Master's thesis

NTNU
Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Language and Literature

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Openings and Beginnings

A Narratological Approach to the Initiation of Narratives

Master's thesis in Comparative Literature
Supervisor: Knut Ove Eliassen
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Kunnskap for en bedre verden

Abstract

This assignment proposes an alternative way of looking at the first part of narratives, conventionally termed the "beginning" by critics such as Aristotle. This includes establishing four concepts to demarcate where this initial section of narrative commences, but also where the section ends and the middle part of the narrative ensures. These concepts are comprised of a distinction of the concepts "opening" and "beginning," a separation of paratext and discourse, a classification of openings as modalities of immediacy, and an extrapolation of a model of plot. By analysing the openings and beginnings of eight modern, English classic novels, published in the period late 1700s to mid-1800s narratological, the thesis aims to show not only how novels open and begin narratives, but also what constitutes the section of narrative.

Sammendrag

Denne oppgaven tar sikte på å definere den første delen av et narrativ, ofte beskrevet som "åpning" eller "begynnelse," blant annet av Aristoteles. I dette inngår etableringen av fire konsepter som avgrenser dette første partiet og redegjør for dets innhold. De fire konseptene er en differensiering av begrepene "åpning" og "begynnelse," en skilnad mellom paratekst og diskurs, en klassifisering av åpninger som modaliteter av umiddelbarhet og ekstrapoleringen av en plottmodell. Ved å narratologisk analysere åpningene og begynnelsene i åtte moderne, engelske, klassiske romaner, publisert i perioden sent 1700-tall til midten av 1800-tallet, vil oppgaven vise hvordan romaner ikke bare åpner og begynner, men også hva som inngår i denne første delen i et narrativ.

Preface

Where to begin... A question that has undoubtedly tormented many authors over the years – and probably many students writing their master's thesis as well. I suspect in my case, however, that it began with Jane Austen:

Had it not been for the evening my mother and grandmother persuaded me to sit down and watch this old, and what I suspected would be a dull, BBC-adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* from 1995, I am not entirely certain this enthusiasm for 19th century novels would have existed, at least not as ardently as it does now. Because of that I am eternally grateful to them for the discovery of one of the many novels I have come to adore.

I would also like to direct my gratitude to Håkon – occasional lightening rod but also provider of tasty food and beverage for comfort in the most trying times of writing the thesis. His unwavering support and encouragement have been instrumental in its completion.

Gratitude is also due to my fellow students at the master's program. I have appreciated their good advice, comfort, exciting discussions on in medias res, psychoanalysis, Mr. Darcy, and mutual feeling of being firmly placed in the same boat, as the Norwegian saying goes. Their company has made the process of writing this thesis a thoroughly enjoyable experience. Thanks are also in order for everyone who has willingly discussed this topic with me – friends, colleagues at Comparative literature at NTNU, and family.

Finally, I will venture to express the gratitude I feel towards the supervisor on this project, Prof. Knut Ove Eliassen. I am much obliged to him for his patience, boundless knowledge, and for sharing his infectious enthusiasm for fiction as both supervisor and lecturer. My sincerest thanks for being interested in this thesis, for inspiring further reading, and your attention to details in your feedback.

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Thesis Statement

This thesis examines the first part of narrative, conventionally called the "beginning" or the "opening," in novels from the late 18th century to mid-1800s. It is done so with the purpose of uncovering the sections that constitutes this part[1], their functions, and to formalise a model of plot that can be applied to the part. The aim is to understand the content of this initial section of a narrative, what it is and what functions it serves. This entails the need to establish at least a working-distinction between the beginning of the beginning and its end. In other words, an establishment of a threshold and ascertaining its dimensions in the narrative. Ultimately, this will help to discuss the beginning's double function: to establish the fictional world and to initiate the plot. This dual function becomes evident in the proposed difference between the opening and the beginning: The first of spatial qualities and the latter of temporal qualities. These distinctions enable a subdivision of the first part of a narrative into three: First, the opening, secondly, the beginning, and finally a kind of threshold that results into the middle part of the narrative.

The initial aim was to catalogue the elements of the beginnings in much-read novels such as Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), and Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778) – narrator, focalization, characters, agents, temporality, spatiality, and plot – and compare them to find their common elements. This quickly proved a challenge due to the narratological field's substantial interest in the end – at the expense of the narrative's first part. The preference of the end in the research is addressed by Niels Buch Leander in *The Sense of a Beginning* (a reference to Frank Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending*), in which he favours, as his title may imply, the beginning. Gerard Prince in his review of the same book, "Unravelling Beginnings" (2019) does not agree with Leander's ambition to raise the beginning's status and argues that "There is a beginning because there is an end," and states that the beginning is conditional of the end (743).

This thesis will show how a narrative's first part is equally indispensable and that there is still much to unearth by establishing the concept and its function in the narratives of this corpus. With the risk of resorting to tautology: An end cannot exist without there being a beginning, nor is a beginning without an end a narrative with a resolution, or as Peter Brooks terms the end in *Reading for the Plot*: a discharge

[1] I apply, perhaps a bit clumsily, the phrase "first part," "initial section," or a combination of these as alternative ways of denominating the start of a narrative. Instead of using the words "opening" and "beginning" the hope is that it will appear less confusing in chapter 2.2 and throughout the thesis as these words are used as concepts to denominate specific areas in this initial part of narrative.

(102). It is tempting to state that neither can exist without the other.

The effort to define the first part of the novel with its features, length, content, and function, is motivated by the belief that if one can define the section, isolate the different elements, understand its qualities and its content, it could provide further understanding of what makes the first part of novels successful[2] and how their various parts and elements interact. By looking further into how a narrative opens and begins, as well as how much space it is allocated, and at which section the beginning ends and the middle part of the narrative begins, we are afforded a clearer framework to understand how world and plot is established and initiated. These two functions may prove important for the rest of the narrative.

As the narratological field has primarily been occupied with the end of a narrative, the number of other works on this topic is less comprehensive as one would suspect. Several works on the end do figure the "beginning," such as Frank Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (1967), as well as Peter Brook's *Reading for the Plot* (1992) which is mainly concerned with plot. A few prominent theorists have devoted entire books to the topic: Edward W. Said's meditation on beginnings and the beginning intention in *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (2012) and A.D Nuttall's comprehensive analyses in *Openings: Narrative Beginnings from the Epic to the Novel* (1992). Niels Buch Leander's dichotomy of beginnings, *The Sense of a Beginning* (2017), also belongs on this list as one of the newest additions to the field of "beginnings". Additionally, Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle's *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory* (1995) reserves the first chapter to the beginning and opens with the question "When will we have begun?" (1). J. Hillis Miller's chapter "Wuthering Heights: Repetition and the 'Uncanny'" in *Fiction and Repetition* (1982) offers valuable insight into the repetitions that occur in the beginning of the novel analysed. This list is not an exhaustive one – however, several of these works have contributed to my understanding of beginnings prior to writing this thesis.

1.2 Method

The method of this thesis draws on narratology, with Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse* (1980) as the backbone of the analysis. Post-structural critics have pointed to the structuralist's lack of interest in the reader's perspective and to the structuralist and narratological functional analysis' disinterest in the functionless, "irreducible residues" as Barthes denotes in "The Reality Effect" (1989, 146). However, this thesis concerns itself with form and the functions in a narrative. This is not to dismiss different methods of approach to the same material, but derives from an

[2]Successful in that the readers read the first part of the novel and continue to read until the end.

earnest belief that by establishing, understanding, and naming the form, the subject matter becomes more manageable for other forms of analysis from other disciplines.

One of the advantages of narratology is its thoroughness. Over two thousand years of theories, albeit the most concentrated in the 1900s, offers various works and catalogues with definitions, distinctions, and identifications of narrative elements and functions. Unexpectedly, the aspects or parts of narrative pertaining to a narrative's initial section, have been left relatively untouched, but the foundation for an effort to demarcate and conduct a functional analysis of beginnings has already been laid by the great narratologists. This thesis draws on Tzvetan Todorov's definition of the structuralist method, namely that the work analysed "will be considered as the manifestation of an abstract structure, merely one of its possible realizations; an understanding of that structure will be real goal of structural analysis," ("Structural Analysis of Narrative," 1969, 70). In line with this definition, this thesis aims to examine the structure of the novel's first part, identify which concepts the structure contains, their functions, and apply the findings to a corpus of several openings and beginnings.

The aim of structuralism, according to Todorov, is to understand a structure. Structures become visible through comparative analyses. I have thus opted for a large corpus to attempt to map their beginnings, apply a model of stable states that I extrapolate from Todorov's theory and identify their forms of world establishment and plot initiation. The corpus is restricted to novels published in England from late 1700s to mid-1800s due to their similarities in plot-orientation, subject, as well as form. Many of the novels concern themselves with a young woman's entry into society, and a few belong to the gothic tradition, especially those of the late 1800s (Emily and Anne Brontë and Wilkie Collins), while others are moralistic (Charles Dickens). A smaller corpus would allow for a more in dept examination of the components of the narrative's first part, establishing the effects of narrator, focalization, and agents to name a few, a larger corpus, however, provides the opportunity to examine whether the distinctions and model that I suggest is applicable to a multiple of novels, not only a few. This could then indicate that the model and its function to establish a world and initiate a plot could be relevant to other plot-oriented novels as well.

The corpus includes the novels *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Persuasion* (1817), *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Emma* (1815), and *Northanger Abbey* (1817) by Jane Austen; Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *David Copperfield* (1849), and *A Christmas Carol* (1843); Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* (1859-1860); Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847); Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848); Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1854); George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860); Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759); and Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778). Out of these, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *North and South*, *David*

Copperfield, *Tristram Shandy*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Emma* are used as examples of aspects examined in chapter 2, while the other novels are analysed in full in subchapter 3.1-3.8.

I have elected to apply the reference style MLA to this thesis. The year of a title's publication will be listed the first time it is referred to in every chapter. In-text citations will contain title of publication and page number, except for citations where the publication already has been accounted for in the paragraph. These citations will only contain page numbers. Italics or other emphases by the authors are noted in the citations.

1.3 Structure

The first chapter of this thesis examines the form of the beginning. The first subchapter, 2.1, argues the separation of paratext and text in order to determine the beginning's beginning. The second subchapter, 2.2, offers a distinction between opening and beginning and explores the spatial and temporal qualities of each part. The third subchapter, 2.3, propose a fourth level of a novel, the implicit history, and suggests four modalities of immediacy as alternatives to the conventional distinction of "in medias res" and "ab ovo." The fourth and final subchapter, 2.4, elaborates a circular plot model from Tzvetan Todorov's theory of equilibriums and destabilising forces in plots, and shows how this can be applied to localise the function of beginnings, as well as its beginning and end.

Chapter 3 contains the analyses of the eight openings and beginnings from the novels of the corpus in line with the four subchapters of chapter 2. I have endeavoured to examine the same aspects of each opening and beginning, but none is like the other. Hence, I have purposely accommodated these variations and addressed those that have been relevant to the beginning's functions. A few novels have been briefly commented upon as examples in chapter 2 and will therefore not be part of the corpus in chapter 3.

Chapter 4 summarises and presents the findings from the analyses of chapter 3. The subchapter 4.2 is a final note on the end of a narrative and how the first and last section of a narrative can be viewed as both conditional and isolated from each other. Subchapter 4.3 concludes the thesis with a discussion of the opening and beginning's impact on narratives.

2 Form

2.1 The Function of Paratext

In an attempt to determine a narrative's point of initiation – the moment the narrative is initiated, I will suggest a demarcation between paratext and discourse with the intention of declaring the paratext as separate from the diegesis. Intuitively, one might identify such a start of a narrative as commencing with the first word or sentence in the novel's first chapter. As Gérard Genette remarks in his catalogue of paratextual elements, *Paratext: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1997), the conventional name for the opening line, the "incipit", does in fact translate to "here begins." (65). This is not necessarily the reader's first meeting with textual elements. Already at a first glance of the "outside" of the novel, it's physical cover, the reader is afforded information such as title and author name, which more than not will give an initial impression of the following discourse. By physically opening the volume more information is presented, such as technical paratext that provides details of publishing, dates, prefaces and even prologues.

In "Introduction to the Paratext" (1991), Genette defines paratext as that which allows a text to become a novel and appear as such to its readers and the public (261). The paratext's function, he states, is that it encompasses the discourse and elongates it "precisely in order to present it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in its strongest meaning: *to make it present*, to assure its presence in the world, its "reception" and consumption in the form, nowadays, at least, of a book (author's own italics, 261). Moreover, Genette also underlines that the novel is a commercial object that the paratext's function is to, as he explains, present with the aim for it to be consumed (261).

While it is my purpose to argue that the paratext should not be considered a part of the first part of the narrative, the paratext's function and effect must be considered as it prepares the readers for their first meeting with the discourse. As I argue in chapter 2.2 on openings and beginnings, the function of the first part of a narrative is in principle twofold: The first is to establish the fictional world and secondly, to initiate the plot. The question is therefore to what degree the paratext adds to or coincides with this function and if the effect has any bearing on the discourse of the first section. Or, perhaps, its aim is to invite, as the material object it is, to lure the consumers to read and, perhaps inevitably, establish an expectation through thematic titles, by intriguing signature or prefaces where the author addresses the reader.

The paratext's mission is ancillary. It is dependent on a body of discourse it precedes to function. The paratext is a precursive text that stands in front of

the narrative that follows. Genette defines its functional aspect accordingly: "The paratext in all its forms is a discourse that is fundamentally heteronomous, auxiliary, and dedicated to the service of something other than itself that constitutes its raison d'être. This something is the text." (*Paratext* 8). Its raison to be is not to convey a story, as the discourse does, but to facilitate the transmission of narrative. In other words, it is a subservient text. Its function and role in the text is not the same as the discourse in the plot-oriented novel. In principle, the paratext is thus not a part of the diegesis. The opening and beginning of the novel, the first section of the diegesis, can be assigned to the first discourse after the paratext.

While there is an abundance of paratextual elements in novels – titles, signatures, copyright page, epitext, and dedications among some – I have chosen to examine titles, signatures, and prefaces in order to investigate the difference Genette establishes between paratext and discourse.

2.1.1 Prefaces and Dickens' Instruction on how to Read *A Christmas Carol*

The preface is perhaps the most explicit paratextual element. Here the author (or the editor) asserts his influence or his version on how the work is to be read. As Genette demonstrates in *Paratext*(1997), there are several different types of prefaces with several different types of functions, but he ascertains that the primary function of a preface is to "ensure that the text is read properly" (197). He further states that

> The way to get a proper reading is also — and perhaps initially—to put the (definitely assumed) reader in possession of information the author considers necessary for this proper reading. And advice itself benefits from being presented in the light of information: information, for example (in a case in which this might interest you), about the way the author wishes to be read. (209)

A preface may then, according to Genette, form the reading process on the one hand by providing information the author (or a different author) of the preface desires the reader to possess, in addition to the information supplied in the discourse of the novel; on the other hand, it allows the author(s) to breach the gap between fiction and reality by getting a head start on the diegesis beyond the scope of the discourse.

Charles Dickens' preface in the novella *A Christmas Carol* (1843) demonstrate the opportunity the author has to influence and prepare the readers ahead of the discourse:

> I HAVE endeavoured in this Ghostly little book, to raise the Ghost of an Idea, which shall not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their houses pleasantly, and no one wish to lay it.
>
> Their faithful Friend and Servant,
> C.D (*A Christmas Carol*)

The novella is a ghost story, but the author insists that the reader should not experience the accustomed feelings when exposed to the ghostly matters in the narrative. Instead of inciting dread and horror, Dickens states that his aim is to excite humour and that he hopes pleasantness will be the results of reading the novel. Moreover, he explicitly characterises the text as a moral tale as it conveys a moral idea; it is literally an effort to resurrect a morality in the reader. The author wants to influence and prepare the reading experience in beforehand and encourages the readers to depart from an expected reaction to elements of a type of narrative traditionally perceived as frightening and mystical. Instead of relying on the readers' ability to surmise that the spirits are not evil, he directly states this to be the case in the novella and that this is also his intention. Thanks to the indirect notion of the preface, Dickens avoids a direct appeal to the reader, a form of "read this work in this way." His declaration of intention is in a way a blessing of sorts. A blessing directed at the readers' understanding and interpretation, but also a hope that the novella will linger with them as a ghost in their home.

By commenting upon the diegesis in the novella, Dickens creates a consciousness of the separation or a distance between the preface and the discourse, between the framework and the text. The paratext is not a part of the diegesis, and the directness of Dickens' appeal of how the work is intended to be read, is an extradiegetic act of making one aware that which follows is a narrative. Dickens' presents himself; he presents what is to come. He asserts himself as the producer of the discourse, further separating the diegesis from the paratext.

Like Dickens, Anne Brontë addresses her readers of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848). She especially reproaches the critics of the first edition and by stating her aim of writing the novel she confronts the criticism:

> My object in writing the following pages, was not simply to amuse the Reader, neither was it to gratify my own taste, nor yet to ingratiate myself with the Press and the Public: I wished to tell the truth, for truth always conveys its own moral to those who are able to receive it (*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Preface)

It is a testament of truth, according to Brontë, and her effort has been to not exaggerate or diminish what she regards as a true depiction of the more "brutal" and "coarse" love scenes. "I know that such characters do exists" she states, furthering her claim that the depictions in the novel are realistic. In her rebuttal, the aim, or perhaps a fortuitous consequence, to warn against characters as the ones she has written becomes evident: "If I have warned one rash youth from following in their step or prevented one thoughtless girl from falling into the very natural error of my heroine the book has not been written in vain" (Preface). As in Dickens' preface there is morality to be found and an ideology, and in Brontë's preface it is also a defence.

2.1.2 Title - Thematic Indicators and Indicators of Genre

A novel may, according to Genette, have a title, subtitle, and a genre indication, although only the first is deemed obligatory in contemporary novels (*Paratext* 58). Title and subtitle are defined formally and the third functionally, however some novels contain titles and subtitles that defy these rules. Charles Dickens' short novel *A Christmas Carol* employs all three: *A Christmas Carol. In Prose. Being a Ghost Story of Christmas*. The first two phrases "A Christmas Carol" and "In Prose", separated by a punctuation, are indicators of form but contrary to each other. In a sense, all three clauses of the title are genre indicators that negate its precursor: The first informs the reader that the text is a seasonal song or a hymn; the second refutes this genre-claim by stating that it is written in prose; and the third asserts the seasonal aspect of the work as well as stating a gothic genre aspect by including the supernatural element "ghost". This way, these three parts comment on each other in some way, creating more a mystery instead of offering a deciphering. The title is enigmatic rather than enlightening.

For Genette, the title's most important function is identification (*Paratext* 80-81). The paratext helps readers identify the work at hand, as a signal of the nature of the work they are about to read. However, Dickens' title, subtitle, and genre identificator help separate the work from other works, but by offering contradictory information of genre, it is less likely to aid the reader's understanding of what form of discourse they are about to read. In addition to the preface that state that it is not to be read as one traditionally reads ghost stories, it could be surmised whether Dickens intended to bewilder the reader by toying with the informative aspect of paratext and to destabilise the grounds upon which readers often base their expectations on. While the title may be perplexing, it could also intrigue the reader or "[incite] one to purchase and/or read" the novel, as Genette claims in his exploration of the function of temptation (91-92).

2.1.3 Author's Name

Like the preface and title, the name of the author has an informative function as well as a function of temptation and invites the readers to begin their expectations. It is also a signature. There are several variations of the author's name that can appear on the cover of a novel, as several of the novels of this corpus portray variations and pseudonyms. Anonymity can, as Genette explains, arouse curiosity and points to it being part of the success of Walter Scott's novels (*Paratext* 42). While the anonymity of the authors behind *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and *Evelina* (1778) might have proved effective at the time of their publication, they also indicate the historical factor in the use of such signatures. In the editions provided by such as Penguin Classics and Wordsworth Editions, contemporary readers are often afforded

a detailed account of the lives of authors, the context surrounding the publishing of the novel, major historical events, et cetera. In addition to the more widespread knowledge of Jane Austen as the author of novels such as *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), the title "by a Lady," as it was signed, would mean something different in the early 1800s than it does today. It would have been not only an invocation of class as well as gender, but it would generate expectations to the type of literature produced by women – literature that was much more restricted to sentimental novels – than it does today.

Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) was signed in a manner that signalled to the readers what to expect. She signed the novel with "By the author of Sense and Sensibility," and her first novel "By a Lady". On the one hand, the signature alludes to a previous success or an intent to establish authority. Signing the novel with a title such as "author," indicated an experienced or skilled writer. On the other hand, a space of genre is created. The signature refers to a previous work – a novel with sentiment, humour, romance, and social criticism, and facilitates the readers' expectations of the same or a similar experience as they had while reading the first novel. It could also generate expectations of a similar plot of romance. Genette explains this concept in *Paratext* as something that

> in itself constitutes a highly devious form of the statement of identity: it is a statement of identity precisely between two anonymities, explicitly putting at the service of a new book the success of a previous one and, above all, managing to constitute an authorial entity without having to recourse to any name, authentic or fictive (45)

The lack of a name combined with the title of a previously published novel continues the mystery of the author's identity, sustaining the seductive aspect of the signature, as well as it creates an expectation in the readers that they are about to read a novel of the same quality as the previous one. It adds authority without the need to justify the authority on the grounds of the author's background.

2.1.4 Extradiegetic Conditions

Paratext such as the preface, title(s), author name and other (epigraphs, dedications, motto, footnotes etc.), present the discourse that is to come, but the paratext inevitably incites, invites, and moreover creates expectation in the readers of the diegesis that the paratext surrounds. In addition to paratext, other extradiegetic elements are also present, such as the specific reader's attitude to words, character ethnicity, ideology et cetera. In her *Introduction to the Theory of Narratology* (2000) Mieke Bal explains that the reader's response to characters, especially those that imitate or represent real life people, is influenced by the reader's awareness or knowledge of context: "Even if we do not wish to study the relations between text and the context as a separate object of analysis, we cannot ignore the fact that direct

or indirect knowledge of the context of certain characters contributes significantly to their meaning" (119).

