

Temporal Alchemy: A Critical Examination of Time Manipulation in Literature

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation report entitled, "Temporal Alchemy: A Critical Examination of Time Manipulation in Literature" is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the Masters of Arts at the Shenoι Goembab School of Language and Literature, Goa University under the Supervision of Assistant Professor Nafisa Oliveira and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or diploma by me. Further, I understand that Goa University or its authorities will be not be responsible for the correctness of observations/experimental or other findings given the dissertation.

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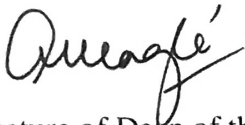
COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation report "Temporal Alchemy: A Critical Examination of Time Manipulation" is a bonafide work carried out by Ms Swastik Shantaram Namshikar, under my supervision in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Masters of Arts in the Discipline English at the Shenoj Goembab School of Languages and Literature, Goa University.



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ABSTRACT

This research titled, "Temporal Alchemy: A Critical Examination of Time Manipulation, illustrates how time manipulation plays a major role in the novel as well as reader engagement. This research delves into the intricate portrayal of time manipulation across various literary works. This research explores how authors employ temporal manipulation techniques to shape narrative structures, develop characters, and convey themes. It scrutinizes the philosophical, and psychological implications of altering temporal dimensions within fictional realms. It analyzes the diverse strategies writers employ to challenge conventional perceptions of time and reality. From time loops and alternate timelines to time travel paradoxes, this study dissects the intricate interplay between narrative experimentation and temporal manipulation. It explores how literature not only reflects but also shapes our perceptions of time and existence.

Key words: Time, Manipulation, Travel, Perception, Philosophical

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"So it goes."

-Kurt Vonnegut

2. Introduction

2.1. Importance and reasons of proposed research

Time in novels plays a dual role, serving as both a pivotal theme integral to the narrative and a narrative tool used to craft the plot. It stands as one of the most fundamental elements under the author's control. Time, the ever-flowing river of existence, in the hands of skilled authors, becomes a malleable substance, weaving fascinating storylines that test readers' perceptions and draw them into the realm of temporal alchemy.

Time manipulation refers to the ability to control, change, or influence the flow of time. This concept is often explored in science fiction and fantasy, where characters or technologies can speed up, slow down, reverse, or otherwise manipulate the progression of time. It is a common theme in stories involving time travel, superpowers, or advanced technology.

Time manipulation in storytelling involves employing various methods to influence the progression of events. It allows authors to connect past or future occurrences to the present and can create the illusion of time passing either faster or slower than its usual pace.

In literature, time can be altered through diverse strategies like flashbacks, concurrent timelines, flashforwards, and foreshadowing. Unlike reality, within a novel, time serves as a tool to present the narrative in a non-linear fashion,

condense uneventful moments, or unveil intriguing background details at suitable intervals, among other possibilities.

This research examines time manipulation in literature, focusing on three significant novels that have pushed the boundaries of temporal storytelling: *The Time Traveler's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger, *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut, and *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* by V.E. Schwab.

As you navigate the corridors of these literary works, you are presented with a plethora of temporal complications that transcend the conventional restrictions of past, present, and future. *The Time Traveler's Wife* introduces readers to a love story that defies the linear progression of time, connecting the lives of its protagonists which transcends the decades. Time is used as a narrative technique as well as a thematic undercurrent by Niffenegger, who explores the profound consequences of love in a world where temporal borders are fluid.

In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Kurt Vonnegut seamlessly crafts a narrative that reflects the disorienting nature of war and trauma through the experiences of Billy Pilgrim, a man "unstuck in time." Vonnegut's use of time serves as a mirror to the chaotic and irrational aspects of the human experience, forcing readers to confront the arbitrary nature of chronology as well as the haunting echoes of historical events.

In *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, V.E. Schwab introduces readers to a protagonist who trades her mortality for endless life at the expense of being forgotten by everyone she meets. Schwab explores the emotional interconnections of identity, memory, and the unrelenting passage of time via Addie LaRue's everlasting journey. The novel challenges readers to consider the existential implications of a life free of the usual restrictions of time.

2.2 Scope and Limitations of the research

Scope

This research examines the detailed depiction of time manipulation in literature, focusing on *Time Traveler's Wife*, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, and *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*. The scope encompasses a multifaceted investigation into the intricate interplay of temporal elements within these narratives. This includes, but is not limited to, an examination of narrative structures, character development, thematic nuances, and philosophical implications arising from the manipulation of time.

Limitations

Focused on three chosen novels: The focus of this research is confined to the selected novels and their unique approaches to time manipulation. While it acknowledges the vast realm of temporal literature, it intentionally excludes works beyond the chosen trio.

Selected text: This research is going to focus on the selected text that are

Availability of Sources: The secondary sources are limited as not much research and critical analyses has been done on these novels.

Written narrative: Additionally, the analysis primarily centres on the literary aspects, limiting extensive exploration into cinematic or other artistic adaptations of these works.

Subjectivity: The study also acknowledges the subjective nature of interpretations and does not claim exhaustive conclusions on the broader implications of time manipulation in all literature.

3. Research question/problem

How does time manipulation within the narrative structure of a novel impact reader engagement and perception of the storyline?

4. Relevance and Necessity of the proposed research

A study paper titled "Temporal Alchemy: A Critical Examination of Time Manipulation in Literature" holds immense relevance and necessity within the realm of literary studies. The chosen focus on three notable works, *The Time Traveler's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger, *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut, and *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* by V.E. Schwab provides a rich essence of temporal exploration, making this research imperative for several reasons.

Firstly, these selected novels offer a diverse array of temporal themes and narrative techniques. *The Time Traveler's Wife* explores the intricacies of personal relationships through time travel, *Slaughterhouse-Five* navigates the chaos of war and the Tralfamadorian concept of time, while *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* examines the impact of immortality on memory. By encompassing such diversity, this study can comprehensively address the multifaceted nature of time manipulation in literature.

Furthermore, these works belong to the contemporary literary landscape, making them an integral part of current literary discourse. Analysing these novels not only offers insights into the evolving trends in literature but also allows for a contemporary examination of how time manipulation is employed in storytelling. As literature constantly adapts to societal and cultural shifts, understanding its treatment of time is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of modern literary works.

The chosen novels also showcase the artistic craftsmanship of their respective authors in weaving temporal elements into their narratives. A detailed examination of the narrative techniques employed in each work can provide invaluable insights into the art of storytelling and inspire further discussions on the evolving craft of contemporary authors.

Moreover, the theme of time manipulation in literature often prompts profound philosophical and existential questions about fate, free will, and the human experience. These novels delve into these fundamental questions, and a comprehensive analysis can contribute to the broader philosophical discourse on the subject.

All in all, "Temporal Alchemy: A Critical Examination of Time Manipulation in Literature" is not only relevant but also necessary for unravelling the complexities of time manipulation in modern literary works. The chosen novels provide a fertile ground for exploring diverse perspectives, engaging with significant philosophical and narrative questions, and shedding light on the temporal anxieties of contemporary society. This research promises to be a valuable contribution to the field of literary studies.

5. Objectives of the research proposed

1. To examine how authors use techniques like foreshadowing, flashbacks, time jumps, and nonlinear narratives in literature.
2. To investigate how time manipulation narrative affects the reader's engagement, comprehension, and emotional connection to the story.
3. To study how time manipulation is employed in different literary genres, such as science fiction, historical fiction, and fantasy.

4. To compare how different literary genres or authors employ time manipulation, identifying commonalities and differences in their approaches.
5. To investigate the author's purpose and intention when using time manipulation and how it contributes to the overall themes and messages of the work.
6. To assess how readers perceive and interpret time manipulation, including its influence on suspense, character development, and plot complexity.

6. Literature Review

6.1. Researchers and research in the selected field

Several scholarly articles and research articles have been referred to understand the intricate portrayal of time in works of fiction. Following are the articles with brief analysis.

Kyohei Yoshizu's research article, "Stop the Clocks: Vonnegut's Conception of Time in Slaughterhouse-Five," is a comprehensive exploration of Kurt Vonnegut's narrative techniques. Yoshizu's work centres on Vonnegut's unique manipulation of time and its profound impact on the storyline.

Furthermore, in the article titled "Chaos Theory and Nonlinearity in The Time Traveler's Wife" by Fatemeh Ahmadi Azar and Farid Parvaneh, the authors skillfully apply Katherine Hayles's chaos theory and nonlinearity to dissect the intricate nature of time within the narrative. Their analysis sheds light on the complexities of temporal experiences in the novel.

