitive research has narrowed down the gap between theoretical and empirical approaches, with its in fact invaluable results on issues such as the “storied” nature of mind. On the other hand, as Bernaerts et al. also underline, one should keep in mind the criticism cognitive theory receives regarding matters such as “the potential backfire of eclecticism, a new essentialism based on positivistic optimism, and a reductionist teleological thinking” (11). In the case of this thesis, it might be of particular importance to underline Marie-Laure Ryan’s comment that cognitive approaches to narrative often confirm what narrative theory already knew (Ryan qtd. in Bernaerts et al. 11). This deduction should not necessarily be perceived as a negative criticism, but can also imply the beginning of a good friendship between cognitive and narrative theory, suggesting that theories might be considered as a well-grounded guidance for empirical researches.

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7 Abstracts

7.1 Abstract in English

This thesis examines the process of meaning-making and its inherent relation to gaps – regarding both word-meaning and the advanced level of interpretation – by drawing on perspectives from Phenomenology, Reception Theory and Cognitive Theory with a focus on the opening lines of short stories by Ursula K. Le Guin. Beginnings in narrative theory indisputably exhibit, with an utmost significance, how readers' perception, which comprises gaps in itself, processes in the making of meaning. Roman Ingarden's theory of the ontology of the literary work of art and phenomenology of reading experience approaches this complex mechanism from philosophical point of view, followed by the concepts of "horizon", "gestalt" and "schema" elaborated in Reception Theory on narrative level. Cognitive science, as a complementary constituent of the question, offers an access to the gappy nature of human perception, while pointing to the schematic nature of perception on empirical grounds, a level that is absent in the two previous theories. The finding, while highlighting the continuous flux and interaction among philosophy, literary theory and cognitive science, indicates that it is through the gap-filling activity that meaning-making and narratives are embodied.

Key Words

Ursula K. Le Guin / Openings / Narrative Beginnings / Meaning-making / Gaps / Phenomenology / Reception Theory / Cognitive Theory

7.2 Abstract in German

Die vorliegende Arbeit versucht den Prozess der Bedeutungserzeugung und seine inhärente Beziehung zu Leerstellen (hinsichtlich Wortbedeutung und einer komplexeren Interpretationsebene) zu untersuchen. Dafür werden drei verschiedene Zugänge – der Phänomenologie, der Rezeptionstheorie sowie der Kognitionswissenschaft – auf die Analyse der Anfänge ausgewählter Kurzgeschichten Ursula K. Le Guins gelegt. Roman Ingardens Theorie der Ontologie des literarischen

Kunstwerks und der Phänomenologie der Leseerfahrung nähert sich diesem komplexen Thema aus einer philosophischen Perspektive. Die Rezeptionstheorie findet im Anschluss daran über die Begriffe "Horizont", "Gestalt" und "Schema" einen Leserorientierten Zugang. Der kognitionswissenschaftliche Zugang soll es letztlich ermöglichen die Lückenhaftigkeit der menschlichen Wahrnehmung in den Blick zu nehmen und so die Fragestellung umfassender auszuleuchten. Im Zusammenspiel der drei untersuchten Disziplinen lässt sich zeigen, dass es gerade der Prozess beziehungsweise die Aktivität des Füllens von Leerstellen ist, der Bedeutung generiert.

Schlagwörter

Ursula K. Le Guin / Anfänge / Leerstellen / Phänomenologie / Rezeptionstheorie / Kognitionswissenschaft