As the perception of a character is affected by conditions outside the text, the perception of the paratext may be subject to the same type of conditions. Bal describes the difficulty of this aspect by ascertaining that "The influence of data from reality is all the more difficult to determine since the personal situation, knowledge, background, historical moment, and so on of the reader are involved here" (*Theory of Narratology* 119), and in the same way these extradiegetic conditions may influence the perception of character, reality may inflict the expectations of the novel. The author's name, the paratextual element that contain information of class, gender, ethnicity, as well as genre, to mention a few, cause or incite reactions in the readers based on ideology, experience, and opinion. Even the binding and the physical apparatus of a book – paperback or bound – influences the reader. Titles, especially thematic titles such as *A Christmas Carol*, produce associations in readers. Some titles may rely on connotations such as this to "set the mood", as a way of creating expectations, but the effects are difficult to measure seeing as we do not have access to the minds of the readers. This may also be the exact reason why authors such as Charles Dickens declare their intentions and hopes in the prefaces. In conclusion, extradiegetic conditions may affect the readers' expectations as well as impression of the discourse they are confronted with. However, due to the scope and method of this thesis, these aspects will not be addressed.

2.2 Distinguishing "Opening" and "Beginning"

The subject matter of this thesis, how literary beginnings have two different purposes, to establish a world and set a plot in motion, rests on the ontological distinction between beginnings and openings. While the two terms are often applied interchangeably, a distinction between the two may be productive. "Opening" and "beginning" can be nouns ("The cave's opening", "the beginning of a novel"), verbs in the gerundive ("the opening of the book" "beginning a story") and adjectives ("the opening flower", "the beginning of the month"). "Beginning" is not normally used for describing the changing state of a window from closed to open, nor do we hush and whisper to our friend that the movie we are watching is opening. Movie premiers, however, are openings. Given the corpus of this thesis, the eight novels with their respective incipits, I will suggest the following working hypothesis: The primary difference between the words "opening" and "beginning" is a matter of distinguishing between spatiality and of temporality. The spatiality of the opening establishes the fictional world while the temporality of the opening initiates the plot.

If a novel is like a house, as J. Hillis Miller suggests in *Repetition and Fiction*

(1982, 46), the opening is the threshold of the front door; it is the act of reaching for the doorknob, turning it, and by opening the door one enters through means of written discourse and narrative[3]. To open a novel is the act of concisely altering the state of something concrete, just as a jar that is opened and the content spills out. The opening lines thus mark the crossing of the threshold of discourse.[4]

If the house analogy risks becoming absurd if applied literally to the body of the novel, it helps highlight the spatial and temporal aspects of the opening and the beginning. The crossing of the threshold is a movement in the spatial dimension. In other words, an alteration from existing outside to existing on the inside through motion across space. The beginning on the other hand, is the entryway or a foyer. As Gotthold Ephraim Lessing argued in *Laocoön* (1984), the spatial form is tied to the pictorial artform, and the temporal form belongs to the arts of the word. It is the object of the painting to represent what Lessing refers to as "bodies", in other words, objects, while the poem represents actions through the representation of consecutive appearance of bodies (78-80). Just as a painting can present spatial matter such as a room with walls, floor, decoration and objects, the opening can exhibit spatial matter and objects through words as a form of still. The beginning, as such, could be regarded as a matter of temporality, the initial establishment of an episode that will eventually segue into consecutive episodes, the result being a sequence of events and the initiation of a plot.[5]

The definitions of the words "beginning" and "opening" in the Oxford English Dictionary imply that while they differ by the one being intransitive and the other transitive, "beginning" is a term that contains a temporal aspect, while "opening" can be assigned to spatial matters. Oxford English Dictionary defines the intransitive verb "begin" as "To open operations upon or in reference to (any action), to set oneself effectively to do (something), to be at the point of first contact with; to enter upon, take the first step, do the first or starting part; to commence, to start" and "to begin at (formerly from): to start from a point. to begin with (formerly at, from, by): to start with an action or thing affected; to begin by doing something" (Begin, def.1). The transitive verb "open" on the other hand, is defined as "To move or turn (a door, gate, window, tap, etc.) away from its closed position to allow passage or access" (Open, def.1a). Hence, there is a slight distinction in the meaning of the words that can be developed tentatively into an ontological distinction between them

[3]Gérard Genette presents an analogy of the paratext as the novel's vestibule in "Introduction to the Paratexts" (1991, 261).

[4]Ursula Le Guin describes the entrance into a narrative accordingly: "first sentences are doors to worlds" ("The Fisherwoman's Daughter" (1988).

[5]In *The Sense of an Ending* (2000) Frank Kermode puts forward an alternative distinction of time and duration in narrative, the "Aevum": "Characters in novels are independent of time and succession, but may and usually do seem to operate in time and succession; the *aevum* co-exists with temporal events at the moment of occurrence, being, it was said, like a stick in a river" (72).

as two separate concepts.

The spatial and temporal qualities of a novel are different textual modalities. While the beginning contains a higher degree of temporal modality, this does not exclude any spatial aspects or feature, nor is the opening devoid of temporality. These two parts of the beginning exhibit both modalities, however, one or the other will be the dominant aspect. In principle, one could not possibly point to certain moments where the beginning part of the novel ceases to be spatial and becomes temporal. Instead of a clear separation between the two, a gliding transition may be a more helpful visual for this thesis. However, as the analyses in chapter 3 will show, some novels demarcate the two concepts in the narrative through different means and devices.

The two concepts, opening and beginning, appear to be ontologically non-identical with regards to function and meaning whereas one applies to spatiality and the function of introducing a state on which the second may unfold the plot, hence its quality of temporality. The technical application of these two concepts, has within narratological theory so far been without a clear, colloquial distinction, as well as the practice of applying them to a narrative, with critics such as Nils Buch Leander and A.D Nuttall who employ the terms opening and beginning without discernment of the part of narrative or plot they are applied on. By hypothesising an ontological distinction between these two terms, we are not only able to effectuate specified terms to specific parts of the plot or narrative, but the distinctions may enable a more concrete approach to these sections. This in turn allows for the applications of models such as the model of equilibrium (2.3) which allows us to section the narrative into beginning, middle and end by means of locating the areas which holds destabilising forces that shift the state from harmonic to disharmonic. This can contribute to the understanding of the structure of beginnings, its beginning and end, as well as provide a simpler approach to what a beginning in its simpler form is.

2.2.1 Two examples: *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Sense and Sensibility*

The opening is the first part of the discourse and provides the reader with the first impression of most elementary information of the narrative before them. It is the first interaction between reader and discourse, paratextual elements aside, and most importantly, it opens up to the fictional universe and allows entrance. It is the first introduction of the narrator, and it is the author's first attempt to engage the reader. Charles Dickens opens his novel *A Tale of Two Cities* from 1859 with the renowned incipit, commonly referred to the first line of the discourse, that makes up the entire initial paragraph:

> It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of

> Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only. (7)

The incipit reveals through the establishment of the fictional world that the plot is set to ambivalence, referring to dominating qualities and possible driving motivations, as well as the state of things. The first of the novel's three parts is set to the late 18th century and the narrator encourages a comparison between the era of the opening of the novel to the one the novel was published in. The following paragraph continues the effort to "paint" the fictional universe by presenting the aristocrats confidence in that their luxury will continue its permanency: "In both countries it was clearer than crystal to the lords of the State preserves of loaves and fishes, that things in general were settled for ever." (7). This world, according to the narrator, is a world of opposites and a world in flux, despite what the higher classes may believe. The opening summarises the fictional world by portraying its instabilities and tension and alludes to a conflict between those who have easy access to food and resources and those who do not. As the beginning unfolds and the narrator lets on more information, qualities such as irony or other forms of ambiguity may come to light, further establishing the world or space of the narrative.

The incipit in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) establishes the backdrop for the uprooting of the Dashwood family:

> The family of Dashwood had long been settled in Sussex. Their estate was large, and their residence was at Norland Park, in the centre of their property, where, for many generations, they had lived in so respectable a manner as to engage the general good opinion of their surrounding acquaintance. The late owner of this estate was a single man, who lived to a very advanced age, and who for many years of his life, had a constant companion and housekeeper in his sister (3).

The line states that this is a family that has for generations stayed in one place and has for several generations had a home and consequently belong in that place. In a sense, the narrator presents the Dashwood family as almost part of the landscape, that is how settled they have been in Sussex. This serves as the premise for the uprooting that follows and creates a contrast necessary for the disturbance the family experiences of having to relocate to a less prestigious and costly place, to be manifested in the beginning.

The opening is in this way static, while the beginning becomes dynamic and portrays both a narrative and plot of movement from one position and situation to another. The third paragraph opens with the line "The old gentleman died: his will was read, and like almost every other will, gave as much disappointment as

pleasure." (*Sense and Sensibility* 4) This is the unfortunate event that causes the upheaval of the Dashwoods and leads to their relocation: Mr. Henry Dashwood's son inherits the estate and leaves his widow and daughters with no suitable option than to seek a home elsewhere. Following what Mrs. Dashwood sees as an improper visit of her daughter-in-law, Mr. John Dashwood's wife, the narrator already expresses her desire to relocate, and the movement of the plot is becoming evident:

> So acutely did Mrs. Dashwood feel this ungracious behaviour, and so earnestly did she despise her daughter-in-law for it, that, on the arrival of the latter, she would have quitted the house for ever, had not the entreaty of her eldest girl induced her first to reflect on the propriety of going, and her own tender love for all her three children determined her afterwards to stay, and for their sakes avoid a breach with their brother. (6)

The narrator portrays Mrs. Dashwood's eldest daughter's serenity and sensible nature to contrast her impulsivity and reactive behaviour. The spatial quality of the opening may allow the entrance into the narrative space, as seen in the opening of *Sense and Sensibility*, while the beginning's temporal quality ensure the progression of plot, such as the Dashwoods' search for a new house to live in.

2.2.2 Opening and Beginning in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

The function of the opening, as a temporary summing up, is to open the text by presenting a still where motif, among other aspects of the novel, can be established. It establishes a space that is the first attempt to bridge the distance between reader and narrator. In this sense it resembles a painting in that it paints a scene or situation, a spatial matter for the rest of the beginning to unfold out of. The primary function of the beginning is to establish and let the plot commence through subsequent events to represent time elapsing.

Anne Brontë's novel *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) opens by establishing a sender and recipient. It is an epistolary narration, but as opposed to being a correspondence between two characters such as in Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778), it is a one-way communication that in the opening functions as an establishment of intent and presentation. The narrator, Gilbert Markham, writes a letter to J. Halford, stating that he is "about to give him a sketch – no not a sketch, a full and faithful account of certain circumstances connected with the most important event of my life" (7-8). It is a form of prelude and an assertation by the narrator that the following story will be worth reading.

While this opening letter is the first text, paratext aside, the readers are confronted with, it is not the opening of the narrative first told. In a sense the novel has two openings. The first establishes the reason for why this narrative is told, and the second is the more traditional opening and exists on a hypodiegetic level as the narrator is retrospectively narrating past events.

The first chapter of the novel, titled "A discovery", opens with the line "You must go back with me to the autumn of 1827" (*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* 9). The narration effectively establishes the season and year of the point that the history departs from as well as asserts, by the use of the personal pronoun "me," that it is still the same narrator. The space of the opening is established, and the narrator continues the opening by explaining how he has come to be a "sort of gentleman farmer" (9). Already a family dynamic becomes apparent, as well as an occupation and economic situation. This contributes to the understanding of the space the narrator, and subsequently the reader, navigate.

The reflection is the last general, temporally unspecified narrative presented before the it transforms into the temporal beginning as a specified event commences: "With such reflections as these, I was endeavouring to console myself, as I plodded home from the fields, one cold, damp, cloudy evening towards the close of October" (*Tenant of Wildfell Hall* 9). As the opening line establishes the season, the narrator now establishes specifically a day on the level of history. This is not to say that the establishment of Gilbert's world is through. Instead of continuing the description of his family and family dynamic, as in the second paragraph that explains how the values of his parents influenced his choice of occupation, a specified, although seemingly recurrent, event is recounted. The first character to be introduced in the event is his sister on the stairs: "In ascending to my room, I was met upon the stairs by a smart, pretty girl of nineteen, with a tidy dumpy figure, a round face, bright blooming cheeks" (10). The description continues, and while at this point the recipient is addressed in the line "I need not tell you this was my sister Rose" (10). The character description, as if the narrator is describing a stranger, adds to the establishment of the world by presenting an image of his sister. A description of his brother follows, but more importantly the scene of the siblings sharing a meal with their mother and recounting their day is even more telling in terms world building. A stability is taking form and as opposed to continue the line of description through adjectives, the narrative can paint a scene, spatially but also temporally, of the family.

The world of Brontë's novel continues to emerge in the beginning as the narrative approaches the initiation of plot. This shows that the spatial and temporal qualities of the opening and the beginning function as modalities, gliding into each other without necessarily showing a clear separation of each. Gossip about the new tenant that has taken up residence at Wildfell Hall is discussed by the family member and the narrative quickly present a new event, with the family attending church. Still, the establishment of world continues as characters outside the family is introduced and the narrator explains whom he considers as possible and not possible matches, as well as other minor character. Additionally, the society is described through their

welcome of the new tenant. It is at this moment that the destabilising force that will eventually cause the instability that results in the change of equilibriums, is introduced and the second phase is initiated as the readers wonder if this tenant will reappear in the narrative.

2.3 The Model of Equilibrium

Given that in plot-oriented narratives the primary function of the beginning conventionally is to accommodate the initiation of plot, establish the plot question, and accumulate enough tension for the novel to begin to unfold, the part of the novel the beginning spans over, should in principle be mappable. By locating which parts can be said to belong to the first section of the narrative, we should be able to derive which elements are crucial in the establishment of its function. Several theorists, such as Tzvetan Todorov, Vladimir Propp, Roland Barthes, Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn, and Henri Bremond have developed models of plot, but few have attempted to concisely pinpoint that part in the plot that distinguishes the opening from the end of the beginning.[6] I will argue that Todorov's theory of equilibriums in a cyclic plot can be extrapolated to a model and applied to the plots of this thesis' corpus which presents us with an end of the beginning in the form of a kind of zone of indeterminacy, a threshold, where one or several oppositional forces create dynamics in the plot. This new dynamic culminates into a new state of disequilibrium.

In the chapter "Grammar of Narrative" in *Poetics of Prose* (1977, 111) Tzvetan Todorov aims at developing a grammar for plot much in the same way as grammar for language. In his endeavour to distinguish classes of predicatives, he refers to what he calls "the complete minimal plot" and how it consists in the "passage from one equilibrium to another" (111):

> An "ideal" narrative begins with a stable situation which is disturbed by some power or force. There results a state of disequilibrium; by the action of a force directed in the opposite direction, the equilibrium is re-established; the second equilibrium is similar to the first, but the two are never identical" (111)

He continues by identifying two types of episodes in a narrative: "those which describe a state (of equilibrium or disequilibrium) and those which describe the passage from one state to the other." (111). The first type, according to Todorov, is episodes that are static and possibly iterative, while the second type is dynamic and singular (111). It is my intention to extrapolate from Todorov's description of an "ideal" narrative a foundation to develop a model of five phases of plot that can be applied to the openings and beginnings of the plot-oriented modern English novel, the model of equilibrium. This model contains three states of equilibrium and

[6] I.e., the start of the narrative and the end of that start.

disequilibrium and two transitional phases. However, only the first state and the first transitional phase is of importance to the first part of narrative.

The model I propose, based on Todorov's theory starts with the first phase, the state of equilibrium. This is a state of balance and stability and in the plot-oriented, modern English novel, this is established through the world establishing of the opening's spatial qualities. The world and its stability are introduced in this part. Stability may appear in the form of rules or norms, habits, position, the personality of certain characters and their values to name some. The relationship between characters and their dynamic may also serve as grounds for stability. Iterative actions, objects, or dialogue could be apparent in this part to crystallise the stability, as well as to be revisited in the final phase of a new equilibrium. Several openings of this corpus open the first phase with a general situation, as to portray any day or event in the characters' lives and to imply that the content of the event is iterative.

The first state transitions through the temporality of the beginning into the second phase, a transitional, threshold zone where the balance and stability of the first phase enters a state of flux. The beginning's temporal qualities crystalize the initiation of plot in this zone. It commences at the appearance of one or several forces that destabilise the first state of balance and the actions that arises as reaction to this; it generates dynamics. Todorov describes this force as non-iterative, as opposed to the iteration that may appear in the first phase. As the first balanced state transitions into this threshold phase, the second state – the state of disequilibrium – transition out of it. It inhabits a small part of the narrative and as a threshold its essence is to be passed through. When this part is over, both world establishment and plot initiation is present in the narrative.

The third phase is the state of disequilibrium, an unbalanced state caused by the dynamics of the second, transitional phase, and occupies what traditionally has been named the middle part. This phase transitions into the fourth, transitional phase, another threshold, but the force in this state is a stabilising one, hence transitioning for the last time into the fifth and final state of a new form of equilibrium, also known as the end.

The model appears on the level of plot but becomes visible through the narrative and is constituted by events on the level of history. In other words, the events that composes these episodes are at a plot level, such as the force that destabilises the first state, because the dynamic transitions that this force provokes is of a causal nature as described in E. M. Forster's definition of plot[7]. The force must cause an instability. This is not to say that events of the same magnitude and ability as this destabilising force has not appeared before in the fictional lives of the characters. Thus, a narrative

[7]Plot is further discussed in subchapter 2.4 "Alternative Definitions of Ab Ovo and in Medias Res".

is necessary to chisel out the part of the plot that is to be communicated to the reader through the narrator, for these events and their order to become discernible as well as to create the cyclic, circular plot that Todorov analyses from the Decameron ("Grammar of Narrative," *Poetics of Prose* 111).

Todorov borrows the term equilibrium from genetic psychology. Its original meaning, he renders "the existence of a stable but not static relation between the members of a society; it is a social law, a rule of the game, a particular system of exchange" ("Structural analysis of narrative" 1969, 75). Todorov proposes that this structure is applied to plot, and that the sufficiency or the lack of it defines the equilibrium and disequilibrium that can be recognized as the states in the plot. The initial state of equilibrium, the beginning of the plot, is stable. It is the state in which the readers are introduced to the normality of the narrated plot and where they can observe the characters and the environment as they are at a certain ideal point in time without any form of intrusion or imbalance changing their behavioural pattern. It is a pre-plot foundation stipulated by the narrator and it serves as the ground on which characters base their decisions. It also functions as a form of neutral background for them to present their qualities and characteristics that may later be applied in a different state and from which an intrigue or a plot to be launched from. The narrative establishes the world where the plot unfurls and ensures that there is enough information available and presented to create the tension necessary for the plot to be compelling and generate the need to continue reading. The power or force that disturbs this balanced state makes it impossible for the characters and the plot to continue as usual which in turn sets the plot in motion.

While Todorov applies the term "equilibrium" to the first and last state of the plot, this does not amount to say that first is a state necessarily filled with harmony, happiness or other positive denotations connected to the word. Tomasjevskij denotes this as a state with peace (qtd. in Gaasland 2004, 52) but the states may on the level of plot also be a state of negative emotions and misery, such as the situation of Catherine and Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* (1847). The stability is apparent in the dependent relationship they have to each other. The miserable occurrences around them, how they are treated by Hareton, to name one, is iterative and the readers are made to believe that this is the stasis, the status quo of their lives. The important aspect is stability of plot and by applying this model to parcel off the beginning we are allowed a more dynamic demarcation.

The tactile number of pages a beginning occupies will vary from beginning to beginning and may span over ten pages or more, or as little as one page, or less. The tactile amount of time the beginning occupies, meaning number of pages allocated to this part of the novel and the time it takes for a reader to read these pages, is not decreed someplace, nor is it necessarily an accurate form of measurement. The

temporal "length", the narrated time, that ensues at a plot level will also vary as well as the time the narrative takes.[8] The narrator determines the duration of the beginning. This flexibility allows for near non-existent states of stability and balance that take up a short time of the narrative before the plot plunges into the state of disequilibrium. Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* serves as an example of how the initial balanced state is allocated a much smaller space than the middle part of the novel, the disequilibrium:

> Master Davy,' said Peggotty, untying her bonnet with a shaking hand, and speaking in a breathless sort of way. 'What do you think? You have got a Pa!' I trembled, and turned white. Something—I don't know what, or how—connected with the grave in the churchyard, and the raising of the dead, seemed to strike me like an unwholesome wind. (12)

The entrance of Copperfield's "new pa" is the counterforce to the stable state described by the narrator in the two preceding chapters. While one of many, it is the determining antagonistic force that drives the narrative and plot into the unstable state that follows: the years of Copperfield's life where he wishes for a life like the one he had. The final chapter of the novel, "A Last Retrospect," finds Copperfield in a new, stable state, with a new family of his own forming a circular narrative, ending with that which it began. As the title of the chapter suggests, the narrative has come full circle: the first chapter is an account of David Copperfield's birth, the opening line stating that the narrative has begun "to begin my life with the beginning of my life" (1) and the last chapter he describes his death: "And now my story ends" (276).

2.3.1 The End of the Beginning – The Zone of Indeterminacy

Tzvetan Todorov differs between two forms of "episodes" in "Grammar of Narrative" (*Poetics of Prose* 1977, 111). The transformative area, or the liminal space in the plot and narrative where the force that causes the shift in states, is classified as an "episode" and according to Todorov, this episode is dynamic (111). The use of the term "episode" further underlines the passing of time in this area by utilising a term that both indicates its belonging to the plot but also its qualities of separation. Hence, the entrance of the destabilising force is not a point, but an area or a form of liminal space seeing as both "narrative time" and "pseudo time" need to elapse in order for the force to initiate the transformation.[9] The narrator needs time to narrate, and the plot needs time to develop. In other words, in a complete cycle of plot a space exists which can be ascribed to be the transformative part that demarcates the end of the beginning.