Zoha Khan's article, "The Invisible Life of Addie La Rue: Darkness, Time, and Contentment," published on January 22, 2021, provides an insightful examination of the protagonist Addie's quest for remembrance. This article primarily scrutinises the role of memory in the manipulation of time, offering a fresh perspective on the interplay between memory and temporal existence.

The paper titled, "The Meaninglessness of Coming Unstuck in Time" by Martin Coleman examines Dewey's philosophical account of time and meaning and Vonnegut's use of time travel in his autobiographical novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* to illustrate these similarities. At the same time it demonstrates how both Dewey and Vonnegut embrace the ameliorative possibilities of art for preserving individuality and meaning in the face of tragic experience. It also discusses the temporal experiences of Billy Pilgrim and how he is unstuck

in time. It also sheds light on the consequences of his actions. Because of Billy Pilgrim's insensitivity to temporal relations, the past is lost to him; he is blind to the present, and the future is wholly inscrutable, bringing good fortune or pain unaccountably and mysteriously. In essence, it is all about how meaning is made as one communicates experiences.

In "Time, Uncertainty, and Kurt Vonnegut, JR: A Reading of *Slaughterhouse-Five*" by Charles B. Harris, an intriguing exploration unfolds, one that addresses a conspicuously overlooked facet of Kurt Vonnegut's seminal work, *Slaughterhouse-Five*. This analysis shines a spotlight on Chapter One of the novel, a segment that had often eluded in-depth critical scrutiny. Within Chapter One, Vonnegut emerges, simultaneously powerful and yet deeply burdened by the weight of time, the past, and the spectre of mortality.

Chapter One's significance extends beyond mere introduction, as it intricately weaves the themes that continue to unfurl in subsequent parts of the novel. It analyses the intricate patterns and motifs that reverberate throughout the narrative, echoing the protagonist's own experiences of being unstuck in time. Harris's examination unveils how the chronology of *Slaughterhouse-Five* is

ingeniously manipulated, subverting conventional temporal expectations and inviting readers to embark on a nonlinear journey through the story.

Through the lens of Chapter One, Harris examines the complex interplay between Vonnegut's thematic preoccupations, his narrative choices, and the existential dilemmas that permeate the novel.

Marie-Laure Ryan's work, "Temporal Paradoxes in Narrative," provides a thought-provoking analysis of the consequences of violating fundamental principles of temporality in storytelling. This literature review delves into Ryan's paper, specifically focusing on the section titled "You cannot travel back in time," which offers a critical examination of Audrey Niffenegger's novel *The Time Traveler's Wife*. This novel presents a unique exploration of time travel, where the protagonist, Henry, involuntarily experiences

"Chronological Displacement." As he uncontrollably moves through time, his relationship with Clare and his life story become a poignant illustration of the profound consequences of temporal paradoxes. This narrative choice challenges the conventional boundaries of causality and temporal linearity.

7. Hypothesis

Time manipulation impacts the narrative structure of a novel as well as reader engagement.

8. Research Methodology for proposed research

The research methodology for this study will primarily employ theory of phenomenology to identify the various themes of determinism, free will, and fate. Additionally, it will help to understand the ethical dilemmas and choices faced by characters due to temporal circumstances.

Another theory will be narrative theory. This theoretical approach will serve as the lens through which the structure and function of stories are examined, providing valuable insights into the construction of narratives and the impact of storytelling techniques on the interpretation of meaning.

To delve deeper into the selected novels and their use of time manipulation, the methodology will incorporate close reading as a crucial analytical technique. This method will facilitate a meticulous examination of instances of time manipulation within the texts, allowing for the exploration of their contextual significance and their influence on various aspects of the narrative, including character development and plot progression. Additionally, close reading will be employed to identify recurring themes related to time, memory, identity, and existential inquiries present in the novels.

Furthermore, a comparative analysis will be a fundamental component of the methodology. This analysis will aim to identify both commonalities and differences in the way time manipulation is utilised across the selected novels, shedding light on the distinct approaches taken by each author in employing this narrative technique.

By combining these research methods, the study will provide a comprehensive and in-depth exploration of the role of time manipulation and its thematic implications in the context of the chosen literary works.

9. Research Design

9.1. Chapterization

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the concept of time manipulation in literature

Purpose and scope of the study

Research questions and objectives

Significance of the chosen novels

Chapter 2: Non-Linear Narrative Structures

Analysis of the non-linear narrative structures in *The Time Traveler's Wife*, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, and *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*

Examination of how these structures affect the reader's engagement and understanding

Comparative analysis of the narrative techniques used by the authors

Chapter 3: Theoretical Foundations

Exploration of literary and philosophical theories related to time and time manipulation

Theoretical frameworks for analysing time manipulation in literature

Relevance of theories to the selected novels

Chapter 4: Character Dynamics and Relationships Through Time

In-depth study of how time manipulation impacts character development in the three novels

Exploration of how temporal elements affect relationships, particularly love and connections

Discussion of how characters perceive and adapt to their temporal realities

Chapter 5: Literary Techniques and Reader Interpretation

Analysis of the specific literary techniques employed by the authors

Critical reception and interpretations of the novels

Insights into the impact of time manipulation on reader engagement and interpretation

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Summary of key findings and contributions of the study

Reflection on the significance of time manipulation in the selected novels

Final thoughts on the temporal alchemy in literature

10. Research Gap

Time travel is not a new concept in literature. There have been many research papers which are published on time travel and time manipulation. The reason for this study is to understand time manipulation better by applying the theory of phenomenology. There is not a single study which has applied this theory to the selected texts which are *Slaughterhouse-five* by Kurt Vonnegut, *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* by V.E.Schwab and *The Time Traveler's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger.

Also, the reason for choosing these three particular novels is because they are set in different decade and therefore helps to identify a new perspective.

CHAPTER II: The World of Time

“We live in a science fiction world.”

-Isaac Asimov

2.1 DEFINITION AND HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION

Science fiction is a genre of speculative fiction characterised by imaginative elements that are not found in reality. It encompasses various themes such as time travel, space exploration, futuristic settings, and the implications of scientific and technological progress.

The origins of science fiction trace back to ancient times, with *A True Story* by Lucian considered one of the earliest examples. As science progressed during the Age of Enlightenment, authors responded to scientific breakthroughs with works like Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Johannes Kepler's *Somnium*, and Cyrano de Bergerac's *Comical History of the States and Empires of the Moon*.

Hugo Gernsback, a Luxembourg expatriate, created the first science fiction journal, named *Amazing Stories*, in 1926. It gave science fiction a distinct identity and spirit. As time passed by, new magazines were published, it had rich and different ideas but the foundation was laid by the *Amazing Stories* and therefore it got American identity.

Despite the significant influence of European authors such as Jules Verne and H.G. Wells, who focused on technology's impact on exploration and social concerns, the distinct American character of science fiction emerged. Verne's emphasis on technology's role in space and Earth exploration, Wells' exploration of societal issues through science fiction, and Kurd Lasswitz's contributions to space exploration novels all played roles in shaping the genre's evolution.

Science fiction initially emerged in Western Europe before gradually spreading to Eastern Europe and the Far East, mirroring the progression of industrialization. It began when writers observed the social changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution and were influenced by the rational thinking of the Scientific Enlightenment. These factors also influenced the development of science fiction in other countries. WWII provided fertile ground for the genre, seemingly validating its themes, such as rocketry and atomic bombs, which had previously been ridiculed. While magazine publications decreased, the number of science fiction books published increased significantly from seventy-five titles in 1952 to over two thousand by the 1980s.

2.2 CHARACTERISTICS AND TYPES

Science fiction is frequently referred to as the "literature of ideas," with its novels featuring a diverse array of futuristic concepts. Given their imaginative nature, these novels can explore virtually limitless possibilities, from space exploration to time-travelling aliens. Regardless of the specific setting or characters, all sci-fi narratives are intricate, rich in detail, and delve into broader themes and societal commentary—sometimes through satire—beneath the surface.

Science fiction mainly includes elements of space travel, time travel, robots, artificial intelligence, advanced computing, virtual reality, extraterrestrial life, genetic experimentation, cloning, transhumanism, mind control, telepathy, and telekinesis, and parallel universe. Time travel literature has some specific elements and those are, a) the concept of a time machine or any other means of time travel b) the exploration of alternate timelines and the consequences of altering history c) the paradoxes that arise from time travel include the grandfather

paradox d) philosophical and moral questions arise from time travel such as the nature of free will and the consequences of one's actions.