The states of equilibrium and disequilibrium are transformed by destabilising/stabilising forces. The first balanced state transforms into an unstable state,

[8] Narrative time and duration are accounted for in chapter 2.4 "Alternative Definitions of Ab Ovo and In Medias Res"

[9] See Gérard Genette's chapter "Duration" in *Narrative Discourse* (1980).

and the imbalanced state transforms to a new balanced state. The force will have to be of such quality that it drives the plot away from the initial stability, and towards the restoration of another form of stability. There may be several forces in a plot exacting this dynamic but there must be at least one. At times an antagonist will serve as vehicle of such, but they may also appear in the form of an event or a peripheral character. This destabilising force initiates the end of the primary state of equilibrium and serves as precursor of the state of disequilibrium by serving as a form of instigator for the plot to be initiated.

By establishing a liminal space – the dynamic, threshold event where the destabilising force occurs, one can determine a section and not a specific point where a change in the plot as well the narrative occurs. The motion must be introduced as part of the narrative's beginning and while signalling the end of the beginning it also instigates the middle of the plot. By identifying which character or event causes this effect, the beginning has a much more concise separation from the middle part of the plot. However, by locating this space and not a point, the demarcation becomes imprecise to some degree. Still, this will suffice to establish a frame in which the content of the beginning may be explored.

As the oppositional force can never be a character alone, a character with its qualities, features and potential actions will never participate sufficiently in the plot by solely *being* a character. The plot is dependent on the character causing and producing an effect as it enters the narrative. The simplest form of this may be appearing in the narrative in such way making an entrance or as in Austen's *Emma* (1815), with the mere mention of the elusive Frank Churchill by his father Mr. Weston and other characters, including Mr. Knightley and Emma herself, and finally his appearance. It is the actions that are caused by the expectations of Frank Churchill's appearance that instigates the events of the plot and changes the balanced state to an imbalanced one, but not by consequence of who he is as a character, but the dialogue, reactions and events that transpires from his entrance into the plot. The narrator demonstrates this by explaining how Emma occasionally thinks of Frank Churchill: "Now, it so happened that in spite of Emma's resolution of never marrying, there was something in the name, in the idea of Mr. Frank Churchill, which always interested her" (95). The narrator continues by observing that "He seemed by this connexion between the families, quite to belong to her" (95) and establishes this way an expectation of Frank Churchill in addition to the ones the characters already have, in that Emma regards him as a potential match. Dialogue, reactions, and events have in common that time needs to pass in order for them to constitute as part of the plot or narrative and a character's mere existence will not suffice as the force in the model of equilibrium.

Heathcliff's entrance into the plot of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847)

in the beginning of Nelly's narrative may appear at first glance as the entrance of a force into a balanced state, and so his presence alone would cause the imbalance. However, as argued in the analysis (3.7), Heathcliff does not, at least at this point, cause this, but is in fact a part of the relation that is the foundation for the meagre equilibrium in the plot. His and Catherine's relationship is the only steady and "peaceful" aspect of Wuthering Heights in this part of the narrative and serves as a comfort and normality for the two and a haven away from the treatment from the environment. It is the entrance of the Lintons into the plot and the change in Catherine that instigates the imbalance, eventually causing Heathcliff to leave Wuthering Heights and return a cruel man.

2.3.2 Two Exceptions to the Complete Cycle

A plot consisting of equilibrium, disequilibrium and new equilibrium is one of two types of minimal complete plots Todorov refers to in his analysis of Bocaccio's *Decamaron* in "A Structural analysis of Narrative" (1969). The second type "begins in the middle of a complete cycle, with a state of imbalance created by a flaw in one of the characters" (75). Todorov detects these minimal plots in the hypodiegetic levels of the *Decameron* which offers simple examples for him to apply this on. However, if one disregards the specification that the state of imbalance is created by a flaw, the second model can be applied to a number of different narratives that begin in the middle of the cycle. This complicates the effort to demarcate the beginning with the entrance of the force that shifts the state of balance and may cause us to reflect upon the question of whether different beginnings require different models and demarcations. In the same essay, Todorov describes the structural analysis as a means "to propose a theory of the structure and operation of the literary discourse, to present a spectrum of literary possibilities, in such a manner that existing works of literature appear as particular instances of what has been realized." ("A Structural Analysis of Narrative" 71). One such possibility is that to truly understand and map out the full scope of the beginning, one must keep the type of beginning in mind – does the narrative include the state of balance or not? Even if it does not include this state at plot level, in other words the imbalanced state is the state the narrative opens in, it does not mean that the narrative is unable to present the state of balance through retrospective means.

Todorov defines the second type of plot, the "conversion" which contains an incomplete plot cycle ("A Structural Analysis of Narrative" 75). The first type of narrative follows a complete cycle "with a state of equilibrium which is broken by a violation of the law. Punishment would have restored the initial balance; the fact that punishment is avoided establishes a new equilibrium" (75). This first type of narrative is frequently found in plot-oriented modern English novels, mainly due

to the plot being firmly driven towards the improvement of the main character.[10] The second type, "the conversion" opens in the middle of a complete cycle and is according to Todorov "basically the description of an improvement process." (75). The imbalanced state is created by a flaw in one of the characters and the plot continues with until the flaw ceases to exist.

I propose that the second type of minimal plot, the "conversion," can be categorized into two forms: with an unknown equilibrium and an assumed equilibrium. They differ in that the second form accommodates the reader's assumptions of an equilibrium. It does this by allowing the reader to deduce from already familiar situations or environments, the balanced state the plot already has transformed from. The equilibrium of the first form is not alluded to, leaving the readers to discover it through retrospective episodes in the narrative.

2.3.3 The Anglo-American Plot Structure

The model of equilibrium contains several similarities to the established, Anglo-American model of plot by theorists such as Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren in *Understanding Fiction* (1959). The model describes the transformations or the development of the narrative and plot through an escalation and a de-escalation in conflict, as Hans Erik Aarset (1983) points to in his elucidation of the third step in the model: "Den generelle linje i handlingsmønsteret her, er at konflikten skjerpes gradvis" (*Grunnelementer i Romananalyse* 72). While the gradual increase in tension and conflict is the foundation of this model, where the exposition and initiation facilitate this escalation, the model of equilibrium describes the consequences of conflict or tension by establishing the phases based on the state of the fictional world, balanced or not.

According to Rolf Gaasland in *Fortellerens Hemmeligheter* (2004) one must first perform an analysis in line with Greimas' Actantial model to establish the project and conflict-axes to be able to apply the Anglo-American model on a plot (51). This must be done to identify the subject of the plot as well as its project and possible oppositional forces. However, in many novels the subject is not revealed until later in the narrative, such as the late focalization of Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*, which in turn would mean that it is not possible to determine where the beginning is because the reader do not know who the subject is, or is misled to believe it is someone else, like Elizabeth's sister Jane. In the model of equilibrium, it is not so much the project of the subject that determines the phases of the plot, but the general condition of the narrative. By establishing the second phase, the threshold

[10] See Claude Bremond's essay "The Logic of Narrative Possibilities" (1980) on that a narrative's events can be classed as either belonging to an amelioration process or a degradation process: A plot can either revolve around the betterment of character(s) which may or may not be fulfilled, or the worsening of character's situation, which may or may not be avoided (390).

into the third phase, the state of disequilibrium, the subject and its project becomes evident as well as potential oppositional forces, due to the reactions of the forces already existent in the first balanced state to the new force.

The first two momentums, exposition and initiation, are exempt from this escalation according to Aarset, and are mainly occupied with establishing the base or foundation for the escalation to arise out of and the escalation itself. The primary function of this beginning is described by Aarset as "å presentere én eller flere viktige personer og å etablere den generelle situasjon og det rom den kommende konflikten skal utspilles i" (*Grunnelementer i Romananalyse* 72). Aarset's description is similar to the opening I have defined in subchapter 2.2, as well as the features of the first phase of a plot, the equilibrium. However, I argue it restricts the beginning more than necessary. While many openings do imply iteration in a general description of a day or episode, descriptions of specific events may also contribute to the world establishment and stability of the first phase. Nor is the establishment of space conditional to the conflict in a way that it must transpire in that same space. Many states of disequilibriums in this corpus arises from a removal or relocation to another space, such as Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* (1859-1860) and Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1854). The first phase, the opening, allows the establishment of a world that will be disrupted, and which will transition into something else and is in this sense more flexible and inclusive than the exposition of the Anglo-American model.

Aarset remarks that in most plots the significant characters are present from the beginning (*Grunnelementer i Romananalyser* 72). While Aarset also comments that there are variations, this appears to be the convention. Which characters count as significant characters is however not defined, but if by the phrase "viktige deler av persongalleriet" (72) Aarset refers to characters that function as actants, it is plausible to deduce that he includes the subject to be party to this classification. The inclusion of the important characters is not necessary for the world to be established in the opening, nor does the plot initiation of the beginning rely on this detail. The opposition to the subject, the helpers in plural, may not appear until later in the narrative, and while one may argue that the project axis changes or the object changes, the first part of the narrative remains the same. The scope of this thesis restricts any delving into actants – which ought to be present and which may appear later. However, based on the corpus it appears that only the subject, object and sender appear at times elementary to the opening and beginning.

It is in the second moment, the initiation, that the Anglo-American model differs from the model of equilibrium. Aarset describes the phase as "et punkt i fortellingen hvor ting har begynt å skje på nåtidsplanet, - dvs. Til det punkt hvor den generelle situasjonen utvikler seg over I et handlingsforløp" (*Grunnelementer i Romananalyse*

72). In the distinction of opening and beginnings, this part would be the beginning in which the temporal quality of the narrative becomes evident in order to initiate the plot. As opposed to Aarset's description, this is not a point in the narrative, but a section. This section transitions into the second phase, the threshold. In other words, the model Aarset refers to identifies the temporality and the initiation but do not separate the parts as the model of equilibrium does. This also implies that specific episodes cannot be part of the exposition or the "beginning" as they are not general, but the function of it can be expressed through specified episodes as well. Therefore, I suggest in the chapter about openings and beginning of viewing the two concepts and their spatial and temporal qualities as modalities of each other as an opening may have temporality that contribute to the world establishment and vice versa.

The initiation phase, according to Aarset, will finally culminate into point where the narrative has finished describing the forces of world and are set into motion: "Igangsettelsen er så det punkt hvor disse krefter settes i bevegelse, møter hverandre, konfronteres og etterhvert kommer i konflikt" (*Grunnelementer i Romananalyser* 72). This phase constitutes partially the second phase of the model of equilibrium, where temporal events of the beginnings transitions into the introduction of a force or forces that disrupt the equilibrium and creates a dynamic by the environments reaction to the force. While Aarset is correct in pointing out that there are forces in the stable state as well, and it is their reactions to the new force that create a new dynamic and an instability. It appears however, that the Anglo-American model assumes this phase to include every episode that are not general, hence it occupies a much bigger space in the narrative than the second phase in the model of equilibrium to.

Despite their similarities, the models differ. This may primarily be due to the form of structure they intend to measure. While they are both models of plot, the Anglo-American model measure "spenningsstigningen" (*Grunnelementer i Romananalyse* 71-72) in forms of escalation and de-escalation, as well as climaxes. The states in the model of equilibrium that this thesis employs are products of conflict or lack of, in addition to the two threshold phases that cause the transition into a new phase. In a sense they measure different aspects of plot, possibly due to their different aims, whereas the aim of developing the model of equilibrium has been to understand the scope and content of the beginning, and the model Aarset refers to is focused on the development of conflict (70-71).

2.4 Alternative Definition of Ab Ovo and In Medias Res

2.4.1 Narrative Levels

While the narrative levels of a novel might be designated different terms by different scholars, often implying slightly different accentuation, critics tend to agree that there are three levels that make up the narrative of a novel. Gérard Genette defines these levels in *Narrative Discourse* (1980) and applies the term story ("histoire") for the narrative content, narrative ("récit") for the discourse or the narrative text, and finally narrating ("narration") for what he describes as the "producing narrative action, and, by extension, the whole of the real of fictional situation in which that action takes place." (27). It should be noted that I have chosen to use the term "history" instead of "story", and rather apply the term of the narrative text as a whole. The reason behind this is that "story" translates to the Norwegian word "fortelling" and is too easily confused with narrative and narration, as the word is often associated with the act of telling a story. In Petter Aaslestad's *Narratologi* (1999) the Norwegian equivalent of the french "historie" is also applied, using "historie" (history) instead of story (25).

Genette based these classifications on the Russian formalists' concepts of "fabula" and "sjuzet", which defines the "fabula" as a summary of the actions of the novel and the "sjuzet" as the enunciation or articulation of the story, in a sense quite similar to what Genette terms "narration" (*Narrative Discourse* 18). In other words, the history of the novel is the actions in the order they unfold without taking into consideration anachronistic devices or other forms of narrative manipulation of the story. The readers access the history through the narrative which assembles the episodes of the history to convey a story to the readers. This story is represented through the discourse of the narrative.

2.4.2 Plot and Intrigue

In addition to the three levels, history, narrative, and discourse, but not really fitting fully into any of them, is the concept of plot. Plot designates the line of events or causal relations that moves the history forward. Aristotle describes the concept as the formal manipulation or reassembly of events that follows a probable or necessary line of action (*Poetics*, VI), while Peter Brooks (1992) refers to plot as "the dynamic shaping force of the narrative discourse (*Reading for the Plot* 13).[11] It is a matter of causality; the events need to follow a cause-consequence form for the plot, or "intrigue," to become apparent, and as Jakob Lothe (2008) states, this "signaliserer

[11]Frank Kermode in *The Sense of an Ending* (2000) presents the analogy of plot in the "ticks" and "tocks" of a clock: "The clock's *tick-tock* I take to be a model of what we call a plot, an organization that humanizes time by giving it form; the interval between *tock* and *tick* represents purely successive, disorganized time of the sort that we need to humanize." (45)

i tillegg at narrative form har ein viktig innhaldsdimensjon" (*Fiksjon og Film* 18) beyond relaying the episodes of the history to the recipient. The term plot, Lothe explains, is the presentation of literary action as understood as contiguous and mutually connected actions. E. M Forster (1985) distinguishes between story and plot and defines the story "as a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence." (*Aspects of the Novel* 130). The plot, he states, shares an aspect with the story by also being "a narrative of event," however, causality sets them apart (130). The fundamental difference can be summarized in which what type of follow up question is formed: It is the "why" and not the "and then" that emblemizes the effect of the plot (130).

Based on these definitions, the plot appears to be interconnected with both the level of history and the level of narrative. It is anchored in history as constituted by events, actions and interactions of the agents and is subject to the narrative's presentation of history, chronologically or not. The narrator presents the events through sequences of causality in the order that creates the desired tension and dynamic that is the plot. It is through the narrative that immediate and acute openings as the "in medias res," meaning "in the midst of things"(suggested below as "the fourth modality"), is made possible. In the case of "in medias res" the narrator initiates the narrative by creating the illusion of a plot and narrative without a beginning and a state of equilibrium, but it exists on the level of either history or implicit history and is in some cases made available in the narrative through means of analepsis or other temporal devices.

If we accept that plot is the causal ordering of events into sequences thus turning sheer chronology into a narrative (death of the king, then death of the queen, into the king died, hence the queen dies of sorrow),[12] another distinction presents itself, the differentiation between the plot on the level of narrative and on the level of history. The causality of the plot, and not simply the recounting of events, speaks to a cause-effect dependent on the presentation of the narrative. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the noun "intrigue" as "the exertion of tortuous or underhand influence to accomplish some purpose; underhand plotting or scheming" ("Intrigue" def. 2a) and explains the word by utilising "plot" as a verb, not as a literary concept. It is an action performed by agents as part of their agency and speaks to their projects. Perhaps this makes room for a suggested renaming of plot on the level of history as intrigue. The causal episodes of the plot that we have located on this level, are products of the agents' projects, and is therefore linked to the characters themselves and their psychology. Intrigues are the product of ambitions and plans, thus characterising the individual harbouring them. Often these products, or actions,

[12]This is the example of events ordered into a sequence E. M. Forster (1985) applies in *Aspects of the Novel* (130).

that produce consequences are of an interrelational nature, such as the conversation between Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley that cause the shift of the balanced state in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). If we accept that the history level of plot can be named intrigue due to the word's connection to agency, then plot may solely be assigned to the level of narrative, as a broader term that encompasses the structuring of the products of the agents in the history and their presence in the narrative temporally. In other words, the placement of certain events before others and vice versa, despite chronology, which is the privilege of the narrative.

2.4.3 The Level of Implicit History

The three levels of the novel distinguished by Genette, in particular the level of history, do not account for implicit events – those events that are not visible on the level narrative or plot, until perhaps later in the novel. If the level of history is constituted by the events the readers have access to through the narrative, there are still events that in principle exist by force of implication, but not in the sense that they exist beyond the level of history. They are events that must have occurred for the narrative and history to commence at the moment they do. In such a way, they are conditional. As an example, for a character to be present on the level of history, that character must have had a "life" before the events conveyed in the novel; a form of pre-history that the narrative does not explicitly present until later, or not at all. By being conditional, this implicit history is, in a way, part of the causality of a plot. For there to be villain, the villain must be born. Hence, there must be a mother and that mother must have met someone to become pregnant, and so on.

I suggest that in addition to these three levels, a fourth should be recognised as the level of implicit history. In several narratives of this corpus, including the "ab ovo"-openings, the narrative suggests events that have occurred before the temporal location from which the first part of the narrative exists, through means of anachronisms such as analepsis. Characters may converse about events in the past; letters often explain past events such as Mr. Darcy's letter to Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), or characters may assume the role as narrator, such as Nelly in *Wuthering Heights* (1847), creating a hypodiegetic level that describes actions that have taken place in the past and precedes the plot proper. These anachronistic events exist on the level of history in the sense that they are communicated and presented to reader by means of the discourse. However, there are events that are necessary for the episodes on the level of history to take place, that are not necessarily available to the reader explicitly through the narrative, but implicitly through causality – that is, they are the cause of what is given in the narrated universe. While there is no denying that the events that make up a fictional work are indeed fiction; the characters are

not real humans, but mere anthropomorphic representations.[13] The illusion power of the fictional work depends, however, on the reader's acceptance of that its characters as humans living and having lived their lives for a while, depending on their age. Hence, a character such as Mrs. Bennet is not merely alive through the narrative's depiction of the history that primarily focuses on the fate of her daughters, but in that she is an illusion of someone who has, figuratively speaking, a history as well, that transcends any possible analeptic devices seeing as a determining feature of being human or human-like is that we do not spring out of the earth at the age of forty, but we are born.

2.4.4 Ab Ovo and In Medias Res

Taken literally, the metaphor ab ovo, "from the egg," hints at the existence of an untold pre-history. An egg should in all probability require a chicken or some other egg-laying creature to not only produce it, but to lay it as well. If the start of the chain of events that constitute the history of a novel is an egg, and subsequently its hatching, it does not exclude the fact that it is dependent on something else to exist. Its existence is conditional and is caused by something. This something, while not explicitly described in the narrative, still exists implicitly seeing as the subject in question, the egg, is a product of this something's existence. Hence, it exists on the implicit level of history before the beginning of the narrative. In other words, the "ab ovo" beginnings of the corpus may not be as initial or "beginning" as traditionally conceived.

The implicit level of a pre-history, something that has gone before, and which the reader is invited to take for granted, is what makes possible openings such as the "in medias res". It is also, I will argue, what creates the inauthentic aspect of many "ab ovo"-beginnings. Ab ovo opens the narrative at the earliest temporal location that the narrative can procure – in theory.[14] Both the term "ab ovo" and "in medias res" stem from Horace's commendation in *The Art of Poetics* of Homer's opening in the *Iliad*: "Nor when he tells the Trojan story, begs / Attention first for Leda and her eggs." (v.146). Homer does not, according to Horace's praise, open by tracing the narrative back to the egg of Leda, the first causal episode that the Trojan war can transpire from (hence the literal meaning "from the egg"). This type of opening from the egg is true to Aristotle's definition of the beginning from *Poetics*, namely that the beginning is that which does not follow something else, as opposed to the middle and the end that subsequently do follow something (VII). Instead, he opts

[13] Or "paper beings" as Roland Barthes denotes in "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives" in *The Semiotic Challenge* (1994, 123.)

[14] A. D. Nuttall complicates the ab ovo further in *Openings* (1992): "the mystic, inherently uninspectable Genesis of the Universe may stand as the sole permissible natural beginning. The wholly erroneous idea that only that which has nothing before it is truly a beginning has a long history" (210).

for a more immediate opening, the "in medias res" which in turn translates to "in the middle of things": "He hurries to the crisis, lets you fall / Where facts crowd thick, as though you knew them all" (v.146). As Horace remarks, the opening is situated without much introduction or establishment of "who" and "what" in the event, imitating the effect of there being no opening nor a beginning at all. This effect, Horace explains, is so that not until the narrative is finished can its parts of become evident and form a unity: "Beginning, middle, end alike agree." (v. 146).

2.4.5 Four Modalities of Implicit History

Instead of sectioning openings into the two categories ab ovo and in medias res, I suggest that they be seen as the effect of four modalities of immediacy. Given that a level of implicit history is recognised, these modalities signify the degree of visibility of the implicit history. By identifying these four modalities instead of the traditional ab ovo and in medias res sectioning, it may make the nuances of openings more evident. However, as the traditional two-way sectioning of the ab ovo and in medias res signals that a novel either contains a beginning or not, and in the lines of Edward W. Said's description: "the tyranny of the in medias res": the latter is overwhelming in numbers (*Beginnings* 2012, 43).

The first modality is the ab ovo most true to its meaning. It is the opening with next to no visible implicit history and is therefore of a low modality of immediacy. This form of opening appears in narratives such as the opening line of the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1) or Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen 1:1). Both openings describe a beginning and the first matters to materialize in this world. In addition to being an explicit statement of something "beginning" or coming into being, it establishes that nothing has become before this moment. If something is "first" it is understood that it is without any form of precursory events. It is without any prehistory and therefore without implicit history. This type of opening has a no degree immediacy, with no event to commence in the middle of, nor are there characters appearing without introductions.

The second modality is the type of ab ovo-openings more common in the corpus; the opening of less modality and some visible implicit history. The narrative and history give the illusion of being a novel that opens at the "beginning of it all", such as the birth of David Copperfield in Dickens' novel with the same title, or the conception of the protagonist in Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759). However, as Knut Ove Eliassen and Knut Stene-Johansen demonstrate in the chapter "Begynnelser" from *Ledeord* (2007), the opening in *Tristram Shandy* is a conditional one as it not only describes the conception of Tristram Shandy, but also reveal other, causal actions that produce the protagonist. Eliassen and Stene-Johansen show

the distraction the mother causes by pointing out that the clock is not winded, is, according to the narrator, a direct cause to the narrator's own distracted nature: "Distraksjonen, bruddet på rutinene, bringer farens livssafter – *the animal spirits* - i ulage og blir den umiddelbare årsaken til sønnens distré sinn" (50). While such novels are portrayed as opening with the first event of the life of a character, there are several events on the level of implicit history that has caused events on the level of history, the existence of the characters to name one. In other words, by establishing this form of opening as an ab ovo-opening, the element of causality is overlooked and the fact that most eggs are laid by chickens – and that people are birthed by women, is lost.

The third modality of immediacy is the most frequent type of opening in this corpus and is traditionally classified as opening in medias res. It portrays more of the implicit history than the first and second modality and contains a higher degree of immediacy as it mimics the entrance upon an already ensued event on the level of history and narrative. This type of opening should in theory, according to Horace, be without explanations or explicit introductions to characters and events, and therefore be experienced as more immediate than the other openings with less degree of immediacy. However, while this type, the third modality of immediacy, does not explicitly afford the readers with explanations or introductions, it may do so more implicitly. One example of this is the opening of *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). The first episode of the novel is the conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet. It appears to be as any other day in their lives, except there is some news about a new tenant at Netherfield Hall. While it is not clear if there has been any other exchange of dialogue between the two before the conversation is initiated through the narrative by Mrs. Bennet asking Mr. Bennet whether he is aware of this new tenant, the effect is that of some degree of acuteness from the implicit history that we cannot read. It is implied through the dialogue that these two persons are familiar with each other, a form of dialogue that entail that there have been former dialogues and their names and titles imply that they are married. Hence, the implicit history's presence is evident on the level of history. The third modality of openings, in addition to the first and the second, are types that facilitate a state of equilibrium, and this is also what separates the first three types to the fourth.

The fourth modality of immediacy is of high degree of immediacy and high degree of visible implicit history. This is the opening of the plots Tzvetan Todorov calls "conversions"; plots that are non-cyclic in that they open in the middle of the plot cycle. As such they do not contain an "opening" or "beginning" on a level of narrative nor on the level of history, but they exist in the implicit history. The implicit history is also the most visible and evident in this modality, often with openings referring or implying that there is a prehistory. An example of this is

the opening of Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*. The opening is a constant referral to the fact that there has been a time before this narrative commences: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity." The temporality manifested in these lines states which times it is "now," but also states that there must have been conditions before that has caused the times to be what they are now. In other words, these openings open the novel in a state of disequilibrium. There is no form of establishment of stability for a force to destabilise. It is a climactic and acute opening that show a high degree of immediacy. The beginnings may appear at a later point in the narrative, meaning that this equilibrium has existed on a level of history, or it may not appear, and it therefore only exists in the implicit history without details of the state.

On the grounds of this suggested dichotomy of openings, it becomes problematic to designate openings as belonging solely to narrative or to history but seem to be a conjecture of both at different degrees. The first and the second modality has a more evident basis on the level of history since the narrative does not to some extent exclude episodes from before the opening, while the third and fourth modality both inhabit a type of opening that makes the excluded episodes in the implicit history more obvious or evident. Perhaps what differs the first two types from the last is the narrative's occupancy in the discourse as it determines the point of commencement in the history.

3 Analyses of the Openings and Beginnings of the Corpus

The following eight analyses will examine or test the four formal concepts established in the first chapter in the corpus' openings and beginnings. The first concept is the "modality of the opening." The analyses will establish which modality immediacy the novel opens in, out of four modalities ranging from the first and second modality of the ab ovo openings, to the third and fourth of the in medias res openings. The first and the second offer none or less immediacy and presence of implicit history, while the third and fourth offer higher or the highest degree of immediacy and present implicit history.

The second concept, "opening," designates the establishment of the opening and identifies which aspects of the discourse and narration depict the spatial qualities necessary to construct the world out of which the narrative will ensue. The particular openings in the corpus appear specific to their novel in the following analyses and vary from each other either through the more literal establishment of the space in which the characters inhabit, or through the characters' relationship to each other and the established dynamics, or through a "day in the life of"- type of narrative, where the general, iterative activities of a character is main material of the opening.

The third concept is "the beginning," a term that denominates the moment the opening with its spatial qualities transitions into the beginning in the form of specific events, exhibiting temporal qualities instead of spatial. These events in sequence initiate the plot by presenting causal events in the efforts to establish the balanced state.

The fourth concept is "the end the beginning," that is the event(s) of the destabilising force that intrudes upon the balanced state established in the opening and beginning. This is the part in the history of the novel where the dynamics are altered by the entrance of the external force which also initiates the indeterminate zone in which the transition from balanced state of the first phase of the model of equilibrium to the imbalanced state, the phase of disequilibrium occurs. This zone of indeterminacy marks the end of the beginning.

I have tried to retain this four-concept structure in the analyses. However, there are openings and beginnings where the sequential order of the concepts is of a different structure. This reorganization occurs in those novels that contain more than one opening and beginning, in other words, those of more than one diegetic level, among other. These openings also allow for a combination of the modalities of immediacy but also presents the readers with discourse prior to the opening as means of alleviating the immediacy of the in medias res opening, or by providing a

type of context, such as doxa or explanations for the discourse that follows.

One novel in the analyses appear less compatible with the proposed model of equilibrium. Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778) opens in the state of disequilibrium, and not in a balanced state, despite portraying implicit signs of equilibrium in the prehistory. Epistolary novels conventionally commence at a stage in a correspondence where prior communication has taken place on the level of history. Even so, despite this disqualification, the novel contains the same concepts as the other novels in this corpus, fully permitting a complete analysis.

The object of these analyses is to show that all of them exhibit these concepts to some extent, and the dynamics of the novels appear in the amount of space they are allocated, or, in some specific cases, the order their appear in. However, all establish a world spatially, initiate a plot temporally, and at a moment in the history, a destabilising force changes the dynamics of the narrative. The concepts are structured by subchapters stating the concept discussed.

3.1 *A Christmas Carol*

A Christmas Carol (1843) by Charles Dickens is a straightforward narrative with an opening, a beginning, and an end of the beginning, out of which the phase of disequilibrium ensues. The novella opens with scenes of generality as means of establishing the opening through spatiality and transitions into the beginning by means of successive, specific events that initiates the temporality of the narrative, and by consequence, also the plot. The beginning culminates into a confrontation between Marley's ghost and Scrooge, entering the zone where the destabilising force of the ghosts shifts the equilibrium of Scrooge's world that has so far been established as balanced.

The Second Modality of Immediacy

Dickens' novella opens with the second modality of in immediacy, a somewhat more immediate version of the ab ovo. The narrator opens with a statement: "Marley was dead: to begin with" (1). The death of a character automatically implies that there must have been a life lived prior to its termination. In other words, an implicit prehistory on the level of history. While there is an evident prehistory, the narrator's statement that the close of one life is the relevant moment on the level of history to start the narrative, still speaks to less immediacy than other opens that may open mid-conversation in the fourth modality of immediacy, for instance. While there are many events that must have occurred prior to the opening, the narrator's statement could be regarded as an admission that these events are less relevant to the narrative and that Marley's death and his afterlife matter more than his experiences prior to his demise. The opening thus establishes the theme of death and afterlife

by not opening at the commencement of someone's life, such as the birth of David Copperfield in Dickens' other novel, *David Copperfield*, or the infancy of Catherine Morland in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, but by opening at the close of a life. In other words, what would often be the end of a narrative.

The narrator employs anachronisms in the narrative's presentation of history, summarised in the names of the spirits of Christmas: Ghost of Christmas Past, Present, and Christmas Yet to Come. In the third phase of the plot, the disequilibrium caused by the destabilising force in the form of Marley's ghost, Scrooge's former colleague, contains the three events of the ghosts: One analeptic event with the Ghost of Christmas Past who presents how Scrooge has come to be misanthropic person he is to the reader; the second is contemporary to the duration of the diegetic level of Scrooge's life as the Ghost of Christmas Present show Scrooge the state of London, its poverty and misery as well as how his relations are celebrating Christmas Eve; and lastly, the third, a form of proleptic narrative, as the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come displays a possible future for Scrooge if he were to continue his path. However, were it not for the narrative's seemingly disinterest in the events before the death of Scrooge's colleague, evident in the second modality of immediacy in the opening line, the Ghost of Christmas Past would not be necessary for the plot. Without this ghost, the symmetrical middle-part of the novel would not be present, disrupting the systematic structure of Dickens' novella. Nor would Scrooge's retrospective journey with the ghost make much sense as it would only retell much of what would already have been recounted by the narrator. Indeed, the narration opens the narrative at the exact moment in the history where a sufficient amount of prehistory has culminated for the ghost to endeavour to guide Scrooge on this tour, as well as for the Ghost of Christmas Present to have enough contemporary misery to portray.

The opening facilitates the growing sympathy towards Scrooge later in the narrative. While the narrator ensures the reader's understanding of Scrooge's persona through explicit characterisation, the first insight into his past may have been construed in order to warm the readers towards his character. The Ghost brings him back to a childhood Christmas he spends alone in a school. The vision of the child, a younger version of Scrooge, causes him to sob, portraying to the reader a man traumatised by his childhood (*A Christmas Carol* 38). The past mistreatments help the readers understand Scrooge's current character. This, and the following events, is the cause of Scrooge's malevolence and misanthropy, presented as suppressed or forgotten memories. If the readers were made aware of these events prior to the point of commencement, the story about a cruel man transformed by the spirit of Christmas would not be possible.

The Opening

The narrator meticulously establishes one rule in the in the world of *A Christmas Carol*, namely that the dead remains dead:

> Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it: and Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was dead as a doornail. (1)

The fact that Marley is most certainly dead is repeatedly asserted by the narrator who continues to elaborate on how dead he is in order to establish a world that seemingly follows the rules of nature, without supernatural manifestations such as ghosts. This elaboration on Marley's death is perpetuated up until the moment the narrator explains why this is important:

> This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come out of the story I am going to relate. If we were not perfectly convinced that Hamlet's Father died before the play began, there would be nothing more remarkable in his taking a stroll at night, in an easterly wind (*A Christmas Carol* 2).

As the narrator plainly states, it must be acknowledged that the dead remain so in order for it to be unexpected and out of the ordinary when they do not. It may appear counter-intuitive to have a narrator reveal such a detail in the opening, but if only, it may suggest to the readers that while ghosts do participate in the plot of the narrative, their unexpected existence may be secondary and subservient to another part of the plot. Nor ought it be too surprising, seeing as the full title of Dickens' short novel include *Being a Ghost Story of Christmas*. Hence, the narrator effectively establishes that in this world it is commonly understood that dead people do not rise as ghosts, although the reader might suspect otherwise.

The narrator continues the opening with the same explicit descriptions and explanations. Contrast is applied to enhance the space of the novella. Ebenezer Scrooge and his character is explicitly stated through a cascade of adjectives and the reader quickly understand that this is not a likeable person:

> Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster (*A Christmas Carol* 2).

Through alliteration, similes, and metaphors the narrator paints a cruel and despicable character, bordering on the comical. His looks are explained in the same explicit fashion and utilises comparisons of bad weather and words associated with the low temperature of December: "The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait" (2-3). The characterisation

continues into a spatial description of his office, a counting house, equally emphasizes the lack of warmth in the surroundings by the sparse use of coal to heat the office.

The care that the narrator bestows upon the descriptions contributes to the depiction of right and wrong in the world, or in other words, what a "good Christian" is considered not to be. Scrooge is everything a good Christian is not. He does not possess qualities such as charity, benevolence, sympathy nor kindness, and as the opening transpires from a general description of Scrooge's world into a more specific day at the counting house, his lack of these qualities is enhanced through the contrasts to other characters. The narrator juxtaposes Scrooge with the humble clerk working for him, the gentlemen collecting money for the poor, and his nephew who invites him to a Christmas party. Through these contrasts, the unlikelihood of Scrooge improving as a character becomes clear, and that his character and how he "keeps Christmas" is more problematic than how dead Marley is.

The Beginning

The encounters with the other characters at his office mark the commencement of the beginning, and the temporality through the narration of specific events becomes evident. The specific day of the history, Christmas Eve, continues with Scrooge making his way home. Places besides his office, home, and the road between them is paid no attention to, due to the world of Scrooge being exceptionally small. This is also addressed by Marley's ghost as one of his grievances against Scrooge. Hence, there is no need to spatially establish the world and its environment beyond these few spaces. As Scrooge retires for the day and makes himself comfortable with his supper, the world establishment also comes at an end and the ghost of Marley becomes more present as the beginning initiates the plot.

The events prior to the moment Scrooge sits down for his dinner has been an effort to show that despite his miserable circumstances and lack of Christmas cheer, this is stability for Scrooge, as well as the other characters in the present time of the narrative. His appearance soured by his personality, his reactions to other people, the state of his cold office and home due to his reluctance to spend money on electricity and heating, and his general attitude towards mankind, are aspects of stability in this narrative. Scrooge can be relied upon to react in this manner and perpetuate this behaviour. All of this is iterative.

The End of the Beginning

The door knocker is the first signpost of the beginning's end, the indeterminate zone. The destabilising force creates a new dynamic, and the middle relieves the beginning, and this alteration becomes apparent in the door knocker that has transformed into Marley's ghostly face. The commencing shift of dynamics in this narrative is strongly related to doors and the forces that want to enter. While the knocker has him shook,

he rationalises the vision and continues to his private chamber. Again, as the full force of disruption appears, it is connected to doors. Marley's ghost obtrusively bangs on the doors and eventually breaks through into the stable state that is the world of Scrooge. It is the unwelcome change to Scrooge's equilibrium that trespasses and while Scrooge attempts to rationalise away the vision of Marley by blaming it on indigestion, the disequilibrium that will follow cannot be avoided.

Marley's ghost functions as an announcer, an instigator of the plot. His announcement changes the dynamics of the plot and facilitates not only the reader's comprehension of the three ghost that will appear and their motives, but also to prepare Scrooge and present the consequences should he not comply with the demands of the ghosts. The narrator's incorrect but proleptic statement in the opening, that dead people will not rise to become ghosts, has been proven opposite and the norm of the world has been disrupted, as intended. However, the mere existence of ghosts does not constitute the disequilibrium in its entirety, but these ghosts, including Marley's, demand that Scrooge changes his world and himself. Thus, the changed dynamics resulting in a disequilibrium is caused by the insistence that the stability present in the first phase must be altered and Scrooge's subsequent resistance to the demands. While the state of disequilibrium consists of the confrontations of three ghosts, it is not a confrontation based on their characters as ghosts, but on Scrooge's life and he is forced to confront three versions of himself: his past self, his present and his likely future self. The ghosts, often referred to as spirits, hold in this way a moralistic or ideological function, as guides for Scrooge to become a better person – a more Christian person, and can apply these extraordinary measures to do so. The Christian ideology behind the word spirit is not lost either.

The plot in Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* is a highly circular one. Marley announces the oncoming arrival of the three ghosts and the middle part of the novel, the third phase of disequilibrium ensues. As the final phase of the plot, the new state of equilibrium emerges from the second threshold zone from the state of disequilibrium, it circles back to where the narrative began, with Scrooge's attitude towards Christmas: "it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well" (125). This new, stable phase of the plot presents a new Scrooge, an opposite person of that he was, but evaluated so out of the same framework as the first equilibrium.

The Christmas novella is strict in its form and in turn allows for a straightforward analysis in line with the division of opening and beginning, as well as the model of equilibrium. This structuring of form presents how the content is connected and often contingent on its framework, as the plot relies on genre conventions such as the supernatural gothic ghost stories. The narrative employs temporally unspecified events in the opening to establish the small world of Scrooge, his relations and

mannerism, and applies specificity in the events to initiate the plot. The end of the beginning is heralded by Marley's ghost as the bleak, but balanced, state of equilibrium transitions into disequilibrium in the zone of indeterminacy.

3.2 *Evelina*

The plot structure in Frances Burney's novel *Evelina* (1778) is the least compatible with model of equilibrium. This could be ascribed to its publishing in the early phase of the novel in the 1700s, or as a purpose to present the reader with a considerable amount of prehistory as a means to inform the reader in advance of the middle part of the narrative. It does not open at the very first event on the level of history, nor does it entirely commence in the middle of the state of disequilibrium as a plot of "conversion" according to Tzvetan Todorov ("Grammar of Narrative" 111). Despite of this, the first part of the narrative contains the all the concepts accounted for in the introduction to this chapter. It is the opening in the fourth modality of immediacy that separates the narrative from the others in this corpus.

The Fourth Modality of Immediacy

The first part of the narrative in *Evelina* opens with the fourth modality of immediacy with high degree of implicit history and immediacy. The prehistory replaces the traditional world establishment. The more traditional opening of a novel such as this in the plot-oriented, modern classic English novel, would be to have a scene more contemporary to the narrative's temporal point of departure, a more immediate, even intruding scene, for then to continue into the account of the prehistory. In *Evelina*, the first two letters appear to have the qualities of a prologue rather than a beginning.[15]

The first letters constitute the less plot-oriented part of the narrative, and the temporal aspect of the more plot driven beginning becomes evident when the letters begin to address the more current situation and events not as far back in history as the first few. The first of the more contemporary or immediate letters is "Letter III" which in brackets is explained to have been "[written some months after the last]" (17) from Lady Howard to Villars. She suggests that Evelina may join their trip to London. A few mentions of the prehistory aside, the letter is concentrated on the diegetic "now" and her plan for the next two or three months. It could be argued that this letter and the ensuing response from Villars constitute the zone of indeterminacy, rather than the beginning.

The letters that comprise the entire novel, discreetly disturbs the chronology in the narrative by being forms of retelling. The novel does not have an extradiegetic

[15]Prologues, while of interest in relation to openings and beginning, do not frequently occur in the modern, English novels of the late 18th century to the mid-1800s.

narrator set apart from the characters in the diegesis, but is narrated through the characters' correspondences, although Evelina is the dominating "narrator" in this sense. As Gérard Genette remarks in *Narrative Discourse* (1980), this allows for the complicated, interpolated focalization,[16] where the producer of the letter communicates from different chronological points, the first being the moment as the letter is produced, and the second is often a recounting of what has happened, but which sometimes morphs into less distanced narration, as if the narration is produced while the events occur. In *Evelina* this comes to view in how her letters are first a response to the letter she has received from Villars, commenting, and answering his concerns or questions, to become a retelling of the episodes from the night before. The anachronistic structure may reoccur in one letter with dates indicating that she writes several letters in one, convoluting letter before sending it.

The Opening

As opposed to opening with a general scene with a potential of iteration to establish the world of the novel, *Evelina* opens with an account of specified events from the past. Instead of creating a space for a plot to ensue from, the correspondence between Rev. Mr. Villars and Lady Howard appear as means of explaining how things have come to be. This exchange, which does not appear to be a singular event and the two characters appear through their discourse to be acquaintances, bears perhaps some inauthenticity, as does the rest of the epistolary aspect of this novel. The reason as to why these two characters find the need to recount events that they would most likely already be aware of, considering their apparent friendship, comes across as illogical and only present for an explanatory effect. It follows that the recount of events appears at the expense of the spatial qualities seen in the other openings in the corpus.

By opening the novel with the fourth modality of immediacy, without the spatiality and world establishment, the exhibit of a stable state becomes near absent. Mere traces of Evelina's last few years appear in the narrative through Villar's descriptions, confining the remaining events of Evelina's life to the implicit history. The narrative thus relies on the reader's ability to register and comprehend the implied. Two phrases in the second letter of the novel from Villars to Howard refer to this implicit, stable state: "her education, however short of my wishes, almost exceeds my abilities . . . Madame Duval will find no reason to be dissatisfied with what has been done for her'" (13) and "I have cherished, succoured and supported her, from her earliest infancy to her sixteenth year" (16). Villars declares that Evelina has received a proper education. She has been supported and has had a loving home, and

[16]Genette differs between three types of focalization in the chapter "Mood": Nonfocalized narrative (or narrative with zero focalization), internal focalization (which is either fixed or variable), and multiple focalization (typical of epistolary novels) (*Narrative Discourse* 1980, 189-190).

it ought to be enough for her grandmother to be satisfied. From these two statements it is possible for the readers to deduce that Evelina has had a traditional upbringing suitable for young women of some means – or at least according to Villars. It is possible to surmise that it has also been an isolated life as young girls did not come out into society until a later age, specifically at a point in history after the initial communication of the opening occurs. In other words, the world establishment is an implicit one. It depends on the reader's knowledge of society and is satisfied with simply referring to this stable state, instead of including it in the first part of the narrative. Additionally, it relies on the reader accepting the account and authority of Villars and believe that there has not been any notable disturbances or destabilising transitions in the life of Evelina and that she has lived the life one can expect thus far.

The effect of opening the novel without an opening but with a summary of past events, may have several explanations. It could serve as a backdrop for the narrative; by establishing the heritage of Evelina the information will be available without the need for explanations when addressed later in the narrative. Evelina is considered an illegitimate child, but wrongly so. Her father burnt the marriage documents, effectively annulling his marriage to her mother, wrongly making her a child born outside of wedlock. This enables the tension of the plot of illegitimacy in Evelina's introduction to London society, and the readers must witness all that she denied, such as social standing and potential marriage matches, due to her dubious birth. However, the reader's sympathy is sustained by the information from the opening letters that the treatment of her is unfair and that she is indeed of aristocratic birth, a type of *Cinderella*-story. The sympathy, as well as the tension in the plot, is dependent on the exposition of the information of her legitimacy in the opening letters between Villars and Howard. The detail of her birth fuels the main plot, namely the redemption of Evelina. Accordingly, the narrative balances the line of avoiding sensationalism and inappropriateness by having a protagonist with an illegitimate birth but retains the tensions and excitement by keeping the readers informed of details characters part of the diegesis are unaware of. This effect may not have been possible if the narrative were to deliver this information slowly, revealing parts of the truth throughout the narrative.