There are various types of science fiction

1. *Fantasy fiction*: Science fiction tales drawing inspiration from mythology and folklore, often incorporating magical elements.
2. *Supernatural fiction*: Science fiction narratives exploring hidden knowledge or extraordinary abilities such as witchcraft, spiritualism, and psychic powers.
3. *Utopian fiction*: Science fiction stories depicting idealised civilizations, often with a satirical tone.
4. *Dystopian fiction*: Science fiction narratives portraying flawed societies characterised by government control, poverty, or oppression.
5. *Space opera*: Sci-fi adventures set in space, focusing on conflicts, romance, and thrilling exploits.
6. *Space western*: Science fiction stories that combine futuristic technology with the rugged aesthetics of the western genre.
7. *Cyberpunk*: Futuristic tales featuring advanced technology within a gritty, decayed societal backdrop.
8. *Steampunk*: Science fiction narratives blending steam-powered machinery with imaginative technology.

2.3 LINEAR AND NONLINEAR NARRATIVES

2.3.1 Time Manipulation

In literature, time manipulation is frequently used as a narrative tool to challenge linear progression, develop elaborate storylines, and to explore complex themes. From H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* to Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, authors employ time to raise philosophical problems,

represent different realms, or convey the fluidity of human experience. Flashbacks, flash-forwards, and time loops allow readers to see into characters' pasts, futures, or different timelines, adding levels of depth and ambiguity to the plot. Through temporal distortions, literature transcends chronological limits, inviting readers to consider the nature of time, memory, and the interdependence of events beyond temporal bounds.

The conventional writing approach is linear, or chronological, in which the story's events develop in the same order in which they normally occur. The linear storyline has a beginning, the middle and the end. It follows the conventional plot of the past, the present and the future. The events here are told as they occur. Disruptions to the chronology in the plot cause it to become non-linear storytelling. Because it refuses to follow the norms of sequential storytelling, this method to writing narratives is multifaceted and adaptable to practically any form that the author's imagination can conjure up. Despite this, many tactics and strategies for non-linear storytelling are used depending on what is judged appropriate for the plot. This comprises the most often utilised strategies, such as flashbacks, memories, and flashforwards.

Non-linear narratives and storytelling differ from linear narratives mainly in that the former place a strong focus on timing. Whether subtly or directly presented to the reader, time becomes a vital plot device that emphasises specific ideas and emotions throughout the book. To some extent, this same effect cannot be achieved without modifying time and chronology, which serve as the foundation of the story. In linear storylines, the existence of time is less obvious and emphasised, and it is frequently employed as a secondary plot device. This is because individuals are accustomed to experiencing time in a linear manner in

reality. *Furthermore, this is why non-linear narratives are often considered unnatural since they bend the laws of physics beyond what people are capable of grasping automatically (Greene, 2010).* The choice between linear and non-linear storytelling is not merely a stylistic choice for literature, but it also touches on fundamental aspects of human vision and instinct.

Time travel literature has roots in ancient mythology. In Hindu mythology, it is said that Lord Vishnu time travelled to restore order in the universe. On the other hand, in Norse mythology God Odin time travelled to gain knowledge and wisdom. However, it wasn't until the 19th century that the modern time travel genre took shape, notably with H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* in 1895. This novel, featuring a protagonist who travels to the distant future, paved the way for numerous other time travel tales, such as Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and Jules Verne's *The Time Machine*, ultimately leading to a flourishing of the genre in the following centuries.

2.3.2 Narrative techniques

1. Non linear

Slaughterhouse-Five employs a nontraditional narrative structure, reflecting the protagonist Billy Pilgrim's experiences of being "*unstuck in time*." This technique allows Vonnegut to explore the fragmented nature of memory and the disorienting effects of trauma. *Moreover, Vonnegut has furnished his novel with flashbacks and flash-forwards. Sarah Fay, an author, believes that: "the linear plot is abandoned as Billy zips into the past or whips ahead to the future without warning. Reading it feels like being inside a pinball machine. And if time travel weren't enough, Vonnegut throws aliens into the mix (Qtd. in Mustazza 16).* By presenting events in non chronological order, Vonnegut highlights the arbitrary

nature of time and its impact on individual perception. By jumping between different moments in Billy's life, from his time as a prisoner of war in Dresden to his post-war existence, the novel captures the cyclical nature of trauma and memory. This nonlinear approach allows Vonnegut to juxtapose moments of horror and absurdity with mundane details, emphasising the chaotic and unpredictable nature of human existence.

2. Metafiction

Metafiction refers to stories in which the characters, author, or narrator acknowledge the fact that they're parts of a fiction. The word "meta" means "about" suggesting right away that anything named "metafiction" is going to be fiction about fiction. It occurs when a book acknowledges that it is a book, the narrator that they're just a fictional creation, or if the narrator addresses the reader directly. (Poem analysis)

Vonnegut blurs the lines between fiction and reality by inserting himself into the narrative as a character. This self-referential technique draws attention to the constructed nature of storytelling and raises questions about the author's role in shaping the narrative. This self-reflexive technique adds an additional layer of complexity to the novel, encouraging readers to consider the relationship between author, narrator, and protagonist. By incorporating elements of his own life into the novel, Vonnegut invites readers to consider the relationship between art and life, and the ways in which fiction can illuminate deeper truths about the human condition.

3. Repetition

Throughout *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Vonnegut employs repetition as a literary device to emphasise key themes and motifs. One of the most notable

examples is the phrase "*so it goes*," which is repeated every time a death occurs in the novel. This mantra-like repetition serves to underscore the inevitability of death and the sense of resignation that pervades the story. Additionally, Vonnegut repeats certain images and symbols, such as the Tralfamadorian concept of time or the image of the bombing of Dresden, to reinforce their significance in the narrative. By echoing these elements throughout the novel, Vonnegut creates a sense of cohesion and rhythm, while also inviting readers to reflect on their deeper meanings.

4. Tragicomedy:

Slaughterhouse-Five masterfully blends elements of tragedy and comedy to create a unique tone that captures the absurdity of war and the human condition. Vonnegut uses dark humour to punctuate moments of horror and despair, offering readers a means of coping with the novel's bleak subject matter. This tragicomic approach allows Vonnegut to explore profound existential questions while maintaining a sense of levity and irony. By juxtaposing moments of profound tragedy with absurd or humorous anecdotes, Vonnegut highlights the inherent contradictions of human existence and the ways in which people cope with trauma. This blending of tones adds depth and complexity to the novel, inviting readers to engage with its themes on multiple levels and leaving a lasting impression long after the final page is turned.

The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue by V.E. Schwab employs several narrative techniques like:

1. Nonlinear Narrative

The story unfolds in a nonlinear fashion, jumping between different time periods in Addie's life, from her past in 18th-century France to the present day

which is set in the year 2014. This technique adds depth to the story and keeps the reader engaged as they piece together Addie's history. The nonlinear narrative structure of *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* allows V.E. Schwab to explore Addie's centuries-spanning life in a way that feels organic and emotionally resonant. By weaving between different time periods, Schwab builds intrigue and suspense, inviting readers to piece together Addie's story like a puzzle. This approach also mirrors Addie's own disjointed experience of time, as she navigates through the centuries with memories as her only constant. Through the nonlinear narrative, readers gain a deeper understanding of Addie's character, her struggles, and her growth over time.

2. First-Person Perspective

Addie's first-person perspective offers readers an intimate window into her thoughts, emotions, and experiences. Through Addie's voice, readers witness her inner turmoil, her resilience, and her yearning for connection in a world where she is condemned to be forgotten. This perspective allows readers to empathise with Addie on a deeply personal level, forging a strong emotional bond between the character and the audience.

3. Flashbacks

Flashbacks serve as windows into Addie's past, providing crucial insights into the events and relationships that have shaped her identity. By interweaving these flashbacks throughout the narrative, Schwab deepens the reader's understanding of Addie's motivations and vulnerabilities, while also revealing the complexities of her relationships with other characters. Flashbacks add depth and texture to Addie's story, illuminating the significance of her choices and the consequences of her immortal existence.

4. Dual Timelines

The dual timelines of *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* juxtapose Addie's experiences in 18th-century France with her encounters in modern-day New York City. This narrative technique highlights the contrasts between Addie's past and present, as well as the ways in which she has adapted to survive over the centuries. By shifting between these two timelines, Schwab underscores Addie's enduring struggle for visibility and connection, while also showcasing her resilience and resourcefulness in the face of adversity. The dual timelines add depth and complexity to Addie's character, as readers witness her evolution over time and the impact of her immortal existence on those around her.

4. Repetition

In *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, repetition serves as a powerful narrative device that reinforces key themes, motifs, and emotions throughout the story. V.E. Schwab strategically employs repetition to imbue the narrative with a sense of rhythm and continuity, while also highlighting the central struggles and desires of the protagonist, Addie LaRue.

One prominent example of repetition is the motif of being forgotten, which echoes throughout Addie's journey as she grapples with the consequences of her Faustian bargain. The repetition of phrases such as "to be remembered" and "to be seen" underscores Addie's existential dilemma and her relentless quest for significance in a world where she is destined to be overlooked.

Additionally, certain symbols and imagery are repeated throughout the novel, such as the imagery of light and darkness, which serves as a metaphor for Addie's search for visibility and permanence. By weaving these repeated elements

into the fabric of the narrative, Schwab reinforces their thematic importance and invites readers to contemplate their deeper meanings.

Through repetition, Schwab not only reinforces key themes and motifs but also creates a sense of resonance and emotional depth that enriches the reader's experience of Addie's story.

In *The Time Traveler's Wife*, following narrative techniques have been used:

1. Dual Narratives

The Time Traveler's Wife employs dual narratives, alternating between the perspectives of Henry DeTamble and Clare. This technique enriches the storytelling by providing insights into each character's thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Readers witness events through Henry's eyes as he navigates his involuntary time-travelling, and through Clare's perspective as she copes with the challenges of loving someone who is constantly disappearing and reappearing in her life. The dual narratives allow readers to empathise with both characters and understand the impact of Henry's condition on their relationship from multiple angles.

2. Nonlinear Narrative

The novel's nonlinear structure mirrors Henry's experiences of time travel, where he uncontrollably jumps back and forth in time. This narrative technique creates a sense of disorientation and unpredictability, echoing Henry's struggle to maintain a sense of normalcy in his life. By presenting events out of chronological order, Niffenegger invites readers to piece together the puzzle of Henry and Clare's story, drawing connections between past, present, and future to reveal the full scope of their love and its challenges.

3. Foreshadowing

Throughout the novel, Niffenegger employs foreshadowing to hint at future events, building tension and suspense. By dropping subtle clues about the characters' fates early on, she creates a sense of anticipation that keeps readers engaged and invested in the story. Foreshadowing adds depth to the narrative by signalling the inevitability of certain events while allowing readers to speculate about how they will unfold.

2.3.4 Comparative Analysis:

1. Time as a Narrative Element

All three novels explore the concept of time in unique ways. *Slaughterhouse-Five* challenges linear notions of time, emphasising the cyclical nature of history and the inevitability of human suffering. "*The Time Traveler's Wife*" and "*The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*" both utilise nonlinear narratives to convey the disorienting effects of time travel and immortality, respectively. Time serves as a central theme in each novel, shaping the characters' experiences and influencing the trajectory of the narrative.

2. Character Development

Despite their different narrative techniques, all three novels excel in portraying complex characters and exploring their inner worlds. *Slaughterhouse-Five* delves into the psyche of Billy Pilgrim, a man haunted by his experiences of war and alien abduction. "*The Time Traveler's Wife*" offers nuanced character development for Henry and Clare, as they navigate the challenges of love and loss across time. *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* provides insight into Addie's journey of self-discovery and resilience as she grapples with the consequences of her immortal existence.

3. Narrative Structure and Pacing

Each novel's narrative structure impacts the pacing and flow of the story. *Slaughterhouse-Five* utilises its nonlinear structure to create a sense of fragmentation and disorientation, reflecting the chaos of war and the protagonist's mental state. *The Time Traveler's Wife* and *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* also employ nonlinearity to enhance the storytelling, but with different effects. Niffenegger's novel maintains a more cohesive narrative despite its temporal jumps, while Schwab's novel weaves together multiple timelines to create a tapestry of Addie's life over centuries.

4. Themes and Symbolism

Themes of love, loss, and the passage of time are prevalent in all three novels. Vonnegut uses the absurdity of war to explore existential questions about human existence in *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Niffenegger delves into the complexities of love and fate in *The Time Traveler's Wife*, while Schwab examines themes of identity and legacy in *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*. Each novel employs symbolism to deepen the reader's understanding of these themes, whether through recurring motifs like clocks and seasons or through more abstract concepts like memory and mortality.

In conclusion, while *Slaughterhouse-Five*, *The Time Traveler's Wife*, and *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* differ in their narrative techniques and thematic explorations, they all demonstrate the power of storytelling to transcend conventional boundaries and illuminate the human experience in profound and thought-provoking ways.

2.4. TIME LOOPS AND PARADOXES

Time loop narratives allow readers to explore the idea of second chances and the freedom from regret. Through these stories, readers experience life

through the eyes of characters who can make different choices without consequence. However, despite the illusion of infinite opportunities, these narratives ultimately come to an end, mirroring the finite nature of an individual's own life. As characters confront the reality of having only one life left, readers are reminded of their own limited opportunities and the need to make the most of them without the luxury of do-overs.

Time loop and paradoxical stories involve characters reliving events or changing timelines, prompting reflections on causality, free will, and existence. They delve into philosophical themes like determinism and moral accountability, often highlighting paradoxes such as the Grandfather, Causal Loop, and Bootstrap Paradox. These narratives challenge an individual's understanding of time and reality, sparking contemplation about the consequences of his/her actions and the nature of fate.

2.4.1 The Grandfather Paradox

If a character travels back in time and prevents his grandfather from meeting his grandmother, then he would not be born, thus negating his existence to travel back in time in the first place. Or imagine a character travelling back in time to kill his grandfather as a young man. Why would he do this? There are multiple possibilities. Maybe her/his grandfather turned out to be a painter who tried to conquer the world or the scientist who discovered some physics laws. Who knows?

In essence, if the grandfather died, then the time traveller's parents never existed — then neither would the time traveller himself. If he didn't exist, then he was not able to go back in time to begin with. But if the character killed his grandfather then there would not have been a trace of his existence. Perhaps the

character doesn't want to kill his grandfather, but ends up changing the past in another way, resulting in a future in which he no longer exists. But then the question arises how this character came into existence?

This paradox highlights the logical inconsistencies inherent in time travel, questioning the possibility of altering the past without creating paradoxes. It is a thought experiment that probes the fundamental principles of causality and the nature of time itself, challenging an individual's understanding of cause and effect within the framework of hypothetical time travel scenarios.

2.4.2 Bootstrap Paradox

Next one is the bootstrap paradox, which is referred to as a causal loop — so named because the time travel journey on which the traveller embarks is a circular one. It is a type of time travel paradox that occurs when an object, information, or person is sent back in time and becomes the cause of its own existence in the present. This creates a circular loop of causality, where the origin of the object, information, or person is unknown or self-created.

One of the central paradoxes in the novel, *The Time Traveler's Wife* arises from the bootstrap paradox, also known as a causal loop. Henry's time-travelling encounters with his past self, particularly during critical moments of his life, raise questions about the origin of events and the causality of actions. For instance, Henry's intervention in his own past, such as saving himself from harm or influencing decisions, creates a loop where the events have no clear beginning or end.

2.4.3 The Butterfly Effect

The Butterfly Paradox, also known as the Butterfly Effect, is a concept originating from chaos theory, suggesting that small changes can lead to significant and unpredictable outcomes in complex systems. The name "Butterfly Paradox" stems from the idea that the flapping of a butterfly's wings in one part of the world could potentially cause a chain reaction of events leading to a hurricane on the other side of the globe.

At its core, the Butterfly Paradox highlights the interconnectedness and sensitivity of systems to initial conditions. It proposes that even minute alterations in the starting state of a system can magnify over time, resulting in vastly different outcomes. This sensitivity to initial conditions makes predicting long-term behavior incredibly challenging, as small errors or uncertainties can compound and lead to divergent trajectories.

CHAPTER III

TIME, WITHOUT CONSTRAINT; LIFE, WITHOUT

RESTRICTIONS

Let things speak for themselves

- *Edmund Husserl*

3.1 PHENOMENOLOGY: DEFINITION

Phenomenology is concerned with the study of conscious phenomena. In simple words, it is the philosophy of experience, an analysis of the way in which things or experiences show themselves. “Phenomena,” a term derived from the Greek, means to show oneself or to appear. It is a philosophical approach which offers a profound lens to examine literature. It is derived from the work of Edmund Husserl in the early 20th century. Phenomenology is the study of phenomena as they appear in consciousness, highlighting subjective experience and how people perceive and interpret the world.