While revealing the details of the past in the opening may avoid the sensationalism of portraying an illegitimate subject, it may also nurture it. The prehistory the readers are presented with may have been intended to shock and intrigue the readers to create an expectation of the narrative that is before them. If Evelina's birth was preceded with such dramatic events, perhaps the rest of the narrative will be equally dramatic as promise of what is to come. However, the full title *Evelina, Or, The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* indicates a genre primarily

concerned with the coming out of a young woman into society, as opposed to a sensational novel such as Wilkie Collin's *The Woman in White*. The impropriety and dramatics, as the narrative later reveals, is assigned to her antagonistic grandmother and other characters, and not Evelina herself.

The Beginning

The letter from Lady Howard that proposes a trip to London may be regarded as the force that destabilises the apparent stable state on the level of implicit history, despite the narrative opening without a balanced state. Her suggestion, which Villars agrees to, causes not only the relocation of Evelina from the countryside to a city, but also alters her current position in society, from secluded young girl in the charge of her ward, to a young lady entering society. The basis of this suggestion and the foundation for this force is rooted in Lady Howard's regard for Evelina's deceased mother and her own daughter's request. As the force cannot be a static, iterative event or character, a trip to London may appear to be too common of an event to qualify. However, the readers are made aware of how protective Villars is through his initial subdued response to Lady Howard and we may assume that this is Evelina's first trip. It is therefore "dynamic" enough. This is the first time she is independent, free from her ward, and is presented as a young woman and not a girl. The letter with the proposition, while less dramatic than other beginnings and destabilising forces in the other novels, such as the financial troubles of Sir Walter Elliot in *Persuasion* or Mr. Darcy's slight of Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*, still functions as destabilising enough for the plot to be initiated. The question that arises from this destabilisation is how Evelina will fare in the complicated and intricate society of London and whether someone see past the circumstances of her birth.

The lack of spatial situating and world establishing of the opening, appears in the first letter after the destabilising force has introduced the imbalance that causes the state of disequilibrium. "This house seems to be the house of joy" (*Evelina* 25) Evelina opens with in her first letter to Villars and the descriptive paragraph that follows is of a spatial quality, rather than temporal:

> Every face wears a smile, and a laugh is at every bod's service. It is quite amusing to walk about, and see the general confusion; a room leading to the garden is fitting up for Captain Mirvan's study. Lady Howard does not sit a moment in place; Miss Mirvan is making caps; every body so busy! —such flying from room to room!—so many orders given, and retraced, and given again!—nothing but hurry and perturbation (25).

The description is an observation of the acuteness, immediacy, and hurriedness of the scene Evelina finds her in. If the novel were to open with this scene in Evelina's letter for then to insert the correspondence between Villars and Howard at a later point, the novel's structure would be similar to other novels with modalities of openings as immediate as this, such as the conversation in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Evelina does not contain plot structure compatible with the establishment of space and temporality in the opening and the beginning, nor a stable state in accordance with the model of equilibrium due to its prologue-like exposition of the prehistory. Subsequently, the world establishment does not appear until the middle of the narrative and describes the state of disequilibrium, and not the equilibrium. The plot initiation of the beginning does not commence until after the narrative has entered the zone of indeterminacy. The structure contains all the elements necessary to constitute the circular plot but demonstrates the limitations of such a novel.

3.3 *Northanger Abbey*

Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817), a satire of the gothic novel's form and content, subverts the readers' expectations in its opening. The novel establishes the world in the opening and initiates the plot in the beginning, but also portrays the flexibilities of the two parts, and manages to create expectations as well as disappointments by applying the destabilising force at a bathetic point in the history, subsequently puncturing the climactic progress of the plot. The undramatic content contrasts the form, and the dynamic between them allows for humour but as the narrator makes the readers aware of the narrative content, the plot structure becomes prominent.

The Second Modality of Immediacy

The narrative opens with the second modality of immediacy as the narrator comments on the antihero Catherine's birth and childhood:

> No one who had ever seen Catherine Morland in her infancy, would have supposed her to be born a heroine. Her situation in life, the character of her father and mother; her own person and disposition, were all equally against her (*Northanger Abbey* 15).

The narrator accounts for the subject's lack of qualities typical of a gothic heroine, and does so by opening as early on the level of history relevant to the narrative of Catherine, as if to prove that these qualities have always been lacking and her life has always been uneventful. The opening is of less immediacy and no implicit events on the level of history aside from the events that must have taken place and culminated into the birth of the character, is accounted for – or of relevance. The first part of Catherine's life serves as a form of explanation or account of her character and formative events in her life, typical of novels that follow the coming of age of a subject, such as *David Copperfield*. Marilyn Butler notes in her introduction in the Penguin Classics edition of *Northanger Abbey*, that the initial title of the novel was 'Susan' and *Catherine* (viii), a thematic title signalling that the subject matter of the novel is the heroine, like Frances Burney's *Evelina* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. As a satirical novel that comments on other gothic novels such as Anne Radcliffe's

The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794) and *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), the final title, *Northanger Abbey*, could be an alteration made to imitate the novels of the gothic genre which more often incorporate castles and abbeys.

By opening with the second modality, the opening and the state of equilibrium is sufficiently established to set up a world spatially before Catherine undertakes her journey to Bath. Subsequently, the opening paragraph is awarded a comprehensive amount of space on the level of discourse, and the readers are accosted a multitude of details of Catherine's life thus far. Opening with the second modality, with the description of a hero or heroin'es birth, is prototypical of the ancient Greek myth of heroes, such as the birth of Achilles, Oedipus, and Atalanta, and often contains specific details that will prove crucial in the heroes later life, like an exposed heel, parentage, and upbringing. Catherine's lack of a heroine-like disposition and circumstance serves as the basis for the humour and satire of her quest later in the narrative.

The Opening

Northanger Abbey opens with the narrator describing Catherine and her qualities and features up until the age of ten. It is not a favourable description, with characteristics such as "she was often inattentive, and occasionally stupid" (16) but the narrator furthermore adds a more complimentary account of the subject at the age of fifteen. Again, it is stated that that she is not well-suited as a heroine, "who had by nature nothing heroic about her" (17) – the iteration contributing to the established world and stability of the equilibrium. However, at this age her efforts to amend this feature of herself is evident. Additionally, the environment of her childhood is unlike the gothic neighbourhood and do not contain any lords or baronets, neither are there any mansions and castles. The world and stable state of Catherine is that of no mystery or dramatics that could constitute a gothic narrative.

The Beginning

The narrator announces the end of the opening with a comment exclaiming the need for a change in the dynamic of the state of equilibrium. The temporality of the beginning is welcomed as it causes events to occur: "But when a young lady is to be a heroine, the persevereness of forty surrounding families cannot prevent her. Something must and will happen to throw a hero in her way." (18). Time must be initiated for events to occur, but a new force must also enter the narrative – a masculine force, according to the narrator, to shift the state to a disequilibrium in order for the heroine to be tried and for a plot to commence.

Until this point in the history, the narrative has accounted for many aspects of Catherine's life and how she has prepared herself to become a heroine by reading many books with gothic heroines (17). She is, however, unlike the traditional heroines

from the novels she reads: "the Morlands had little other right to the word, for they were in general very plain, and Catherine, for many years of her life, as plain as any." (15). There is nothing dramatic or extraordinary about Catherine and her family to describe for the narrator, but it is important for the satirical approach to the stereotypes of the genre that the lack of them is accounted for. The opening is establishing a world and an equilibrium of the ordinary and uneventful through the narrator's depiction of a heroine atypical of the genre the narrative pretends to belong to.

For the state equilibrium to transform into a state of disequilibrium, the subject is removed from the state that do not hold any potential, destabilizing force that can alter the dynamics. As the opening ends, the narrative ceased to be a retrospective description of what Catherine and her world has been like, and the narrator begins to narrate specific events on the level of history. Following the narrator's proleptic announcement that "Something must and will happen to throw a hero in her way" (18), the narrative transforms from a general description of the opening to a narration of a specific incident that leads to Catherine's journey to Bath.

The End of the Beginning

The removal from the established world depicted in the opening does not constitute enough disruption for the state to be shifted to a disequilibrium, but it does facilitate a potential change in the dynamics. The journey from Catherine's home to Bath is described as perfectly ordinary: "The parting took place. It was performed with suitable quietness and uneventful safety. Neither robbers nor tempests befriended them, nor one lucky overturn to introduce them to the hero" (*Northanger Abbey* 20). It is emphasised that the world of Catherine remains unaltered and continues in an uneventful, balanced state. While maintaining its stability, the impending plot is crystallising as if the plot follows a formula. Events are accumulating pending an intrusion of a force that has yet to make its appearance.

Catherine's first ball is an auspicious event for a destabilising force to enter the narrative and alter the dynamic of the balanced state, but again, like the journey from home, Catherine endures the event without any momentous events occurring. The narrator toys with the reader's expectations by presenting opportunities for the much-expected hero to enter the narrative without it happening. The temporality of the beginning and the prolongation of it, frustrates as the initiation of plot is almost attainable but the destabilising force, the hero, remains elusive. This postpones the transition into a new state of imbalance, the phase of disequilibrium. The narrator expresses the impatience Catherine (and the readers) experiences: "Not one, however, started with rapturous wonder on beholding her, no whisper of eager inquiry ran round the room, nor was she once called a divinity by any body" (*Northanger Abbey*

24). The construction of these expectations and the reluctance to cater to them is made possible by the temporal qualities of the beginning. In extension of the expectations established in the opening, it manages to present several subsequent events on the level of history that may seem apt for a destabilising disruption to appear, only for the event to proceed without it.

The suspense does not continue for long as the destabilising force of the plot appears in the following chapter. After an account of the many shops Catherine and the rest of the party visits one day, they arrive at a fortuitous place where a shift in the dynamics will occur: "They made their appearance in the Lower Rooms; and here fortune was more favourable to our heroine" (25). The narrator describes the meeting between the "heroine" Catherine, and the "hero" Tilney with less details than the ball, and the expectations of a dramatic entrance the readers might have had are punctured. Again, Catherine is denied the gothic, romantic drama of meeting the hero at a place more opportune and dramatic, such as a ball. At this point the hero's entrance has been long awaited, but again the expectations are subverted as the hero Tilney is less like a typical gothic hero. He is witty, amiable, and friendly, as opposed to gothic characters such as Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Rochester in *Jane Eyre* (1847).

While the entrance of the destabilising force is an anticlimactic one, it is sufficient for the shift the dynamics of the current state of equilibrium. The zone of indeterminacy is initiated in addition to the plot, as the visit to Bath now revolves around investigating Tilney and Northanger Abbey, as well as Catherine's wish to become more acquainted with him. Her interest in Tilney is expressed by the narrator the very next day: "With more than usual eagerness did Catherine hasten to the Pump-room the next day, secure within herself of seeing Mr. Tilney there before the morning were over, and ready to meet him with a smile" (*Northanger Abbey* 30). The effect of Mr. Tilney's appearance in the narrative is that he contributes to the conditions that have lacked so far for Catherine to live out her fantasy as a gothic heroine. She now has a possible hero as well as a mystery to be solved. She has also possibly become the object of someone's interest, a need expressed at the first ball where few young men pay her much interest:

> her humble vanity was contented – she felt more obliged to the young men for this simple praise than a true quality heroine would have been for fifteen sonnets in celebration of her charms (24).

Tilney, albeit in a less gothic manner, accommodates Catherine's desire for a man's attention. The change in dynamics in the zone of indeterminacy, marked by their first meeting, appears at this stage to be the connection of a possible love interest, but the more significant consequence is that Catherine is now closer to qualifying as a heroine as a hero has entered her life.

As a satire of the gothic novels that Catherine reads, *Northanger Abbey* appears as a metacommentary on the genre, and in extension the plot. Through the narrator's comments upon the lack of events, such as the uneventful journey to bath, Catherine's less than heroine-like qualities, as well as the announcement that a hero must arrive in order for the narrative to be initiated, the narrator also explicitly demarcates the first two phases of the plot, the opening and the beginning, as well as the transition into the third, the zone of indeterminacy Yet, the shifts on the level of history appear understated in contrast with the narrator's comments due to being less dramatic and grandiose than those of the novels satirized. This contrast not only add a humoristic aspect to Catherine's story, but is also highlighted by displaying the more ordinary, and more realistic lives of girls visiting Bath.

3.4 *Persuasion*

Jane Austen's novel, *Persuasion*, published posthumously in 1818, opens with the introduction of the world of Walter Elliot. Like many of the other novels in this corpus, such as Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* (1859), the opening dominates much of the first part of the narrative, and the beginning is awarded less space. The first event of the opening is strikingly general, as it depicts acts that require a sense of temporality in the form of a succession of events. As the scene continues, it becomes evident that no time passes on the level of history, and that it is a mere spatial description of a general, non-specific, and implicitly iterative event in the character's life. The specificity of the events become apparent in the conversations about finances and the future of the manor, and the end of the beginning and the initiation of the plot are stated by the subject of the novel, Anne Elliot as she prepares herself for the disequilibrium that is about to commence.

The Opening

The opening of *Persuasion* is alike the opening in Charles Dickens'*A Christmas Carol* (1843) as they both open with a general event in the form of an iterative, mundane action of the character, and not a specific one. This contributes to the spatial effect of the narrative; time and the sequence of specific events on the level of history are postponed in favour of a general or typical event. The general, spatial event serves the establishing of the world in its generality, the stability of the world as experienced by the characters and does so by portraying an image of a handsome man who looks through the baronetage, a record of his family history.

The spatial situating of the opening is the first to be established by the narrator. The patriarch of the family is Sir Walter Elliot. His home is named "Kellynch-hall," providing a sense of that the house is a manor or estate, and he resides in the town of Somersetshire. Two paragraphs later this form of specific spatiality reoccurs: "Then

followed the history and rise of the ancient and respectable family, in the usual terms: how it had been first settled in Cheshire; how mentioned in Dugdale..." (4). The spatial grounding functions not only as world establishment, but is also an indicator of wealth and position, and as such an establishment of priority of these matters.

The scene which the readers enter upon exemplify that "vanity and person" (4) matter a greatly to the patriarch of the Elliot family, at the occasional expense of his relations:

> Sir Walter Elliot, of Kellynch-hall, in Somersetshire, was a man who, for his own amusement, never took up any book but the Baronetage; there he found occupation for an idle hour, and consolation in a distressed one; there his faculties were roused into admiration and respect, by contemplating the limited remnant of the earliest patents; there any unwelcome sensations, arising from domestic affairs, changed naturally into pity and contempt, as he turned over the almost endless creations of the last century – and there, if every other leaf were powerless, he could read his own history with an interest which never failed (*Persuasion* 3)

Sir Walter Elliot is a man who prefers to read about himself and his family's history for entertainment rather than other books. The opening creates boundaries against that which is outside the family through the scene's introspectiveness, an aspect that will follow the narrative throughout the novel. He spends hours dwelling on the lives of his predecessors for pleasure but also at times as a distraction from his own family and the "unwelcome sensations, arising from domestic affairs" (*Persuasion* 3). At times, his isolation also means an isolation from his own family.

By establishing of the world of Sir Walter Elliot, as well as his general behaviour, the world of the other characters is declared in extension of this. As the patriarch, his behaviour, rules, and ideologies serve as determining factors in Anne's world. As we come to learn, it is his (and other characters') views that persuaded Anne to refuse her love interest, Captain Wentworth, demonstrating that she abides by her father's rules and opinions.

The ideology and ideals of Anne Elliot's father contributes to the situation the destabilising force arises from. The readers can deduct from the opening event that a good financial situation is a criterion for any man who wishes to marry Walter Elliot's daughters. A good marriage is also of great importance to Sir Walter as one of the few noniterative actions in the opening is the adding of Mary's marriage in the Baronetage: "married, Dec. 16, Charles, son and heir of Charles Musgrove, Esq. Of Uppercross in the country of Somerset," (*Persuasion* 4). Sir Walter Elliot's vanity is not restricted to himself but is projected onto Anne and other characters surrounding him. According to the narrator "he considered the blessing of beauty as inferior only to the blessing of a baronetcy; and the Sir Walter Elliot, who united these gifts, was the constant object of his warmest respect and devotion" (4) revealing his self-adoration but also how these are standards he holds everyone to, including Anne:

> Anne Elliot had been a very pretty girl, but her bloom had vanished early; and as even in its height, her father had found little to admire in her, (so totally different were her delicate features and mild dark eyes from his own); there could be nothing in them now that she was faded and thin, to excite his esteem (6).

Hence, the subject of the novel, Anne, navigates through the world of Sir Walter Elliot, a world where she is not up to par.

The Beginning

The opening does not transition into the beginning until the second chapter when the dire financial situation of Sir Walter Elliot becomes known, and the spatial establishment of the world appears less prominent than the sequence of events that constitute both the causality of the plot and its temporality. The plot ensues with the narrator's recount of the meeting with Mr Shepherd and Lady Russell who come to advice Sir Walter.

The result of the conversation regarding the Elliot's finances becomes the destabilising force that shifts the equilibrium into a disequilibrium. Sir Walter's financial situation causes this change in the plot and at the same time initiates the plot. The solution to their financial situation is to rent out Kellynch-hall to Admiral Croft and his wife. It becomes clear that her brother is Captain Wentworth, the man Anne regrettably declined to marry. Hence, the event reinitiates the subject-object relation[17] between Anne and Captain Wentworth and by doing so it also initiates the plot.

Several causal elements contribute to the possibility of a destabilising force to enter the narrative and cannot solely be Sir Walter's mismanagement of his financial affairs. As the readers come to understand, this financial misfortune has been an ongoing situation on the level on implicit history. It is not until the situation reaches a point where action is required, that the matter is presented in the narrative through a conversation. The readers are not afforded many events of Sir Walter contemplating and discussing his situation before this point, except that he is "growing distressed for money" (*Persuasion* 10) and his revisitation of the Baronetage is to distract him from his finances: "when he now took up the Baronetage, it was to drive the heavy bills of tradespeople, and the unwelcome hints of Mr Shepherd, his agent, from his thoughts." (10). It is an admittance to his daughter Elizabeth that causes the meeting with Mr Shepherd and Lady Russell which results in them quitting Kellynch-hall and renting it out to Admiral and Mrs. Croft. The decision causes the plot initiation of Anne's realisation that Captain Wentworth may re-enter her life again if he were to visit his own kin. This final causality and expectation of

[17]To utilise Algirdas Julien Greimas' Actantial model in the model of equilibrium would undoubtedly be of interest to this thesis. Regrettably, neither time nor pages could be spared for the actants and projects of the model due to the scope of this assignment.

something that is to come is summarised in a thought Anne has at the conclusion of third chapter: "a few months more, and he, perhaps, may be walking here" (author's own italics, 25). The emphasis on "*he*" reveals not only the possible unresolved feelings Anne has for Captain Wentworth but also establishes a desire to read how this reunion transpire. It marks the end of the beginning as it has already entered a zone of indeterminacy, and the middle part ensues.

The Third Modality of Immediacy

The opening occupies a significant amount of space in the first part of Austen's novel and thoroughly establishes the spatial qualities of the plot and introduces the readers to the world of Sir Walter Elliot and indirectly Anne's world. Subsequently, the temporality of the first part is not initiated until the moment the force that transforms the state of equilibrium is introduced and applied to the narrative. Contrary to the opening that relies on generalities instead of sequential events, the beginning is decidedly small. This could indicate that this is a plot that lacks an equilibrium, an initial stable state, and that the readers are introduced to a dynamic event, such as the fourth modality of immediacy. However, as already established, the extensive opening is present and in line with the stable state, contains an iterative, static state. Thus functioning as the stable state.

While the narrative opens with the third modality of immediacy, it appears to be emulating the second modality of immediacy, implying and alluding to a narrative with less implicit history and immediacy. The iterative scene of Sir Walter with his Baronetage is prolonged and there is no acuteness in the narrative. However, the content of the opening is a testament to a prehistory as he is examining the Elliott family line. The text also imitates the page about his own family that Sir Walter reads, by providing the likeness of a chapter title as a paratextual element, which would in other parts of a novel pause the pseudotime[18] and prolong the narrative time, but in this opening, there is no "time" on the level of history because it is not a specific episode described. However, it does not take long before the narrator refers to specified events that have happened before the commencement of the narrative. The description of Anne's appearances makes it evident that the events on the level of implicit history are not unimportant to the plot: "A few years before, Anne Elliot had been a very pretty girl, but her bloom had vanished early" (*Persuasion* 6). What Anne was is of importance. The stationary opening, temporally speaking, appears as the second modality but considering the comprehensive prehistory despite the lack

[18]Genette assigns the term "pseudotime" to the elapse of time on the level of history, or "conventional time" as he describes it, in the chapter "Duration" in *Narrative Discourse* (94-95). Out of the four basic forms of narrative movement, the opening in Persuasion could be assigned as a "summary" if there were temporality in the narrative. Genette depicts the relation of time between the narrative levels accordingly: Summary: NT < ST, where pseudotime (NT) is less significant than "story time" (ST) (94-95).

of immediacy indicate that it is an opening with the third modality of immediacy.

Austen's novel differs from many of her other stories by being a narrative of "what happens after." It is a narrative about the subsequent events following the meeting between two people and their courtship that suffers difficulties and conflicts. However, that Anne chose not to marry her love interest makes the narrative proper possible, while the contour of the prior narrative is visible on the level of implicit history. From the implicit narrative it is possible derive a complete circular plot, albeit without Austen's traditional happy ending: A young woman from a family of means falls in love with a man without the means necessary for her family to approve of him. The family intervenes and persuades the young woman to refrain from the union and the young man enlists in the navy. The new equilibrium of the implicit narrative becomes the first equilibrium in the present narrative accessible to the readers. The narrative demonstrates by its point of commencement in the history and the visibility of a former plot, the scale on which potential events in characters' lives may be present on the level of implicit history, as well as how those may contribute to the establishing of characters.