Phenomenology seeks to make explicit the implicit structure and meaning of human experiences. It is the search for “essences” that cannot be revealed by ordinary observation. Phenomenology is the science of essential structures of consciousness or experience. It concentrates neither on the subject of experience nor on the object of experience but on the point of contact at which “being and consciousness meet” (Edie, 1962, p.19)

At its fundamental level, phenomenology attempts to understand the framework of consciousness and how situations are experienced. In literature, this

translates into an investigation of how readers perceive and understand the text. Rather than viewing the text as an object to be objectively studied, phenomenology illustrates the subjective experience of reading—the thoughts, emotions, and sensations that develop when one engages with the text. Phenomenology is an authentic vision of what an experience essentially is.

Husserl developed the potentially skeptical belief that only the mind, “the thinking thing,” is known to exist for certain. He became concerned with the problem of what it means to be aware of the existence of the world, with what it is to experience a world and to be situated in one. (South Atlantic Bulletin, 4)

Husserl outlined a method that became concerned with literature because of its interest in approaching general essences through individual and singular experiences, as well as the obvious similarities between phenomenological reduction, which brackets our belief in existence and modifies our consciousness as we focus on the art object during an aesthetic experience.

Phenomenological Reduction is a transcendental act whereby the belief in factual existence characteristic of what the phenomenological call the natural attitude is suspended or bracketed off in order to study the appearance of things to a consciousness as pure phenomena.

Martin Heidegger believed in Husserl's “let things speak for themselves” but his concern was more with being in reality, which he designates, *Dasein*, literally, “Being there.” He argues in “Being and Time” that understanding is shaped by a pre-existing framework of assumptions and ideas. This idea is consistent with the conventional notion that text interpretation is circular, as understanding every textual fragment is dependent on presuppositions about its

larger context. Heidegger's philosophy of understanding reflects his broader view of human existence as a continuous projection beyond oneself, continuously looking forward. This anticipatory structure of understanding is relevant to later phenomenological techniques that focus on interpretation and reading.

Heidegger regards the meaning of Being as inseparable from the phenomenon of time. The existential concept of time as not merely world time as measured by the clock but as personal time, my time, my span of life - finite in two directions, a beginning and an end is derived from Heidegger. The ordinary view of time emphasises an abstract movement from past through present to future. My time moves from the future to the past in order to assimilate what has made the present. (3)

In his description of human existence, Heidegger makes it clear that our daily being-in-the-world is in- authentic in that it is seldom under our control. What he calls authentic existence is achieved only when a means is discovered to rescue the individual from doing "as One does" to doing as he chooses to do himself. The mood of dread is the force that may rescue a person from in-authenticity. Dread differs from plain fear in that it has no namable, isolated object; it is precisely that sense of nothingness which lays hold of an individual when he faces *sorge*, or the whole structure of being-in- the-world. It can be of life as a whole; or, since Heidegger views life in its entirety as Being-to- Death, dread can be of death as the end and boundary of life. There is also a second force that is capable of calling a human being out of in- authentic being conscience. In Heidegger's view, conscience is the avowal of a person's responsibility for being itself, the call the self hears to be itself.

One key concept in phenomenology is intentionality, the idea that consciousness is always directed towards objects or phenomena. In the context of literature, this means that readers approach texts with certain intentions or expectations, which shape their reading experience. For example, a reader may approach a novel with the intention of being entertained, challenged, or moved emotionally. These intentions influence the way the reader engages with the text and the meaning they derive from it.

Another important aspect of phenomenology is the idea of the lifeworld, the world as it is experienced by individuals in everyday life. Literature often serves as a reflection of the lifeworld, presenting characters, settings, and events that resonate with readers' own experiences. Through the exploration of the lifeworld in literature, readers gain insights into human existence and the complexities of the human condition.

Phenomenology also highlights the role of embodiment in human experience. The body is not just a physical entity but also a site of consciousness, shaping the way individuals perceive and engage with the world. In literature, embodiment is often explored through descriptions of sensory experiences—the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations that characters encounter. By evoking these sensory experiences, literature invites readers to inhabit the world of the text more fully, engaging not just intellectually but also viscerally with the narrative.

3.2 TIME AND PERCEPTION

Merleau-Ponty's aim was to implement Husserl's "back to things themselves" movement by an intentional theory of consciousness and a strict

phenomenological descriptive method which starts from perception. One of his more interesting ideas in this respect is his view of the body as the expression of our modes of existence, as the means of our communication with the world and the means by which we have a world. It is through the body's relation to a situation that the first meanings come which the intellect may later codify in symbols. His stress on artistic expression as a bodily movement and on the process of aesthetic experience as a bodily experience might suggest R. P. Blackmur's concept of "gesture." Merleau-Ponty would likewise find the meaning of a poem in the gesture it contains; to him a word is a gesture. To understand the gesture in a work of art we need to participate in the situation it describes by having an aesthetic experience. Included in this concept of artistic expression as bodily movement is a stress on the artist's mode of thinking as always being with his materials rather than through imposing. One of the central figures in the application of phenomenology to literature is Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose work emphasises the embodied nature of perception. Merleau-Ponty argues that perception is not a purely intellectual process but is deeply intertwined with bodily sensations and movements. In literature, this perspective suggests that the act of reading is not just a cognitive exercise but also a bodily one, involving gestures, postures, and bodily rhythms that shape the reading experience.

Merleau-Ponty's concept of the "flesh" further underscores the embodied nature of human existence. The flesh refers to the intertwining of subject and object, self and world, in the lived experience. In literature, the flesh is evident in the way characters are portrayed as embodied beings, with desires, vulnerabilities, and physical sensations that anchor them in the world of the text. By

foregrounding the flesh, literature invites readers to empathise with characters and inhabit their perspectives more fully.

Phenomenology also sheds light on the role of language in shaping consciousness and experience. Language is not just a tool for communication but also a medium through which one makes sense of the world. In literature, language is used to evoke sensory experiences, convey emotions, and explore complex ideas. Through the manipulation of language, writers create worlds that resonate with readers, inviting them to participate in the meaning-making process.

One of the challenges of applying phenomenology to literature is the inherently subjective nature of both phenomena and consciousness. Each reader brings their own unique background, experiences, and perspectives to the act of reading, shaping the way they interpret and engage with the text. As a result, there can be multiple interpretations of a single literary work, each valid in its own right. Phenomenology encourages scholars to embrace this plurality of perspectives and to explore the rich diversity of reader responses to literature.

Despite its challenges, phenomenology offers a powerful framework for understanding literature and its impact on readers. By focusing on subjective experience, embodiment, and language, phenomenology illuminates the ways in which literature engages and shapes consciousness. Through the exploration of themes such as intentionality, the lifeworld, embodiment, and the flesh, phenomenology enriches readers' understanding of the human experience as reflected in literature.

3.3 TEMPORAL EXPERIENCE

According to phenomenology, time is a subjective experience that differs from person to person. In *The Time Traveler's Wife*, Henry DeTamble's chrono-displacement state is a prime example of this subjectivity. Henry's time-traveling episodes are beyond his control; he finds himself taken to various points in his life, both past and future. Furthermore, Henry's meetings with his past and future selves demonstrate the fluidity of time borders and the diversity of temporal views.

Impossible but true, because Henry is one of the first people diagnosed with Chrono-Displacement Disorder: periodically his genetic clock resets and he finds himself misplaced in time, pulled to moments of emotional gravity from his life, past and future. His disappearances are spontaneous, his experiences unpredictable, alternately harrowing and amusing. (Niffenegger 2)

Henry experiences time as disintegrated with the past, present, and future all coexisting in his consciousness. His experiences with time travel are confusing and frequently undermine his sense of continuity and security. Henry tends to time travel when he is extremely stressed or nervous about something. He drifts to the past most of the time. These are the moments of his life which have affected him gravely. *"It got my hat. The police couldn't figure it out. All my clothes were in the car, on the seat and the floor, and I was found stark naked by the side of the road. You time traveled ...My mother dying...it's the pivotal thing...everything else goes around and around it...I dream about it, and I also—time travel to it. Over and over...."* (Niffenegger, 111 - 112). The first time Henry time traveled was

when he and his mother met with an accident. Time traveling saved his life but took away everything, his mum. But at the same time, it gave him the ability to go back in the past and live the moment again. He could see the details, what and how went wrong. Sometimes he could even participate like calling 911. He could do everything except save his mother because one could go back to the past but cannot change anything.

Phenomenology also emphasises the subjective nature of time, which is illustrated profusely in the *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Billy Pilgrim, the main protagonist's time travel experiences serve as the principal motif for challenging the traditional notions of temporality. Billy's time-travel adventures transport him to numerous points in his life, including a time as a Prisoner of War in World War II, his prosaic post-war existence as an optometrist and his encounters with the Tralfamadorians, the aliens.