Despite the amount of prehistory evident on the level of implicit history, *Persuasion*'s opening and beginning still maintains the functions of the opening and beginning in the first part. It establishes (or possibly re-establishes) the spatial world that the new plot will ensue out of as well as it initiates the plot. Sir Walter's world is meticulously set up in a static, general, and iterative event and the temporal quality of the beginning coincides with the introduction of the destabilising force into the narrative. The entrance of both temporality and destabilisation produces both momentum and a dynamic that alongside Anne's summarising plot-initiation, creates a climatic sense in the narrative and heightens expectations of the inevitable meeting between Anne and Captain Wentworth.

3.5 *The Mill on the Floss*

George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) exemplifies the distinction between the spatial opening and the temporal beginning by opening the narrative with a memory and beginning with a conversation. The opening present an atemporal scene, which provides difficulties in establishing the modality of immediacy, and complicates which level of diegesis the modality can be assigned to. While the stable state of the first phase is more challenging to establish, it can be argued that the opening contributes spatially to an implicit establishment of world and equilibrium, as the plot is initiated in Mr. Tulliver's conversations.

The Third Modality of Immediacy

The narrator in *The Mill on the Floss* opens the narrative with a memory nonspecific to any date in the history. No specific events are recounted or presented until later in the memory. It appears as if the description is a general depiction of the landscape that surrounds Dorlcote Mill:

> A wide plain, where the broadening Floss hurries on between its green banks to the sea, and the loving tide, rushing to meet it, checks its passage with an impetuous embrace. On this mighty tide the black ships – laden with the fresh-scented fir planks, with rounded sacks of oil-bearing seed or with the dark glitter of coal – are borne along to the town of St Ogg's, which shows its aged, fluted red roofs and the broad gables of its wharves between the low wooded hill and the river brink, tingeing the water with a soft purple hue under the transient glance of this February sun. Far away on each hand stretch the rich pastures and the patches of dark earth made ready for the seed of broad-leaved green crops, or touched already with the tint of the tender-bladed autumn-sown corn. There is a remnant still of the last year's golden clusters of beehive ricks rising at intervals beyond the hedgerows, and everywhere the hedgerows are studded with trees – the distant ships seem to be lifting their masts and stretching their red-brown sails close among the branches of the spreading ash. Just by the red-roofed town the tributary Ripple flows with a lively current into the Floss. How lovely the little river is, with its dark, changing wavelets! It seems to me like a living companion while I wander along the bank and listen to its low placid voice, as to the voice of one who is deaf and loving. I remember those large dipping willows. I remember the stone bridge. (5)

The picturesque description presents a still without specific events as markers of time. The final sentence of the paragraph reveals a narrator, an "I" who relays these details of the land from a memory.

Due to the generality of the description, and that the events recounted are mere observations of nature, the opening inevitably contains a high degree implicit history and immediacy. These observations are for example the phrases about the river Floss, which must have "hurried on between its green banks" before the opening of the memory, and the hallmark of "the loving tide" is its perpetual, iterative rise and fall of the sea. It opens in an undefined middle of the history of nature. Hence, a third or even a fourth modality of immediacy could be assigned to the opening, although classifying it as atemporal could be of more use. If the movement or history of landscapes can constitute the level of history, every narrative must open in the third or fourth modality of immediacy. Additionally, the memory itself is not rooted in the history of the diegesis, but exists in a partially unreal level of diegesis, much like memories, and therefore do not function on the level of history the same as any other diegetic level. The narrator's revery-like remembrance suspends time in the narrative as well as on the level of history.

The lack of specified events in favour of descriptions of a landscape severs the narrative from the level of history, thus complicating the establishing of modality of immediacy as there is no purely diegetic matter to open at the start or the middle of. There is no event described that can be the first, initial event in a succession of events, as the birth of a character, nor is there an implicit sequence of events for the narration to open in the middle of. Nevertheless, the third modality of immediacy could be applied to the opening if the narration of memory is regarded as an event itself, regardless of its content. The immediacy of opening the narrative with a memory not only implies the presence of a pre-existing conversation and actions, but also portrays both immediacy and a high degree of prehistory. The matter of this remembrance is not the description of an event, but a moment from memory, but it appears as not a specific memory of a specific event either. It exists on a second, immaterial diegetic level, as neither narrative nor history, but as an image. In this sense, the description is similar to an ekphrasis, without having a material picture or painting to serve as grounds for comparing the description with the image.

The Opening

Time, albeit lacking on the level of history, is in its generality present at the surface level of the opening. It is apparent in phrases such as "the loving tide", "February sun" and "last year's golden clusters of beehive ricks rising at intervals" (*The Mill on the Floss* 5) and contributes to the spatial quality of the description by portraying a landscape that is alive, as compared to the landscape of a painting that remains unchanged. This does not repress the spatial qualities of the openings insofar as there is no specificity to the temporal references, only the organic representation of it in nature. These references mark an inevitable temporality necessary for nature to appear alive and thriving.

The narrator establishes in the second paragraph the space of the reverie and itself as a narrating "I." Appearing initially as an observer, the narrator's presence becomes more intrusive: "And this is Dorlcote Mill. I must stand a minute or two here on the bridge and look at it, though the clouds are threatening, and it is far on in the afternoon." (*The Mill on the Floss* 5). The subjectivity of the representation of the landscape surfaces. It is a memory, and the tranquillity of Dorlcote Mill may be a result of someone's subjective experience of a space. The space is invoked by the narrator, construed from the mind of someone recalling the space from one or several memories, but rooted in the reality of the diegetic level of the narration. Thus, the description can be deduced as less reliable than the ensuing conversation.

The final paragraph of the opening describes a specific image of a wagoner and a girl but retains the generality and noninterative description from earlier in the opening. An image of a wagoner with his horses returning home is recounted to

a recipient who is listens to the narrator. Nevertheless, the event appears to be imagined, or a form of recollection that aims to contribute to the tranquillity and harmony of the memory, rather than be a narration of a specified event:

> And now there is the thunder of the huge covered wagon coming home with sacks of grain. That honest wagoner is thinking of his dinner getting sadly dry in the oven at this late hour, but he will not touch it till he has fed his horses – the strong, submissive, meek-eyed beasts, who, I fancy, are looking mild reproach at him from between their blinkers that he should crack his whip at them in that awful manner, as if they needed that hint! (*The Mill on the Floss* 6)

The remarks about the wagoner's honesty and phrases such as "I fancy," contribute to the impression that the wagoner is imagined and he and his horses are equally a part of the landscape as the tide. The passing time in the description as subsequent actions functions as an indicator of the landscape vitality, rather than portray a significant event part of the plot. This also applies to the description of the girls: "That little girl is watching it too: she has been standing on just the same spot at the edge of the water ever since I paused on the bridge "(6). Like the wagoner, the girl is nameless, and their lack of specified identify asserts their function as part of the imagined environment and as expressions of the opening's spatial qualities.

The opening concludes with the narrator removing himself from the space of the memory, and when this narrating "I" resurfaces from the revery it is with the intent of telling a story to someone: "Before I dozed off, I was going to tell you what Mr. and Mrs. Tulliver were talking about as they sat by the bright fire in the left-hand parlour on that very afternoon I have been dreaming of." (*The Mill on the Floss* 7). The spatiality of the opening withdraws to allow space for the temporality of the oncoming conversation. The narrator changes position as an observer of a landscape to a more self-aware and plot-conscious narrator who recounts a specific event to an unnamed recipient. As the observation ends, the purely descriptive quality of the narration comes to a close. At this point in the narrative the space that the mill is situated in has been thoroughly established, and as no relations or characters have been described, the focus is entirely upon the physical environment the plot will ensue out of.

The Beginning

The beginning, as announced by the narrator at the end of the opening, is comprised of the dialogue between Mr. and Mrs. Tulliver. Temporality is inserted into the narrative as it is a specified event between two characters narrated. The lack of immediacy in the opening is replaced by an immediate conversation without explanations in advance and appears in contrast to the opening as less tranquil than the space of Dorlcote Mill. The conversation concerning Mr. Tulliver's want of an

education for his son reveals a state of conflict as the education he has in mind for him will aid him in the lawsuit concerning the mill:

> But I should like Tom to be a bit of a scholard, so as he might be up to the tricks o' these fellows as talk fine and write with a flourish. It 'ud be a help to me wi' these lawsuits and arbitrations and things. (*The Mill on the Floss* 8).

He explains his project to his wife and time unfolds alongside the dialogue. The narrator leaves no room for summaries or descriptions in this chapter and represents the duration of the event on the level of history parallel to the narrative. The observing, beholding narrator is gone from the narrative along with the languish and exhaustive description.

The dialogue provides an outline of a conflict and an initiation of plot. Additionally, the beginning contributes to an establishing of the spatiality in the relationships between the characters as an extension of the physical world set up by the opening. A division becomes visible between the concrete space of the world and the social space of relationships. The narrator employs a multitude of adjectives describing the quietude of the landscape: "The rush of the water and the booming of the mill bring a dreamy deafness, which seem to heighten the peacefulness of the scene" (*The Mill on the Floss* 5). Contrary to the opening, the beginning establishes a conflict that severs the characters and their projects from the tranquil scenery surrounding Dorlcote Mill. A juxtaposition is presented, one between the atemporality in the opening, and the temporality of the beginning, and subsequently the repose in nature and conflict in that which involves humans.

The narrator presents the characters in the beginning by a mixture of implicit characterisation through dialogue and indirect and explicit characterisation performed by Mr. and Mrs. Tulliver of their children. Combined with the opening's spatial description, a balanced state becomes visible. Through their dialogue the readers are made aware of two oppositional children, their habits, mannerisms, and their relation to their parents – particularly the girl, Maggie:

> "It seems a bit of a pity, though," said Mr Tulliver, "as the lad should take after the mother's side istead o' the little wench. That's the worst on't wi' the crossing o' breeds: you can never justly calkilate what'll come on't. The little 'un takes after my side, now: she's twice as 'cute as Tom. Too 'cute for a woman, I'm afraid," (*The Mill on the Floss* 11)

Instead of permitting the reader to observe the family in action and derive their characters from their actions, such as the beginning in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) and *Wuthering Heights* (1847) which consist of family dinners portraying the members of the families, the information is introduced through an observation of a conversation. However, the conversation establishes the first phase of equilibrium by presenting the space, relations and characters in a balanced state and reveals

that this state also contains the ongoing conflict regarding Mr. Tulliver and the mill. Consequently, the plot is initiated as the removal of one part, Tom, impacts the relationships in the family and contribute to Maggie's upbringing.

The End of the Beginning

The conflict regarding the mill and Mr. Tulliver's rancorousness towards lawyers culminate in the decision to send the son to school. The conflict instigates the shift in balance, leading to the phase of disequilibrium. The zone of indeterminacy is initiated by the discussion of suitable schools as it would produce a shift the relationship between Tom and Maggie, which determinably serves as a foundation for the balanced state for Maggie, the subject of the narrative:

> There were few sounds that roused Maggie when she was dreaming over her book, but Tom's name served as well as the shrillest whistle: in an instant she was on the watch, with gleaming eyes, like a Skye terrier suspecting mischief, or at all events determined to fly at anyone who threatened it towards Tom. (*The Mill on the Floss* 15)

Removing Tom from their home would destabilise Maggie's equilibrium as she appears to be considerably devoted to him. "Father, is it a long way off where Tom is to go? Shan't we ever go to see him?" (26) Maggie asks her father after his conversation with Mr. Riley. When she hears that he is to be sent away to school her reaction is to inquire how easily she can visit and maintain their relationship, even though a change of this degree would certainly alter their connection.

While the decision to send Tom away, and the subsequent shift in the dynamics of the equilibrium, arises in the third chapter in the conversation with Mr. Riley, the shift is visible in the second chapter. In other words, the balanced state is afforded less space in the narrative to be established and the narrator portrays the normality of the family through dialogue and characterisations. What initially is an informal conversation of Mr. Tulliver's desire culminates into the meeting between Mr. Tulliver and Mr. Riley and as he restates his intention the potential consequences of sending away Tom becomes evident in Maggie's immediate reaction.

The opening and the beginning are decisively separated from each other not only by the spatial and contemporary qualities of each concept, but also on a diegetic level as the opening takes shape as a form of recall of memory of a physical place more than a specific event. Not only does this create a challenge in establishing modality of immediacy as the memory appears atemporal, but the beginning also contains a spatial establishment of the dynamic between the characters. In this sense, *The Mill on the Floss* provides an example of how the two concepts, opening and beginning, may appear almost isolated from each other while at the same time functioning as modalities, as the beginning not only initiates the plot through its temporality and introduction of the destabilising force, but is allocated the socio-relational establishing

as well.

3.6 *Pride and Prejudice*

Jane Austen's second novel to be published, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), exemplify how a subject of the novel may be indirectly affected by the destabilising force that initiates the zone of indeterminacy. The narrator centres the narrative on events related to Jane and Mr. Bingley in the first part of the novel which transitions into a narrative of the relationship between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. The opening cannot be assigned a modality of immediacy as it appears atemporal, as opposed to containing a visible level of history. The history is not present until the beginning, which opens with the second modality of immediacy.

The Opening

The narrator of *Pride and Prejudice* applies variations of distance to create awareness of which plot, out of the many in the narrative, is the primary plot. It appears discreetly in the first part of novel as space and temporality are established. As the novel famously opens, social space is established through the ironic declaration of doxa:

> It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of wife.
>
> However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighborhood [sic], this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughter. (3)

The narrator describes a non-specific, general concept and distances itself from the matter while at the same time establishes that this is knowledge everyone in the diegesis is aware of. It explains the role of mothers, daughters, and single men with good fortune, and the dynamics of a neighbourhood should one such single man appear. Similar to Austen's other novel, *Persuasion* (1817), it establishes the world and initiates the plot of the narrative quickly, meaning that the sections are decidedly small compared to the other sections in the narrative. The narrator comments upon what appears to be a general attitude towards mothers' efforts to acquire good matches for their daughters, and that the character of the single man is or what his own sentiment towards marriage must be is of less importance, as long as his fortune is sizeable and his standing good. Hence, the narrator is presenting an overview of the world by establishing the urgency and importance of making a good match, as opposed portraying a concrete space with descriptions of rooms and environment. This in turn makes the spatial qualities of the opening of a more abstract matter as it demarcates the world of the novel to the bounds of matrimony.

The Beginning

The opening transitions into the beginning as the narrative turns to a conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Bennett. The dialogue exemplifies the opening's maxim as it concerns the arrival of a single man in possession of a good fortune, and the possibility of marrying one of their five daughters to him:

> Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!"
>
> "How so? how can it affect them?"
>
> "My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them. (*Pride and Prejudice* 3)

The dialogue is specific and much more intimately narrated than the general situation and priorities of society presented in the opening as the initial distance shrinks considerable by direct and indirect speech. The maxim combined with the exemplificatory dialogue that follows outline a plot for the readers to expect – a plot of marriage.

The dialogue is concluded with a paragraph that explicitly describes Mr. and Mrs. Bennet as characters. The spatiality and temporality of the opening and beginning function as in that the former's spatial qualities continue into the beginning. Instead of allowing the qualities of the characters to become apparent through the dialogue between them and their daughters, the narrator asserts their personalities before continuing with the narration of the family dynamic, through statements such as Mr. Bennet's "odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice" (*Pride and Prejudice* 5) and Mrs. Bennet, "a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper" (5). The dialogue presents characteristics and qualities, either by the character itself or others, while the narrator's summaries and descriptions ascertain the aspects of the characters. This leaves little room for the readers to speculate in the nature and mannerisms of certain characters, while others, such as Elizabeth, Jane, and Mr. Darcy, are primarily presented through the words of other characters. Hence, any characterisations offered by others than the narrator do not have the same authority and could be subjected to misconceptions.

The End of the Beginning

The beginning continues with the ballroom-event where Jane and Mr. Bingley become acquainted and Mr. Darcy insults Elizabeth. This event is also the start of the zone of indeterminacy where the equilibrium transitions into a disequilibrium. The narrator summarises the ball with the reactions of those who attended to Mr. Bingley's amiability and their less favourable reactions to Mr. Darcy's "forbidding, disagreeable countenance" (*Pride and Prejudice* 8). It is, however, in the dialogue that the first shift in dynamics occur. Mr. Bingley states his affection towards Jane and Mr. Darcy's comment upon Elizabeth and that she is not "handsome enough to

tempt *me*" (9), initiates the dislike Elizabeth has for him. As Jane and Mr. Bingley meet more often, so does Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, and the two relationships can transpire into disequilibrium. The indeterminate zone where the dynamic shifts from equilibrium to a disequilibrium, continues to the decisive event at Netherfield Hall as Jane falls ill after riding there on horseback (24-44). Mr. Bingley's feelings towards Jane are established and Mr. Darcy has become intrigued by Elizabeth – whom do not at this moment share the same interest in him. The entire plot of the narrative is the causal events that follow Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's perceptions towards each other as well as others. The beginning's function, the initiating of the plot, is achieved, as well as the opening's establishment of the world the readers are to navigate.

The Second Modality of Immediacy

To establish which modality the novel opens with, the narrator's maxim must be disregarded in favour of the conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Bennett. While the opening does indeed establish the world of the novel, it does not open with a modality per se as it does not exist on the level of history. It is a statement by the narrator in its narration. Subsequently, *Pride and Prejudice* does not open with any of the modalities of immediacy, but it *begins* with the second.

The maxim offers distance more than it does immediacy. It opens with a general description of a society, one that has previously behaved as described, and will surely continue to do so in the future. It is removed from the level of history and narrative and exists on the level of narration as a comment by the narrator before any specific prehistory could exist aside from the general description of society presented in the two paragraphs. The opening, much like the one in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) by George Eliot (2.7), appears close to atemporal. The modalities of immediacy determine the point of departure on the level of history, but this level is yet to exist.

As opposed to the opening, the level of history is evident in the beginning and it begins with the second modality of immediacy. While the apparent immediacy of the beginning may contribute to the impression that the beginning begins with the third modality, any event prior the news of the new tenant at Netherfield Hall, is irrelevant. The discourse up until this point has been unnarratable,[19] and the implicit history contains the so far ordinary lives of the Bennetts. One of the few analeptic instances that allow us glimpses into the prehistory of the narrative is the letter Mr. Darcy gives Elizabeth which summarises his life and dealings with

[19]Peter Brooks employs this term in the chapter "Freuds Masterplot" to describe the state of quiescence, or normality in a narrative: "The ensuing narrative – the Aristotelian "middle" – is maintained in a state of tension, as a prolonged deviance from the quiescence of the "normal" – which is to say, the unnarratable – until it reaches the terminal quiescence of the end." (*Reading for the Plot* 103).

his family and Mr. Wickham up until that point in the history: "With respect to that other, more weighty accusation, of having injured Mr. Wickham, I can only refute it by laying before you the whole of his connection with my family"(*Pride and Prejudice* 138). The defence of his behaviour he submits in the letter could not be part of the opening because his manners and general disagreeability are part of the plot's tension. If the narrator were to recount these events before the narrative begins with the dialogue between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, the subject of the narrative would be altered, and the narrative would appear to a story about meeting Mr. Darcy. As part of the indefinable opening where the subject initially appears to be Jane, any prehistory concerning either character would sway the reader's perception of whom the subject is.

The lack of prehistory relies on a more well-traversed type of romantic plot of a young woman of lesser means who meets a single man with greater means. No details in the prehistory are relevant for the love story of Jane and Mr. Bingley, as the narrative alludes to a simpler type of plot than which the narrative eventually reveal. The primary plot, contrary to the universal truth established by the narrator in the opening, is that of a woman who do not wish to marry one such man, single and of good fortune, as his feelings and views on the matter results in her dislike of him. Hence, Elizabeth serves as an antithetical construction to the narrator's maxim; she is not steered by her mother's wishes of matrimonial matches nor does a good fortune count for more than character, as she explicitly declines Mr. Darcy's first offer of marriage. It is vital for this plot to let Mr. Darcy redeem himself in order for his relationship with Elizabeth to fit the opening statement. As Mr. Darcy is improved in the eyes of Elizabeth, their union becomes a variant of the universal truth of matrimony between those of a lower caste and the aristocrats.

Distance

The varying degree of distance occurs several times in the narrative as a device to focus the attention of the narrator as well as to underline which characters or plot is important.[20] The ballroom scene, which is also the start of the indeterminate zone, is the scene in the beginning where the first hint of whom the true subject of the narrative is. Jane and Mr. Bingley's first ball is summarized in a paragraph. The narrator tells, rather than shows,[21] the reader of the events that have transpired, such as the number of times the couple danced. There is however, no dialogue between the two afforded to the reader. The unfortunate episode of Mr. Darcy's slight of

[20]Gérard Genette discusses the term "distance" in the chapter "Mood" in *Narrative Discourse* (1980) in relation to Wayne Booth and Norman Friedman's definitions. While Genette ties the term to focalization, I have refrained from delving too deep into focalizations in this thesis due to the scope of this assignment.

[21]The concept "Showing and Telling" (8) from Wayne Booth's *Rhetoric of Fiction* (1983) is of interest to the spatial establishment of the novel's world as well as to the establishing of characters.

Elizabeth, however, is more thoroughly described:

> he looked for a moment at Elisabeth, till catching her eye, he withdrew his own and coldly said, "She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt *me*; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men (*Pride and Prejudice* 9).

The conversation Mr. Darcy conducts with Mr. Bingley about Elizabeth is the only specific episode narrated from the evening, and the intimacy that it produces is not only due to the specificity and details presented in the dialogue, but it also creates a sense of immediacy.[22] The ballroom in full is narrated in a paragraph or two despite the event would have lasted an entire evening on the level of history. The conversation Elizabeth overhears between Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley occupy the same amount of space in the discourse. As a result, the start of the relationship between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth appears to be more important to the narrative than Jane and Mr. Bingley, since only the former is narrated as it occurs on the level of history. A hierarchy of duration is visible, and the primary plot, the prioritisation of the relationship between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth, becomes evident through the use dialogue in narration of the events that concern them.

Pride and Prejudice may appear initially as a straight-forward narrative to identify within the opening and beginning, the end of the beginning, and to assign which modality of immediacy it opens with. However, the opening is construed as an atemporal maxim, and the beginning is comprised of the conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Bennett. The novel does not open with a modality of immediacy but begins with one. The narrator's varying degree of distance towards the characters presents at first glance a much simpler romance narrative of Jane and Mr. Bingley, but it progresses into a more intricate and indirect narrative of the ambivalent relationship between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth.