The most important thing I learned on Tralfamadore was that when a person dies he only appears to die. He is still very much alive in the past, so it is very silly for people to cry at his funeral. All moments, past, present, and future, always have existed, always will exist. They can see how permanent all the moments are, and they can look at any moment that interests them. It is just an illusion we have here on Earth that one moment follows another one, like beads on a string, and that once a moment is gone it is gone forever. (Vonnegut 34)

At one point in the novel, Billy finds himself watching his own death in the future while also reliving events from the past. These nonlinear jumps in time

depict Billy's disorientation and fragmentation of awareness, emphasising the subjective and fluid character of time.

One of the novel's most important incidents is the firebombing of Dresden, which Billy survives as a POW. *And Billy had seen the greatest massacre in European history, which was the fire-bombing of Dresden. (Vonnegut, 90)* The author keeps on illustrating the horrors of war and the indiscriminate damage caused by bombings. The dreadful impact of the Dresden bombing echoes throughout the story, influencing Billy's perspective of reality and later experiences. Through Billy's perspective, readers are presented with the chaos and brutality of combat, as well as the psychological toll it takes on the people who endure it. His time-travel adventures can be viewed as a coping technique, allowing him to flee the horrors of war and seek solace in moments of calm and tranquillity. However, they also mirror the psychological wounds left by his traumatic experiences, which emerge as dissociation and detachment from the present moment.

The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue sheds a different light on the phenomenology of temporal time. *What is a person, if not the marks they leave behind? She has learned to step between the thorny weeds, but there are some cuts that cannot be avoided—a memory, a photograph, a name. (Schwab 11).* This exemplifies the subjective experience of time and the marks Addie leaves behind. Her journey through the metaphorical "thorny weeds" represents her lived experiences, with each thorn symbolising moments of pain or struggle in her temporal existence. This imagery reflects the phenomenological notion of consciousness as shaped by individual experiences and perceptions.

The line "there are some cuts that cannot be avoided" highlights the inevitability of certain temporal events or memories that leave lasting impressions on the Addie's consciousness. These "cuts" represent moments of significance, trauma, or joy that contribute to her temporal identity and shape the understanding of her within the passage of time. The mention of "memory, a photograph, a name" highlights the role of these tangible artifacts in anchoring Addie's temporal existence. Memories evoke subjective recollections of past experiences, photographs freeze moments in time, and names serve as markers of identity across temporal contexts.

From a phenomenological perspective, Addie's navigation through the thorny weeds can be seen as a continual process of temporal becoming, where her subjective experiences and perceptions of time are in constant flux. Each encounter with a thorn represents a unique moment of temporal consciousness, shaping her temporal alchemy—the transformative interplay between their lived experiences and the marks she leaves behind in the temporal landscape of the narrative.

3.4 MEMORY AND PERCEPTION

Phenomenology in literature is a philosophical approach that examines the lived experience of characters within a narrative. At its core, it explores how individuals perceive and interpret the world around them, particularly through the lenses of memory and perception. Memory plays a crucial role in shaping characters' understanding of their present reality, as past experiences color their interpretations of current events. These memories are not static but rather dynamic, continually influencing characters' thoughts, emotions, and actions.

Perception, on the other hand, involves the immediate sensory experiences through which characters interact with their environment.

Authors often employ various literary techniques to convey the intricacies of memory and perception. Stream-of-consciousness narration, for example, allows readers to delve deep into characters' minds, experiencing their thoughts and memories in real-time. Symbolism and imagery are also commonly used to evoke sensory experiences and trigger memories, thereby enriching the reader's understanding of characters' subjective realities. Through phenomenological exploration, literature not only illuminates the complexity of human consciousness but also invites readers to reflect on their own perceptions and interpretations of the world.

Memory and perception play a vital role in shaping an individual's experience of reality. In *The Time Traveler's Wife*, Henry's time-travelling experiences profoundly influence his memories and perceptions of events. Despite experiencing events out of chronological order, Henry's memories are organised in a cohesive narrative, blurring the boundaries between past, present, and future.

Henry's encounters with Clare at different points in her life illustrate the interconnectedness of memory and perception. While Henry experiences these moments as cohesive events in their shared history, Clare experiences them as fragmented interactions with a mysterious stranger. This interplay between memory and perception underscores the subjective nature of reality and the ways in which individual experiences are mediated by consciousness.

“I’m Clare Abshire. I knew you when I was a little girl...” I’m at a loss because I am in love with a man who is standing before me with no

memories of me at all. Everything is in the future for him.....Oh, no, you shouldn't be. I mean, I know.. .why that is....It's because for you none of it has happened yet, but for me, well, I've known you for a long time.”
(Niffenegger 15, 18)

Clare met Henry at the age of 8, at that time he was mostly in his 30s and 40s. In their relationship, she is the one who keeps the memory and he forgets everything. Clare's perception of the world, and of herself had been shaped by Henry as he spent most of his time with her as well as he introduced her with different perspectives of the world. They meet each other at present when Clare is 22 and Henry, 28 by that time she is madly in love with him and he doesn't even remember her. For her, everything which happened in the past with him exists and he is yet to live it as he had not been at the age where he would be time traveling to the time when Clare was 8 years old.

Phenomenology acknowledges the role of trauma in shaping one's perception of the world. In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Vonnegut explores how trauma disrupts Billy Pilgrim's consciousness and distorts his sense of reality. The Dresden bombing serves as a focal point for Billy's trauma, the experience leaves an indelible mark on his psyche, haunting him long after the war has ended.

Billy's response to trauma is characterized by dissociation and detachment. He often retreats into his own mind, seeking refuge in his time-travelling fantasies. For example, when confronted with the horrors of war, Billy adopts a passive demeanour, accepting his fate with resignation rather than resistance. This coping mechanism allows him to distance himself from the brutality of his

surroundings, but it also isolates him from the world around him, exacerbating his sense of alienation and disconnection.

“You’ll pretend you were men instead of babies, and you’ll be played in the movies by Frank Sinatra and John Wayne or some of those other glamorous, war-loving, dirty old men. And war will look just wonderful, so we’ll have a lot more of them. And they’ll be fought by babies like the babies upstairs.” So then I understood. It was war that made her so angry. She didn’t want her babies or anybody else’s babies killed in wars. And she thought wars were partly encouraged by books and movies.”
(Vonnegut 18 - 19)

One of the friends of the narrator's wife states the above quote. Her perception about the war was affected by the books and movies she watched. Therefore she believed that, media and the actors promoted the war. She complained about that as the narrator was writing a novel on war. She was aware that the narrator and even her husband had joined the war when they were not out of their teens. She could see and experience the trauma war left on them, this scared her. She did not want her children to go through the same fate.

The theme of trauma is further explored through the character of Roland Weary, a fellow soldier who becomes obsessed with avenging his perceived slights. Weary's relentless pursuit of revenge ultimately leads to his demise, highlighting the destructive consequences of unchecked trauma. Through Weary's tragic arc, Vonnegut underscores the psychological toll of war and the ways in which trauma can shape individual behaviour and perception.

In *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, the phenomenological approach is through acceptance. The character of Estele portrays this brilliantly. *Estele, who belongs to everyone, and no one, and herself. Estele, who grew like a tree at the heart of the village by the river, and has certainly never been young, who sprang up from the ground itself with gnarled hands and woody skin and roots deep enough to tap into her own hidden well. (Schwab 24)* Estele is Addie's friend who had accepted her fate and dedicated her life to nature. She wanted to be a tree. She believed in God who accepted the sacrifices and fulfilled the wishes. She lived in the world created by herself.

3.5 MEMORY AS A TIME MANIPULATOR

Memory serves as a remarkable tool for manipulating time within literature, offering authors a rich palette to craft intricate narratives that transcend linear chronology. Through the interplay of past recollections and present experiences, authors wield memory to weave complex tapestries of time, inviting readers to navigate the intricacies of human consciousness and the fluidity of temporal existence.

Non linear storytelling is a way through which memory manipulates time in literature. By incorporating memories into the narrative, authors can fracture the linear progression of time, allowing events to unfold out of sequence. This nonlinear approach grants writers the freedom to explore the interconnectedness of past, present, and future, presenting readers with a mosaic of experiences that mirror the fragmented nature of memory itself.

One of the most striking aspects of *Slaughterhouse-Five* is its portrayal of the fragmentation of memory, as Billy's consciousness drifts between different

moments in his life. This fragmentation mirrors the fractured nature of trauma itself, as memories of past traumas resurface in unexpected ways, triggering emotional responses that are both powerful and disorienting. Through his use of time manipulation, Vonnegut invites readers to consider the ways in which trauma shapes one's perceptions of the world and ourselves, influencing the choices one makes and the relationships one forms.