3.7 *Wuthering Heights*

Narratives that employ more than one diegetic level, at least those as comprehensive as the diegetic levels in *Wuthering Heights* (1847) pose a challenge in applying the definitions and models of this thesis. Multiple diegetic levels complicate the ascertainment of which diegetic level's opening and beginning is *the* opening and beginning that commences the primary plot according to the model of equilibrium and deciding whether they fulfil the functions of establishing the world and initiate plot.

[22]The types of narrative in the opening and beginning of Pride and Prejudice are the narrative forms of movement "summary" and "scene" (*Narrative Discourse* 1980, 94-95). Genette depicts the first as NT (pseudotime) < ST (narrative time), and the second as NT = ST in an effort to visualise how pseudotime and narrative time "realizes conventially the equality of time between narrative and story" (94).

The two diegetic levels in Emily Brontë's novel appear to establish aspects of the world according to the narrator that observes the events and the moment in the history they occur. Lockwood is the narrator on the first level and as someone unfamiliar with the manor Wuthering Heights and its occupants, he describes the space and the disaccord that he witnesses as an observer. The second level, narrated by the servant Nelly, is from the perspective of someone more integrated in the family, and who does not look upon the conflicts and relations with the eyes of a stranger, but as a peripheral character in the house. She is therefore privier to the dynamics in the family. This level facilitates the reader's comprehension of the connection between Heathcliff and Cathy, as well as how they have been treated by other characters, like Hareton. However, the recipient to her story is Lockwood, and it is therefore a "story within a story".[23] The narrative's function is to shed light upon the current state of Wuthering Heights for Lockwood (and consequently the readers) and to present more intimate knowledge of the characters.

Lockwood opens the novel and Nelly begins it. The first, primary diegetic level contains both an opening and a form of beginning, while the hypodiegetic level of Nelly's narrative need only initiate the plot with a beginning seeing as the world has already been established by Lockwood. Subsequently, Lockwood opens the primary diegetic level with the third modality of immediacy, and Nelly begins the hypodiegetic level with the second modality.

The Opening

The opening in the novel is part of the account of Lockwood's arrival at Wuthering Heights and opens with a temporal situating: "1801." (*Wuthering Heights* 25). The year of the narration is established, and it aids the assertion of time on the level of history, as part of a novel with a hypodiegetic level[24], as well as contribute to the impression that this narration is a subjective observation, like entries in a diary. The narrator continues the situation by explaining how he was met by the property owner:

> — I have just returned from a visit to my landlord — the solitary neighbour that I shall be troubled with. This is certainly a beautiful country! In all England, I do not believe that I could have fixed on a situation so completely removed from the stir of society. A perfect misanthropist's Heaven — and Mr. Heathcliff and I are such suitable pair to divide the desolation between us. A capital fellow! (25)

[23]I have refrained from elaborating further on hypodiegetic levels' ability of appearing "en abyme" in a narrative due to its complexity as it is a matter beyond the scope of this thesis. I therefore settle with referring to the concept as a "story within a story".

[24]Gérard Genette defines the difference in diegetic level accordingly: "*any event a narrative recounts is at a diegetic level immediately higher than the level at which the narrating act producing this narrative is placed*" (author's own italics, *Narrative Discourse* 1980, 228). For the sake of order, I have chosen to refer to the second diegetic level as hypodiegetic level in the two novels the term is applicable.

Lockwood depicts in his diary an isolated landscape, separated from other humans and in the same paragraph reveals his enthusiasm of this feature of the house that he is to rent. This account is also the reader's first impression of Heathcliff – an impolite man whose manners appear to have suffered by the absence of polite company. Heathcliff invites Lockwood in, and subsequently the reader. His invitation, however, is an unwelcoming one: "The "walk in" was uttered with closed teeth" (25). The begrudging invitation contributes to the expectation the reader may have of what lies beyond the entrance door of Wuthering Height, the manor – as well as the novel.

Lockwood brings his own anticipations to the environment as someone new to Wuthering Heights but describes the novelty of space for himself. He relays the information he has received at some point about the name of the manor and an external description of the building follows:

> "Wuthering" being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure bracing ventilation they must have up there, at all times, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind, blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun (*Wuthering Heights* 26)

The gothic scene presented by the narrator depicts an image of an unwelcoming house built to withstand the even more unwelcoming weather and describes in detail the confrontation between the wind and the materials of the house.

Lockwood continues his description as he enters the house, relaying the details of the house and observations of the family he meets inside. Lockwood is familiarising himself, and in extension the reader, with Heathcliff's dwelling and his family. His interaction at dinner with Mrs. Heathcliff, the confusion surrounding her marriage, as well as Hareton Earnshaw's paternity, allude to a dynamic of conflict in the house and further asserts the misery of the environment. As Lockwood interacts with the characters present at the dinner, the relationships become clearer and reveals enough information about the family names for the following episode in Catherine's old bedchamber to become intriguing.

The event of the dinner is not specific beyond serving as an introduction to the occupants of the house. The interactions Lockwood observes appear iterative, as if the misuse between the characters occurs regularly. It is specific for Lockwood, but general for state of Wuthering Heihgts, and the narrative revolves around the latter. Subsequently, the event at night functions as the initiation of the beginning's temporality. The entrance of temporality instigates the zone of indeterminacy, and the dynamics become altered. Lockwood finds the different variations of Catherine's name etched into a ledge. He has already been made aware of the different last names of the people in the house as well as the intricate combination of the families,

and the names Heathcliff and Earnshaw, as well as a new surname, Linton, serves as an implication of the presence of another, deciding party in what must be an unfortunate prehistory.

The plot is starting to materialise as the beginning of the narrative becomes more dominant. In a state half awake – half dreaming, Lockwood grapples with the spectre in the window who begs to enter, and as Heathcliff storms in, the dynamics changes, and a plot is initiated. The variations on Catherine's surname and the appearance of a ghost cause the question of what has happened before Lockwood's arrival and the contour of a plot is becoming evident. The spectral manifestation of a person who has died implies that the death has traumatised Heathcliff. This further becomes evident as Lockwood observes Heathcliff's appeal to the ghost: "'Come in! come in!" he sobbed. "Cath do, do come. Oh do – *once more!* Oh! my heart's darling! Hear me *this time*" (author's own italics, *Wuthering Heights* 45). Heathcliff's lament and the emphasis on the iterative statements "*once more*" and "*this time*" imply that this has occurred before and the manor appears to be haunted by this spectre. This is also the first time Heathcliff is revealed as something else than an ill-mannered, cruel, and spiteful character, but as a person capable of love indicating that what has been before.

The primary objective of Lockwood's narrative is to establish the world, as Nelly's narrative relies on the spatial establishing before it initiates the plot. As the opening and the beginning function as modalities, primarily establishing the world of the novel and initiating the plot, the opening may contribute to the narrative temporally and the beginning spatiality. The narrative on the primary diegetic level initiates some plot in order to justify the existence of Nelly's narrative, but the majority of the narrative and history on this level is occupied with presenting the physical environment surrounding Wuthering Heights and the manor itself. The narrative also includes mystifying events with temporality that warrants an explanation in Nelly's narrative.

Instead of continuing into a state of disequilibrium on the same diegetic level as the stable state Lockwood describes, the hypodiegetic level of Nelly's narrative of events prior to Lockwood's account is initiated. The narrative could be regarded as the state of disequilibrium, but contains a complete plot within itself in that a state of equilibrium, disequilibrium, and new equilibrium can be established. It contributes to the imbalanced state of disequilibrium, but it remains difficult to see how a hypodiegetic level would not contain a different, if not at times separate, plot.

The Beginning

There is no opening on the hypodiegetic level part of Nelly's retelling of the events that have led to the state at Heathcliff's manor, but there is a beginning. The

spatial descriptions of the physical environment have already been accounted for in the opening in Lockwood's narration. However, Lockwood's observations are limited as he is an outsider, while Nelly, due to her more intimate knowledge of the family, continues the world establishment and furnish the world with the social aspects. She is more concerned with the dynamic of the household and establishes the iterative treatment of Heathcliff and Catherine. Remarks such as "Miss Cathy and he were now very thick; but Hindley hated him, and to say the truth I did the same; and we plagued and went on with him shamefully" (*Wuthering Heights* 52) positions Heathcliff into the family and in relation to the other characters. While Nelly comments upon how close Heathcliff and Catherine has grown, the next specific event she relays to Lockwood establishes that the relationship between them is part of the plot initiation as the beginning ensues.

The world establishing in the beginning of Nelly's narrative is subordinate to the plot initiation. As a modality the beginning may do both, but the temporal qualities preside over the spatial. Subsequently, the novel's entire narrative, while comprising of two diegetic levels, does not contain two openings and beginnings. While this may appear counter-intuitive, the diegetic levels exist in the same space, but are temporally situated in different parts of the level of history. To establish the physical space of Wuthering Heights would produce redundant and repetitive discourse, especially considering that the relationships between the characters provides the tension of the plot. In other words, it is the social world of Brontë's novel that is the most important to establish, and this world exists differently on the two levels. Nelly's narrative is also an explanatory one. It functions as to justify, explain, and make sense of what has caused the current situation at the manor in Lockwood's narrative. Hence, her narrative cannot avoid depicting the prior events that have led to the current misery resulting in that the first section of her narrative appears more as a beginning with temporal qualities combined with a few spatial descriptions, than a purely spatial opening.

The state of equilibrium proves to be more challenging to establish in the narrative of the second level. Three events that occur with rapid succession may pose as possible disruptions to the balanced state: The entrance of Heathcliff into the narrative as an orphaned boy from Liverpool collected by Mr. Earnshaw, Mr. Earnshaw's death, or the initiation of Catherine's relationship to the Lintons. While the first episode substantially changes the dynamic, especially in the case of Hareton and his relationship to his father, Mr. Earnshaw, and as Catherine also establishes an almost interdependent relationship with Heathcliff, it would only be possible to view it as disruptive if the plot revolved around the Earnshaw family. However, the plot initiation in Lockwood's diegetic level concerns itself mainly with the relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine. Thus, Heathcliff's arrival at Wuthering Heights

is closer to opening with the second modality of immediacy. The second event causes the stability of the relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine as seen in Catherine's discovery of her father death; she immediately cries for Heathcliff, and they wail over the loss together (*Wuthering Heights* 57). The relationship is the equilibrium.

The End of the Beginning

One part of the stable relationship is removed and returns altered in the third event, subsequently changing the dynamic of the stable, interdependent relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine, to an imbalanced one. After Catherine returns from the Lintons, a confrontation arises between her and Heathcliff, instigating, combined with Catherine's visit in the first place, the zone that transitions the beginning into the middle. The two children who had formerly played together on the mores and collectively endured the mistreatment of the environment, are now faced with how different they physically appear to each other, but also how their manners now differ. This is caused by the Linton-family and their refinement of Catherine. Hence, as one force in the stable state is removed, it also returns with other forces in addition to being changed itself, and a new dynamic is created: A state where Catherine and Heathcliff are more different than alike each other. Upon meeting again after five weeks at Thrushcross Grange Catherine exclaims: "Why, how very black and cross you look! and how — how funny and grim! but that's because I'm used to Edgar and Isabella Linton" (*Wuthering Heights* 64). As Lockwood remarks when first arriving at Wuthering Heights, "a situation completely removed from the stir of society" (25), Catherine has been removed from the unsociable, uncivilised space into civilised company and it is reflected in her appearance and manner. Heathcliff, on the other hand, is painted as something dark, uncivilised, and wild, almost as a foreshadowing of his future behaviour.

The return of Catherine is grieved by Heathcliff, underlining the loss of the version of Catherine that partly constituted the equilibrium: "The notion of *envying* Catherine was incomprehensible to him, but the notion of grieving her he understood clearly enough" (author's own italics, *Wuthering Heights* 66). Catherine also grieves the change in their relationship according to Nelly, who relays to Lockwood that she had wept in the wake of their confrontation (66). Heathcliff counters that he "had more reason to cry than she" (66). Their impossible connection is often referred to throughout the narrative. Heathcliff curses Catherine when Nelly announces her death: "Be with me always—take any form—drive me mad! only do not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh, God! it is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!" (155). The troubled relationship constitutes the plot and continues after the death of Catherine and up until Heathcliff himself

has died.

The Third and Second Modality of Immediacy

The opening in Lockwood's narrative and the beginning in Nelly's, do not open and begin with the same type of modality of immediacy because the functions of the narratives differ. Lockwood's narrative is an introduction to Wuthering Heights, an entry into the novel, while Nelly's narrative is told to make sense of and give reason to the events in Lockwood's.

The first diegetic level of the novel, Lockwood's arrival at Wuthering Heights, opens with the third modality of immediacy. The amount of pre-existing history becomes evident in that the narrator, and apparent subject of Lockwood's recount of his visit, is already fully formed. As a man from the city, he already has a mannerism, values, expectations, etc. and we are made aware that he is not native to this rural area, and acts as a contrast to highlight the uncivility of the people and landscape. However, the narration is a form of diary the readers get access to and so either one can assume that it is a part of that diary made available, the part regarding Wuthering Heights, or Lockwood has begun one at the point of his revival. It is a recount, as Lockwood states himself: "— I have just returned from a visit to my landlord —" (*Wuthering Heights* 25) and this is his retelling retrospectively of his experience with the landlord. His narration continues with the observation of a family with what the readers may assume is a sordid prehistory, and the narrative that follows is a recount of what has happened, particularly between Heathcliff and Catherine. Hence, the need to open with the third modality is to arouse curiosity of what is at play. The immediacy of the opening is directed at the family of the place, Lockwood less so, as a record of how things currently are.

Nelly's narrative begins with the second modality of immediacy, and as it functions as an explanation, it is narration explaining how things were. Due to the lack of opening on the hypodiegetic level and that it is not an atemporal narrative, such as in the maxim in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), there is a level of history that needs a point of departure. Ergo, the narrative must begin with a high or low degree of prehistory. As opposed to Lockwood's narration, Nelly begins her narrative at the earliest point in the history relevant to the situation at Wuthering Heights. She states herself the point of departure: "from the very beginning, he bred a bad feeling in the house" (*Wuthering Heights* 53). The narrative's function is to explain the conflict at Wuthering Heights and must therefore commence at the earliest point of relevance – the entrance of Heathcliff into the Earnshaw family. As in Lockwood's narration, there is a pre-existing family dynamic at the start of the narration, however, Nelly recounts the events she deems important to the story about Heathcliff and Catherine, and subsequently for the plot. By stating "from the very beginning" – after the

subject has entered the history, she also states that anything before on the level of implicit history, such as Heathcliff's years in Liverpool before coming to Wuthering Heights, is either unavailable for her to narrate, or simply unimportant.

The two narratives present two different timelines and perspectives. While the opening in the first diegetic level is there to show how the current state at Wuthering Heights, the other is a recount of the former situation. Lockwood, like the reader, is the outsider looking in, passing through the threshold into the stormy manor, with an effort to navigate the relationships and history of the place. In a sense, he is an extension of the reader and could therefore be seen as the reader's avatar and not really the narrator in the opening. As opposed to simpler narratives such as *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and *A Christmas Carol* (1843), with less discourse allocated to the stable state and the establishment of space, the narrators of the opening and beginning of *Wuthering Heights* navigate a much longer section on the level of history and different perspectives. The novel also presents a narrative without an opening on the hypodiegetic level and shows how this is possible through the diodiegetic[25] structure of the novel. Lockwood and Nelly are tasked within establishing both the space, family dynamics – even the house, Wuthering Heights, a character in its own right, on two diegetic levels, as well as initiating the plot.

3.8 *The Woman in White*

The serialised novel *The Woman in White* (1860), written by Wilkie Collins, opens with a discourse that confuse the extratextual and the intratextual. The narrative emulates a legal document and creates an expectation that details of a crime will be revealed. The novel, in addition to being a gothic novel, belongs to the sensationalistic genre, furthering expectations of mystery and sultry details. By opening the novel with a judicial "preface," although a highly fictitious one, the novel enables several diegetic levels, which the narrator(s) navigates while continuously aware of their own fictitious medium, but also the causality of the events accounted for.

"Paratext"

Although a separation of paratext and text has been proposed earlier in this thesis, in line with Gérard Genette's distinction in *Paratexts* (1997), this novel challenge that distinction. *The Woman in White* opens by imitating paratext, or, more specifically, a form of judicial preface. Phrases such as "This is the story", "the events that fill these pages", "the story left to be told" as well as a whole paragraph elaborating on the transitions of narrators and perspectives throughout the narrative, contribute to the legal impression of the discourse. It is an effort to set itself apart from what is

[25] I have been unable to find a term for a narrative with two diegetic levels. Hence, a combination of the Greek words "dio" (two) and "diegesis" has been employed.

about to be told.

There is an element of actual, extradiegetic paratext present, namely the chapter title: "*The Story begun by* WALTER HARTRIGHT, *of Clement's Inn, Teacher of Drawing*" (author's own italics and capitalisation). The title muddles the separation of extradiegetic and intradiegetic paratext by emulating a court document of sorts. It does so by listing which part of the narrative (or testimony) is about to be told, the full name of one of the narrators, his origins, and his profession. The formal, judicial chapter title appears as if it were the actual title of the document the recipient of the discourse, "the Reader" is about to read. However, there is a discrepancy in the diegesis. It would be more convenient and realistic to insert such a title before the text that contain Hartright's testimony seeing as the judicial narrator takes great care in describing the several testimonies that will follow, the others with chapter titles of their own. The subtitle also states that this is a "beginning," in other words the commencement of the narrative according to Hartright, but as the discourse ensues it becomes clear that the narrative does not start until the "paratext" is finished presenting the following text. It is here that the subtitle reveals itself as an extradiegetic paratextual element that mimics an intradiegetic appearance.

As established in subchapter 2.1, paratext exists to present the following discourse according to Gérard Genette in *Paratexts*, and the opening preface indicate an awareness of the medium and its function by submitting a declaration of intention. This is, according to the narrator, in order to "present the truth always in its most direct and most intelligible aspect; and to trace the course of one complete series of events" (*The Woman in White* 2). Not only does this delay the opening's world establishing in Hartright's diegetic level by offering technical information in advance of the narrative, but it creates an environment. The narrator appears in the preface to be some type of lawyer, and "the Reader" is invited to form an opinion of the testimonies that the rest of the text is comprised of. The declaration of purpose encourages the recipient of the story to read the testimonies and to pass judgement, as if the reader is a part of a jury.

The Opening

The opening is initiated with Hartright's testimony, and, as introduced by the legal "paratext," it commences on another diegetic level. His, as well as the other testimonies, are enclosed in this document that the Reader is presented, and while the "paratext" is on the same diegetic level as the Reader, the testimonies' recounts of events are on a secondary level. Hartright, now the narrator, opens with a spatial description:

> It was the last day of July. The long hot summer was drawing to a close; and we, the weary pilgrims of the London pavement, were beginning to think of the cloud-shadows of the corn-fields, and the autumn breezes

on the seashore.

> For my own poor part, the fading summer left me out of health, out of spirits, and, if the truth must be told, out of money as well, During the past year, I had not managed my professional resources as carefully as usual; and my extravagance now limited me to the prospect of spending the autumn economically between my mother's cottage at Hampstead, and my own chambers in town (*The Woman in White* 2).

The day, the season, as well as the financial condition he finds himself in are described. It is also possible to deduce from the opening that the narrator is impulsive, as his "extravagance" (2) has caused his new and humbler living situation. Phrases in the opening, such as "The quiet twilight was still trembling on the topmost ridges of the heath" (3), creates an eerie feeling through the narrative, much in line with the gothic undertones of the novel.

A stable state is established in the opening, albeit from a small section of the history. The current situation and the expectation of it being similar for at least the next season, namely that of poor economy and the back and forth between Hartright's own rooms in London and his mother's cottage, is sufficiently balanced for a force to destabilise the dynamics. These few paragraphs that constitute the opening transitions into the beginning as the spatial description transforms into a narrative of the specified events and temporality and plot is initiated.

The Beginning

As Hartright enters his mother's house, he is welcomed by the character who facilitates a change in dynamics and initiates the transition into the state of disequilibrium, the professor called Pesca. The self-awareness in the narrative becomes evident as the narrator himself explains the significance of this character and how their relation is crucial for the plot to commence: "Accident has made him the starting-point of the strange family story which is the purpose of these pages to unfold" (*The Woman in White* 3). The narration is self-analytical, it comments upon itself, extracts certain events, and presents them as significant. Hartright, perhaps in the tradition of testimonies, feels the need to elaborate and explain the acquaintance with Pesca as their first meeting is a direct cause to the destabilisation that will follow. Explicit statements by Hartright that start with "If I had not…" and "I should never, perhaps, have…" (5), make evident the causal connection between their acquaintance that follows Hartright's rescue of Pesca, and the return of the favour by the procurement a position as a drawing teacher for Hartright. Had it not been for Pesca, there would not be a plot, according to the narrator.

The End of the Beginning

The account of the event that assured Pesca and Hartright's friendship culminates into the zone the indeterminacy, as Pesca tells the other characters how the offer

of employment has come about. It becomes evident throughout his story that the position will be of consequence to Hartright, and subsequently, the beginning transitions into the indeterminable zone as it changes Hartright's original plan of commuting back and forth from London, into taking up a position where he observes the woman from the novel's title for the first time. The position of Hartright transforms from secure and predictable to the uncertain and unpredictable and facilitates the entrance of the destabilising force that initiates the plot, the mysterious woman Hartright meets on the road to his new employment (*The Woman in White* 17-18, 26).

Hartright solidifies the plot initiation in the final paragraph in chapter V as a personal query: "'What shall I see in my dreams tonight?' I thought to myself, as I put out the candle.; 'the woman in white? Or the unknown inhabitants of this Cumberland mansion?'" (*The Woman in White* 28). The query addresses the tension of the plot; the identity of the woman in white garments and her circumstance, but also functions as a comment upon the alienation Hartright is experiencing in the new situation he finds himself in, the unstable state of disequilibrium. It asserts the question that will drive the narrative into the middle of the story and nourish the curiosity of those readers who share the same questions.