Moreover, *Slaughterhouse-Five* explores the ways in which memory can be both a source of comfort and a source of torment. For Billy Pilgrim, memories of his time as a prisoner of war serve as a constant reminder of the horrors he has witnessed and the losses he has endured. However, they also offer moments of connection and understanding, allowing Billy to make sense of his experiences in ways that transcend the limitations of linear time. Through his interactions with other characters, such as the Tralfamadorians and his fellow soldiers, Billy comes to recognize the power of memory to shape readers' understanding of themselves and their place in the world.

Furthermore, Vonnegut delves into the ways in which trauma can distort one's perceptions of reality, blurring the line between memory and fantasy. Throughout the novel, Billy's experiences of war become increasingly surreal and disjointed, as the boundaries between past, present, and future blur and dissolve. This surrealism serves as a powerful metaphor for the ways in which trauma can warp one's sense of reality, leaving readers adrift in a world that feels both familiar and utterly alien.

Billy's memory in the *Slaughterhouse-Five* is fragmented as he is “unstuck in time” *Time is very important to understand Billy's development. Throughout the*

technique of stream of consciousness, Pilgrim has in his mind a blending of time, i.e., the past through memory, the present through perception, and the future through anticipation. Vonnegut's own life as well as Billy Pilgrim's, are categorized by an obsessive return to the past (Rodney 80). It would not be wrong to say that, Billy just does not travel back in time, he chooses to live there. Therefore, his memories are always flooded with Dresden firebombing and war incidents. Albeit, it is a trauma response.

When Billy is on Tralfamador's planet, he does not have to follow any rule of time. He can spend years there and it would be a microsecond on the Earth. Time works differently on Tralfamadore's planet. *I am a Tralfamadorian, seeing all time as you might see a stretch of the Rocky Mountains. All time is all time. It does not change. It does not lend itself to warnings or explanations. It simply is. Take it moment by moment, and you will find that we are all, as I've said before, bugs in amber. (Vonnegut 109)* on this alien planet, even death does not exist. Tralfamadorian see aliens as dead corpse who are at the wrong place. They believe that people can leave even after they die.

In V.E. Schwab's *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, memory emerges as a pivotal tool for manipulating time, shaping both the narrative structure and the protagonist's existential journey. Set against the backdrop of centuries-spanning immortality, the novel explores the consequence of a Faustian bargain that grants Addie LaRue eternal life but condemns her to be forgotten by everyone she meets. Within this storyline, memory serves as a means for Addie to navigate the shifting currents of time, anchoring her to the past while propelling her forward into an uncertain future.

As Addie's story unfolds across centuries, Schwab deftly weaves together past and present timelines, juxtaposing moments of historical significance with intimate glimpses into Addie's personal history. Through this nonlinear approach, memory becomes a narrative device that blurs the boundaries between past and present, allowing readers to traverse the temporal landscape alongside Addie as she grapples with the consequences of her immortal existence.

“Some days you’re stuck with what you’ve got,.....Addie will be gone, from sight and mind and memory.”(Schwab 19) This quote depicts how Addie is no less than a figment of imagination even though she exists. Many spend time with her, they know her but once they or she crosses the threshold of the door, everyone forgets about her existence. She doesn't even exist as a memory.

Memory serves as a mechanism for Addie to reclaim agency within the confines of her timeless existence. Unable to leave a lasting mark on the world through conventional means, Addie relies on the power of memory to carve out her legacy, imprinting herself on the minds of those she encounters through fleeting moments of connection. These memories become her currency, traded for temporary reprieves from the crushing weight of anonymity and offering glimpses of immortality in a world that would otherwise forget her.

In addition to shaping the narrative structure, memory influences the thematic exploration of time and identity in the novel. Through Addie's memories, readers are invited to reflect on the passage of time and the ephemeral nature of human existence. Each memory serves as a poignant reminder of the transience of life, imbuing even the most mundane moments with a sense of significance and poignancy. As Addie grapples with the weight of her immortal curse, memory

becomes both a blessing and a curse, offering solace in moments of loneliness while also serving as a reminder of the countless lives she has touched and subsequently forgotten.

Memory also serves as a catalyst for Addie's personal growth and self-discovery throughout the novel. As she navigates the complexities of her immortal existence, Addie is forced to confront the memories of her past and the choices that have shaped her identity. Through these reflections, she begins to unravel the true meaning of her existence and discovers that her legacy is not defined by the memories others hold of her, but rather by the memories she chooses to cherish within herself.

All in all, memory emerges as a multifaceted tool for manipulating time in *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, shaping both the narrative structure and thematic exploration of the novel. Through Addie's memories, readers are invited to contemplate the nature of time, identity, and the human experience, weaving together past and present into a tapestry of interconnected moments. As Addie grapples with the complexities of her immortal existence, memory becomes her lifeline, offering glimpses of solace and self-discovery amidst the relentless march of time.

3.6 DETERMINISM VS. FREE WILL

Free will is the thought that people are able to choose and decide their own fates and that their actions make a change in determining their future. But to his dismay, the protagonist discovers that he is directed by external forces and peoples' destinies are decided by others. That is the reason why Billy finds happiness and peace only when he is on the Tralfamadore planet (Bly, 26).

Vonnegut sets the concept of free will clearly in this novel whereby a Tralfamadorian tells Billy that “*Only on Earth is there any talk of free will*” (Vonnegut 74).

Billy has a conversation with aliens on the planet Tralfamadore in 1967 in an attempt to emphasize man’s inhumanity and brutality during the Dresden Holocaust. He questions human free will. If humans have free will, what then is the purpose of their brutal actions, like the bombing of Dresden during World War II (Schatt, 58). The Tralfamadorians do not hinder the stream of time although they have some knowledge of their fate and the end of the planet. Billy asks a Tralfamadorian about that in the following lines:

“We know how the Universe ends,” said the guide, “If You know this,” said Billy, ‘isn’t there some way you can prevent it [the Universe will be destroyed by a Tralfamadorian pilot who presses a button]? Can’t you keep the pilot from pressing the button?’ “He has always pressed it, and he always will. We always let him and we always will let him. The moment is structured that way” (Vonnegut 55).

Billy realizes that the free will that he has always considered a fact seems to be an illusion. Vonnegut wrote *Slaughterhouse-Five* in a “telegraphic schizophrenic manner of tales” that separates the individual situations and relinks them in terms of the synchrony of conflicting items. Whenever the realistic method, used by Vonnegut, violates its diagrammatical method, it draws long periods of time in the life of Pilgrim being a prisoner of war who has stayed alive after the fire-bombing of Dresden and, in a science fiction strategy of the novel, he is kidnapped to an “extraterrestrial planet, Tralfamadore” (26), where he learns

a new way of looking at things, he says: *The most important thing I learned on Tralfamadore was that when a person dies he only appears to die. He is still very much alive in the past, so it is very silly for people to cry at his funeral.* (Vonnegut 26). The concept of free will is not accepted by the Tralfamadorians. This means that humans are not free to determine or affect the course of their own lives. They teach Billy how to look at his life as a rounded structure or a long line of events. Their philosophy of time rejects the reality of death. Man is allowed to select among the eternal moments of his presence. *If people have the freedom to travel through time, they can try the Tralfamadorian credo and pay no attention to the unpleasant times, and focus on the good ones only* (Merrill 69).

Addie grew up in the world where she never got to make any choice. Therefore she started to pray to God and made small sacrifices in the exchange of her wishes to be fulfilled. The God's never answered her but she knew that they heard her. One day when she was about to be married off to an old man, she desperately prays to the god after dark, which she was informed not to do by Estele. The consequences of this action led to her evoking the God of darkness. *"I do not want to belong to anyone but myself. I want to be free. Free to live, and to find my own way, to love, or to be alone, but at least it is my choice, and I am so tired of not having choices, so scared of the years rushing past beneath my feet. I do not want to die as I've lived, which is no life at all. I—"* (Schwab 46) When Addie had no idea what she wanted when God of darkness asked her, she started to blabber the above lines. For once, she wanted to be free, without any societal or parental restrictions. To live or to suffer, she wanted to choose everything. She desperately wanted to have a life of her own. Therefore she ends up trading her identity for an immortal life.