The Second and Fourth Modality of Immediacy

It has been established that the first opening of the narrative is an imitation of paratext at a different diegetic level than that of Hartright's account of the events.[26] While this section aims to emulate a non-fictional discourse, it is possible to establish that it opens with the fourth modality immediacy. Through the stories told by the witnesses, the implicit history will become accessible on the level of history at later moments in the narrative. The history remains implicit only in the space it inhabits, as a preliminary preface to the opening. Its causal existence is dependent on something that occurred at an earlier point in the history, as it is there to present the retelling of these event.

Hartright's account mimics that of a testimony, an explanation of what he has witnessed as well has how he has conducted himself. The narrative opens at the earliest, and most relevant point prior to his encounter with the woman, with the second modality of immediacy. The "starting-point" (*The Woman in White* 3) as Hartright himself terms at a point in the narrative, although this point occurs later than the point the overall narrative commences, is the origin or commencement of his own narrative. This is not a narrative about Hartright per se, nor any other characters, but concerns a series of events surrounding the woman in the white garments. The testimony is there to attest to the events in question. Even the

[26]See footnote on Genette's definition of diegetic levels in subchapter 2.7.

chapter title underline that this is how Hartright "begins" his narrative, making it possible to classify the opening as the second modality, with less implicit history prior to the point of commencement in history, and less immediacy.

While the explanatory preface at the start of the narrative may be an informative device utilized to inform readers of what to expect in terms of form (the change of narrator, type of narrator as well as additional narrators) as a consequence of the novel's serialised publishing, the narrative appears to navigate and manage the diegetic levels, the line between extra- and intradiegetic, as well as the cause-and-effect quality of plot, by directly and explicitly stating these aspects. This way the narrative is added another element to the beginning, a faux paratextual discourse in the diegesis, which does not fit into the model of equilibrium, nor does it establish the world or initiate the plot of the primary narrative. This is not to say that it does not contribute to these elements but could be disregarded as part of the diegetic level of Hartright and is therefore not part of the narrative proper of this novel. "Paratext" aside, the beginning is small yet effective in favour of a zone of indeterminacy of some length to establish the destabilising force that eventually drives the narrative onwards.

4 Conclusion

4.1 Findings

The analyses of the selected openings and beginnings show how the four concepts can shed light on how narrative universes are established. "The opening," "the beginning," "the modalities of immediacy," and "the end of the beginning," identify different aspects of in the initial part of the narrative, although their importance varies from novel to novel. The single narrative out of the corpus which opens in the phase of disequilibrium, the analysis of *Evelina* shows how implicit history points to a phase of equilibrium.

In addition to aspects identified by the four concepts, some other aspects were discovered in the process of analysing the novels. The extent of the opening and the beginning varies on the level of narrative. The two parts appear in this way as flexible and fluid concepts that can be shortened or prolonged as the producer of the narrative sees fit. The amount of space allocated to the opening and beginning may contribute to a sense of emergency and immediacy in the narrative's first part. A spacious and comprehensive opening may slow the narrative in the sense of immediacy and at times appear as a form of respite for a more immediate beginning as temporality is introduced into the narrative. A brief opening that segues into a longer beginning, on the other hand, may be experienced by the readers as more urgent, but as a consequence, the opening will have less time to establish the world and may leave the readers more bewildered as to what is happening in the history and the narrative, an effect that can be applied to mimic the feelings of the subject.

How openings and beginnings operate as modalities is established in chapter 2.2 "Distinguishing Openings and Beginnings." Their functions of establishing the world and initiating plot bleed into each other. The opening primarily denotes spatial qualities and the beginning the temporal aspects. A strict demarcation between the two concepts can be difficult to pinpoint. However, while occasionally the beginning's temporal qualities may appear in the opening through specific events, it is more likely that the opening's spatial qualities continue into the beginning, meaning that aspects of the world are established parallel to the initiation of plot. What remains significant is that world establishment tend to occur in the opening before the beginning, and that a plot initiation follows, and these two concepts make up the function of the first part of a narrative. Any divergence from this order creates an effect in itself.

The narratives all contain openings and beginnings, and those that open with the third and fourth modality of immediacy – the type of opening meant to make the narrative seem as if it is commencing in the midst of events on the level of history, only imitates the lack of opening and beginning, while containing both. As the

functions of the opening and the beginning are to establish the world and initiate the plot, opening with the third or fourth modality of immediacy may exclude the state of equilibrium, appearing as if the disequilibrium is already initiated. It is still necessary, however, establish both world and plot in the first part of the novel. The two types of more immediate modalities may aim to appear in the middle of the history with a significant amount precursory events on the level of implicit history, although it appears as if there are other effects that the openings produce as well. The openings produce an effect of celerity and intrusiveness of narrator and subsequently the reader, as the events the narrative opens in is often that of a conversation. The recounting of dialogue is the type of narrative where narrative time and time of the level of history align the closest. The effect is that time appears to move more rapidly as if the readers are reading the event in "real time." This discourse of dialogue contributes in turn to the experience of observing two characters and an opening in the middle of such a conversation could create the effect of intrusion as neither narrator nor reader partakes in the conversation. Hence, while immediacy and amount of prehistory determines the modalities of openings, other secondary affects arise in the wake of the abruptness of the openings.

Two novels in the corpus indicate atemporality in their openings. This postpones the modality of immediacy, otherwise belonging to the opening, to the beginning. In other words, they begin with a modality of immediacy as opposed to opening with one. The atemporality is caused by the narrative's complete separation or severing from the level of history. Either the level of history has not been initiated the moment of the opening, or the opening section displays a narrative without history as a form of fictitious or imagined (albeit fictitious within the diegesis of the novel) discourse.

The first type of atemporality, seen in the opening of *Pride and Prejudice* (3.6), is caused by the narrator's maxim. It is a general comment upon a social rule or doxa. The maxim cannot be tied to any history at this moment. The readers are not afforded any physical descriptions of a space that may also emit any temporality but are made familiar with the social dynamics that appear generally in society. The maxim, while firmly situated within the diegesis as part of the discourse, still contain the quality of being able to transcend the discourse more promptly than any other social commentary in the novel. Hence, as a general comment upon mothers' matrimonial quest in this world, the narrative is unable to open with any implicit prehistory or immediacy as these are contingent upon the existence of a history.

The second novel to display atemporality is George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (3.5). The opening is a recollection of a space. Its general description of the nature that surrounds Dorlcote Mill contain, as opposed to the opening in *Pride and Prejudice* (3.6), signposts of temporality and some causality in nature. Notes on the tide and the river present the environment as something living, hence as something

with a past. However, the pictorial scene that the narrator "paints" to the recipient is a memory and it does not appear as if the narrator is recollecting a specific event, but more the experience of the space. Therefore, it cannot be established that there is a level of history in the form of a retrospective discourse.

The result of the atemporal openings is that the modality of immediacy become evident later in the narrative as the opening transitions into the begin. The narratives begin with a modality which demonstrates that the act of discerning a "starting point" for the narrative relies on the level of history as the modalities are tied to immediacy and implicit history.

The opening and beginning in narratives that contain more than one diegetic level can place each concept on different diegetic levels, as opposed to containing both on each level. *Wuthering Heights* (3.7) opens in the first, primary diegetic level, Lockwood's narrative, and begins on the hypodiegetic level in Nelly's narrative. The narratives on both levels exist in the same space as each other but in different parts of the history. The space remains the same, but the characters and their relationships to each other differ greatly. Hence, the temporal beginning in Nelly's narrative must, in addition to initiate the dominant plot of the novel, establish spatially the new (the old on the level of history) characters and relationships as an explanation for Lockwood.

As opposed to the singular occurrence of a modality of immediacy in the beginnings of *Pride and Prejudice* (3.6) and *The Mill on the Floss* (3.5), *Wuthering Heights* (3.7) contains a modality of immediacy in both the opening and the beginning. These modalities appear tailored to the function of the diegetic level they exist on. As the primary diegesis, Lockwood's narrative, is an observational one, the narrative opens with the third modality of immediacy in order for the existence of prehistory to become evident. The hypodiegetic level in which Nelly's narrative takes place, however, serves as an explanation of the reasons for why matters have transgressed the way they have at Wuthering Heights. Accordingly, the modality the narrative begins with is the second modality of immediacy, beginning as far back in the history as relevant to the narrative.

Relationships between characters may be sufficient as grounds for the state of equilibrium. Several novels in the analyses exhibit an equilibrium in the relationship between two characters as opposed to an entire balanced environment. As in *Wuthering Heights* (3.7), it is the companionship between Heathcliff and Catherine that constitutes the balanced state. The balanced is founded in the mutual reliance between them in the midst of a discordant environment. They can endure the treatment due to their relationship. The beginning transitions into the zone of indeterminacy as does their relationship by Catherine's prolonged stay at the Lintons who function as the destabilising force that alters Catherine and subsequently the

dynamic between her and Heathcliff.

While the equilibrium is constituted in the relationships of the characters in some novels such as *Wuthering Heights* (3.7), the majority of openings exhibit the balanced state in the environment. Elements such as marital state, family dynamics, habits, occupations, financial state, and relationships combined serves as foundations to the balanced state, thus the establishment of the equilibrium may appear contingent on the opening's world establishing beyond the concrete spatial aspects of it. The world establishment of the opening is not limited to the physical objects. The characters that inhabit these worlds are evenly a part of it as the house they live in. Their relationships, mannerisms, and projects equally contribute to the fictional world that the opening set up. Thus, the initial balanced state – the first equilibrium, may likely exist in the spatial qualities of the opening.

The initiation of the zone of indeterminacy by the destabilising force and subsequently the end of the beginning, occurs in one out of two ways in the analyses. The destabilising force is either a new force introduced into the already established balanced state of the world, or as consequence of a character's relocation out of the space of the balanced state, such as Catherine leaving her home in *Northanger Abbey* (3.3). The destabilising force that changes the dynamics in the latter, such as Tilney, appears as an inevitable consequence as the new location facilitates an alteration in the dynamics. To continue the equilibrium from one space to another would appear close to impossible and less likely to occur as the change of location would bring about the effect of a new combination of dynamics.

The change in the dynamics in the equilibrium may not be of a direct consequence to the subject. The change in the majority of the novels is of a direct consequence, often in the form of a new acquaintance or the introduction of a character that forces the subject to change or behave differently, such as the spirits in *A Christmas Carol* (3.1) or the subject's new position as a teacher in *The Woman in White* (3.8). However, as seen in *Pride and Prejudice* (3.6), the shift in equilibrium is not directly a shift in the subject Elizabeth's equilibrium per se, but in her sister Jane's stable state as Mr. Bingley starts courting her. The shift in Elizabeth's equilibrium, as she could continue her balanced state, is due to the consequence of having to spend time in Mr. Darcy's company. The occasion for this is the courtship, although the marriage between Miss Lucas and Mr. Collins, and the scandal of Lydia and Mr. Wickham, contribute the development of their relationship. In sum, it is not required that the subject be at the centre of the balanced state but may initially be a more peripheral character for then to have the narrative relocate its lens of perspective upon it.

4.2 The End of the Novel

Among the objectives of this thesis, an effort to establish that the function of the first part of the novel, the opening and beginning, is to establish the world out of which the narrative can take place and to initiate the plot. These functions are isolated to this first part. However, Peter Brooks in *Reading for the Plot* (1992) maintains that the "beginning," as he terms the part of the narrative, is conditional of the end:

> We read the incidents of narration as "promises and annunciations" of final coherence, that metaphor that may be reached through the chain of metonymies: across the bulk of the as yet unread middle pages, the end calls to the beginning, transforms and enhances it (93).

In other words, the opening and beginning has significance and function retrospectively as it requires the end to give it relevance and meaning. Brooks continues his argument by stating that:

> The sense of a beginning, then, must in some important way be determined by the sense of an ending. We might say that we are able to read present moments - in literature and, by extension, in life - as endowed with narrative meaning only because we read them in anticipation of the structuring power of those endings that will retrospectively give them the order and significance of plot. To say "I have begun..." (whatever it may be) acquires meaning only through postulation of a narrative begun, and that beginning depends on its ending. (94).

While this may certainly be the cause, I would argue that the first part of the novel may also be regarded isolated from the middle and the end of a narrative to determine functions and effects.

The narrator in the first chapter of Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* (1981), a novel made up almost entirely of openings and beginnings, states to "the Reader" that "It's not that you expect anything in particular from this particular book." (2). This is of course not the truth as Calvino demonstrates in his novel – the readers expect the opening to continue in to a middle and to finally end, which these openings do not, proving indeed Brooks' point that we do read openings and beginnings "in anticipation of the structuring power of those endings" (94). However, as Calvino also demonstrates in his openings, in order to even start to think about how a narrative will end, a world must be built in the narrative. To give meaning to events, certain aspects of the space must be established, even the most basal details such as the type of subject (whether it is an anthropomorphic figure or an animal of sorts) and if the world contains the same natural laws and social rules of the reader's world. While details such as this often is implicitly established, except in *A Christmas Carol* (3.1), where the aftermath of death is thoroughly described, the space in which the narrator, and subsequently the readers, navigate, is of importance, regardless of a potential end. What makes the unfulfilled openings and beginnings of

If on a Winter's Night a Traveller equally titillating and frustrating is the initiation of plot without the "discharge," which proves that no matter the occurrence of the plot's release, the success of initiating a plot is crucial for the reader to make it pass the middle and to the end.

Brooks' insistence on that the beginning is conditional of the end can be turned on its head. If one agrees that the beginning may have unfulfilled potential and latent significance until the end retrospectively provides it, the end itself is conditional of an opening and beginning containing the elements for it to create the order and structure to provide meaning. For there to be an end, something must have been begun. Hence, the opening and beginning are imperative for the narrative's structure, although as the analyses show, it is possible through the third and fourth modality to mimic a narrative without them.

4.2.1 Quiescence

In the chapter "Freud's Masterplot" in *Reading for the Plot* (1992), Brooks applies psychoanalysis on plots, and points to the quiescence and the shifting states of a narrative. His theory of the desire of the end may coincide with the model of equilibrium as they both describe phases of inactivity at the start and end of a narrative. "The ensuing narrative – the Aristotelian "middle" – is maintained in a state of tension" Brooks states and continues to describe that the state of quiescence is an aberrance from the normal, which he terms the "unnarritable" (103). The state of imbalance is iterative but at the same time inactive in that the initiation of plot has not occurred and is "unnarritable." The narrative relies on plot and temporality for events to ensue, and the world establishing of the opening is without the same form of activity as seen in the state of disequilibrium. Plot, Brooks argues, "starts (or must give the illusion of starting) from that moment at which story, or "life," is stimulated from quiescence into a state of narratibility, into a tension, a kind of irritation, which demands narration." (103). The moment "life" is stimulated form quiescence is the moments of be the concluding part of the beginning as it transitions into the zone of indeterminacy and as the plot is initiated.

Brooks' argument that the organisms desired return the quiescence, or the narrative's drive towards the end, is established in the model of equilibriums as well. The phase of disequilibrium will eventually transition into a new zone of indeterminacy, and transition again into a new equilibrium. This new equilibrium, or quiescence, bears resemblance to the first equilibrium. It is a balanced state, but often the space of the end returns to the space and events established by the opening and the beginning. In *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Lockwood imagines Catherine and Heathcliff wandering the moors together in the afterlife, as they did in the beginning of the second diegesis, and in the final part of the narrative of *Pride and Prejudice*

(1813), Jane and Elizabeth find themselves waiting for Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy to call on them and hopes of a match between Jane and Mr. Bingley is renewed. Even if the end does not appear similar to the first space of the narrative, the ends of the narratives in the analyses all revert to a kind of equilibrium, reinstating the stability the narratives ensued out of.

The destabilising force that alters the dynamics in the state of equilibrium, initiating the zone of indeterminacy, is also referred to in Brooks psychoanalytic analysis, stressing the external factor. The organism, Brooks explains while referring to Freud's masterplot, prefer to remain in an unaltered state, a state of balance or equilibrium: "if its conditions remained the same, it would constantly repeat the very same course of life. Modifications are the effect of external stimuli, and these modifications are in turn stored up for further repetition" (*Reading for the Plot* 98).[27] The modification, or the transition into the disequilibrium, is caused by an external force: the destabilising force in the zone of indeterminacy.

While Brooks' chapter "Freud's Masterplot" psychoanalytical focal point is plot and the drive towards the death of a narrative, many of his arguments are applicable, if amended to some degree, to the model of equilibrium extrapolated from Tzvetan Todorov's "Grammar of Narrative". As Brooks concludes himself, "Plot is a kind of arabesque or squiggle toward the end" (104) which may by all accounts be the case, but while his interest and emphasis is on the death of the narrative and its middle, it is the first part, the opening and the beginning, that enables any arabesques in the first place.

4.3 Conclusion

This thesis has presented the first part of narrative isolated from the middle and the end and established its function solely as the first discourse the readers are to process. The analyses in chapter 3 show that it is possible to assert the spatial opening and the temporal beginning as world building and plot initiating sections in the narrative. Additionally, while the corpus demonstrates that the matter of opening with a modality of immediacy may prove to be complicated, they show that if a level of history exists, it is possible to establish one of the four modalities. Finally, the application of the model of equilibrium on the plots of the narratives have proven helpful in determining the end of the beginning, but also how sufficiently the spatial world of the narrative has been established.

I hope that this thesis has shown how significant openings and beginnings are to a narrative, demonstrated their varieties, but also conveyed their potential. If

[27]Peter Brooks in *Reading for the Plot* (1992) and J. Hillis Miller in *Fiction and Repetition* (1982) both discuss the function of repetition in narratives, as does Gérard Genette in *Narrative Discourse* (1980).

we were to apply the distinctions and models on novels from other periods, such as the late 1800s, modernist novels such as *To the Lighthouse* (1927), postmodern novels like *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* (1979), or more contemporary novels, we might be able to more fully understand what makes an opening and beginning, but also understand the full scope of the initial part's impact on the novel and the readers.

As this thesis reaches its end, it is my hopes that it has demonstrated that there are still aspects and functions of the openings and beginnings of narratives yet to be uncovered and understood. This initial part of a narrative is worthy of at least the same attention that the end receives. Peter Brooks may be correct in establishing that the beginning is conditional of the end, but, as I have and will continue to argue, there is decidedly ample aspects of a narrative that depends on the success of the opening and the beginning.

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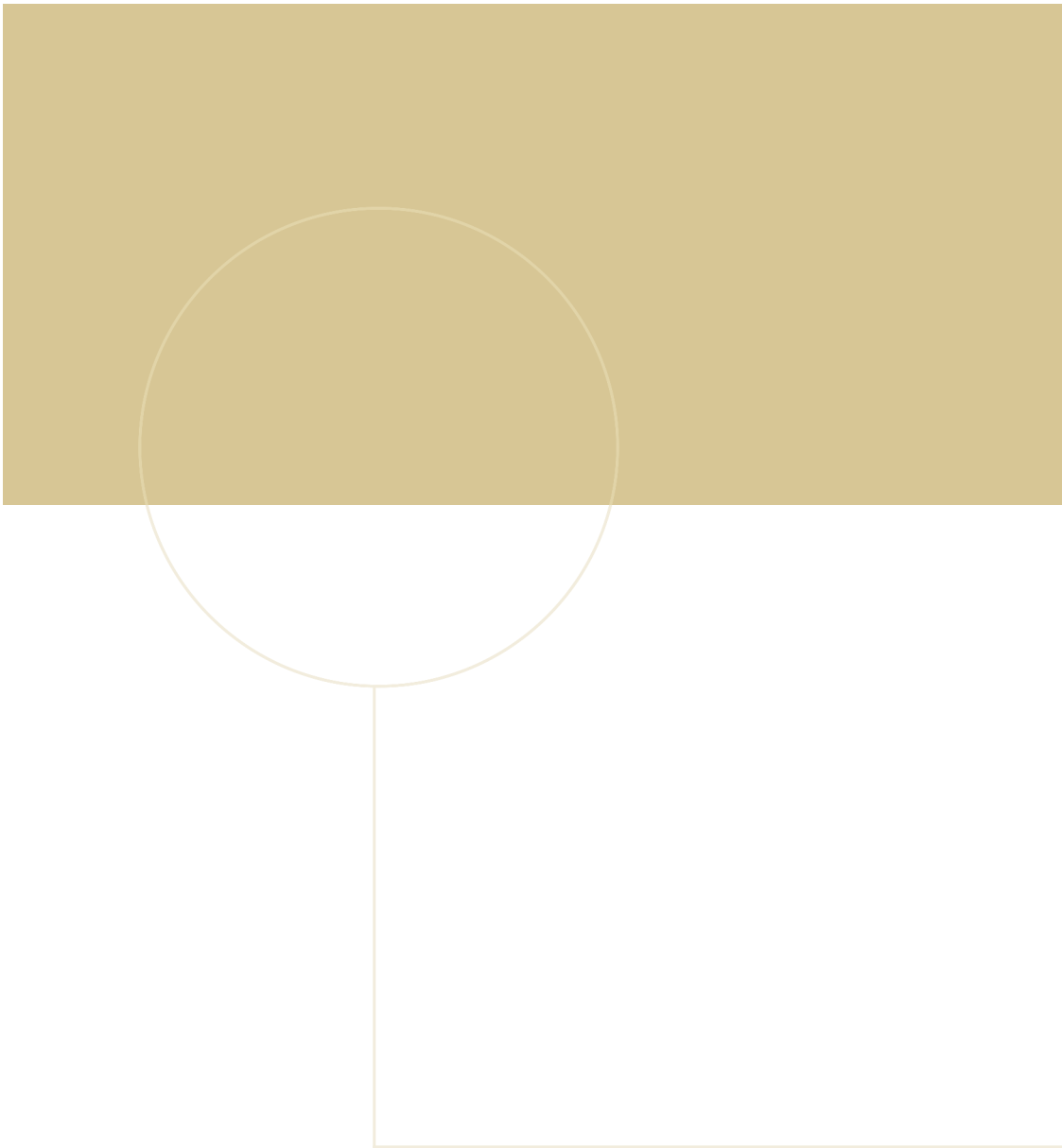

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