Henry DeTamble's involuntary time-travelling abilities blur the line between determinism and free will. While he experiences events from his past and future out of sequence, his actions seem to be predetermined by his future knowledge. This raises philosophical questions about the extent to which individuals can exert control over their destinies when confronted with the inevitability of time. Once Henry meets his future self and he says to him that “... *he said that he thinks there is only free will when you are in time, in the present. He says in the past we can only do what we did, and we can only be there if we were there.*” (Niffenegger 61)

Even though Henry had the ability to go back to the past or future at certain times, he had no control over whatever was happening. As mentioned in the above quote, free will exists only in the present, that's the only time one has the power to change the trajectory of their life. In the past, things happen and one has to live with the choices made by him at that time in the present. One cannot change the past. “*But he said that you have to behave as though you have free will, as though you are responsible for what you do.*” (Niffenegger 62)

When 1992 Henry travelled back to 1973, he advised Henry that when in the past, they can only pretend that they have the free will, that they can act the way they want to. But, in reality, they have no power, the only thing they can do is pretend that they are responsible for whatever they do. All in all he meant that, if you act like you have power then you can at least feel like you can control something. Phenomenology takes place in the consciousness and then one acts on it. To explain it in a better way, one can look at the example of Macbeth, when he

killed the King, the feeling of guilt made him suffer more than the act. He felt, therefore he suffered. Pain and happiness' roots lies in the mind.

There is another incident in *The Time Traveler's Wife*, where Henry is explaining determinism and its opposite to young Clare. *What's the opposite of determinism? Chaos. Oh. I don't think I like that. Do you like that? Well, I do and I don't. Chaos is more freedom; in fact, total freedom. But no meaning. I want to be free to act, and I also want my actions to mean something. (Niffenegger 78)*

Here Henry explains how the most mundane sounding words can mean so much. He considers chaos as the opposite of determinism and for him, it carries more freedom than responsibilities. But the drawback of it is that it has no meaning. He is getting the freedom to act however he wants to but there's no meaning to his actions. He wants his actions to mean something. It is same as Addie, both of them want to leave a mark, evidence of their existence.

3.7 REALITY AND EXISTENCE

In literature, reality and existence intertwine as essential themes that underpin the fabric of narrative exploration. Reality, as depicted in literature, serves as the backdrop against which the existential questions of human existence are explored and confronted. Authors delve into the depths of reality to probe the very essence of existence, unraveling the complexities of being and meaning within the context of their stories.

Within this exploration, reality becomes a conduit through which the existential dilemmas of characters and societies are examined. It is through the lens of reality that authors navigate the labyrinthine pathways of identity, purpose,

and mortality, inviting readers to contemplate the fundamental questions of existence alongside their literary counterparts.

Moreover, reality in literature serves as a mirror reflecting the existential struggles and triumphs of humanity. It captures the rawness of human experience, from the mundane to the extraordinary, and invites readers to confront the universal truths and uncertainties inherent in existence. Through the nuanced portrayal of reality, authors offer glimpses into the intricate tapestry of life, inviting readers to grapple with the complexities of their own existence and the myriad ways in which they navigate the world around them.

In essence, reality and existence converge in literature to form a symbiotic relationship, where the exploration of one enriches the understanding of the other. Together, they serve as pillars upon which narratives of profound depth and resonance are built, inviting readers to ponder the mysteries and complexities of the human condition.

Phenomenology posits that reality is constructed through lived experience, shaped by individual perception and interpretation. In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Vonnegut explores the subjective nature of reality and the ways in which it is mediated by trauma, memory, and consciousness.

Billy's experiences of time travel and his encounters with the Tralfamadorians challenge his understanding of reality, forcing him to question the fundamental assumptions of his existence. For example, when he is abducted by the Tralfamadorians, Billy is presented with a cosmic perspective that transcends human limitations. This revelation prompts him to reconsider his own place in the universe and the meaning of his life.

The recurring motif of "So it goes" underscores the existential themes of the novel, suggesting a resigned acceptance of the absurdity and randomness of existence. Through Billy's journey, Vonnegut explores the tension between fate and free will, highlighting the existential angst that accompanies the search for meaning in an indifferent universe.

"She said no, and that wasn't even the worst word.... "You're great," she said. "You really are. But you're not..."...And she doesn't finish, and she doesn't have to, because he knows what comes next. You're not right. You're not enough." (Schwab 257) This rejection lays a foundation for Henry Strauss' course of life. Henry had always been a broken soul and when Tabitha, his girlfriend of two years, rejects his proposal without any valid reason, it shatters him. His relationship was stable, no fights whatsoever. However, the proposal and subsequent rejection disrupt this stability, introducing a rupture in Henry's temporal experience.

The rejection introduces an existential crisis for Henry, challenging his understanding of time and his place within it. The gap between his expectation of a positive response and the actual rejection creates a temporal dissonance, highlighting the disconnect between his subjective experience of time and objective reality.

Henry Strauss' experience reflects a rupture in his temporal perception, where the passage of time seems to diverge from his expectations and desires. His perception of time is not merely linear but intertwined with emotional and existential dimensions, shaping his understanding of self and relationships. The rejection serves as a catalyst for Henry to reevaluate his temporal experiences and

perhaps undergo a transformation in his understanding of time, self, and relationships. That was his last straw. This eventually leads him to make a deal with the darkness. He trades his soul for a year where he would feel wanted, loved. Because of this very incident, he ends up meeting Addie LaRue as well, the girl whom he remembered.

“She tells the story of her life to the little carving, as if afraid she’ll forget herself as easily as others do, unaware that her mind is now a flawless cage, her memory a perfect trap. She will never forget, though she’ll wish she could.”

Addie's act of telling her life story to the little carving suggests her desire to externalise and preserve her identity and memories. Her narration to the carving reflects her attempt to solidify her sense of self and maintain a connection to her past.

The fear of forgetting herself mirrors the phenomenological concept of "self-awareness" or "selfhood," where individuals continuously reflect on their own experiences and identities. She worries about losing herself, not just to the passage of time, but also to the indifference of others, indicating a profound existential concern.

The idea of her mind being a "flawless cage" and her memory a "perfect trap" suggests that her consciousness, while retaining every detail of her life, also imposes a burden. This reflects the phenomenological notion of "intentionality," where consciousness is always directed towards something. In this case, her consciousness is fixated on her memories, creating a sense of entrapment within her own subjective world.

The final line, "She will never forget, though she'll wish she could," highlights the ambivalence of memory. While memory preserves one's identity and experiences, it can also become burdensome, especially if those memories are painful or traumatic. This reflects the phenomenological idea that consciousness is both enabling and limiting; it allows readers to experience the world but also imposes constraints on their perception and understanding.

"No way to think in days or weeks when she lives in moments. Time begins to lose its meaning—and yet, she has not lost track of time. She cannot seem to misplace it (no matter how she tries) and so Addie knows what month it is, what day, what night, and so she knows it has been a year." (Schwab 127) Here, Addie, experiences time in a unique manner. While she lives in moments and seems disconnected from the conventional linear progression of time, she paradoxically remains aware of it. This highlights the complex relationship between lived experience and objective time. Her inability to "misplace" time despite her unconventional experience suggests that time, for her, is not solely a linear progression but a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses lived moments. This resonates with phenomenological notions of time as not simply an external, objective entity, but as intertwined with subjective experience and consciousness.

Additionally, the quote touches on the theme of temporal consciousness, wherein individuals are not just passive recipients of time but actively engage with it in their subjective experiences. Addie's awareness of the passage of time, even in her unconventional perception, underscores the intricate interplay between lived experience and temporal awareness.

“What is your name? Why must I have one? All things have names,” she says. “Names have purpose. Names have power.” She tips her glass his way. “You know that, or else you wouldn’t have stolen mine.”(Schawb 163) The question "What is your name?" initiates a discussion about the importance and meaning of names. The character questioning the other implies that names are essential identifiers, implying a connection between one's identity and their name. This aligns with phenomenological notions of identity construction, where names play a crucial role in how individuals perceive themselves and are perceived by others. The response, "Why must I have one?" challenges the assumption that names are necessary or inherently meaningful. This perspective resonates with phenomenological scepticism towards fixed categories and labels, suggesting that identity is not confined to linguistic constructs.

The subsequent assertion that "All things have names. Names have purpose. Names have power." reflects a phenomenological interpretation of the significance of names in shaping perception and understanding. Names serve as linguistic symbols that carry meaning, imbued with social and cultural significance. They not only identify but also confer agency and influence over individuals and objects within the lifeworld.

The mention of the stolen name adds a layer of intrigue, implying a narrative where names hold transformative power or agency beyond mere identification. This aligns with phenomenological themes of embodiment and intersubjectivity, where names can shape interpersonal relationships and mediate one's engagement with the world.

“Being forgotten, she thinks, is a bit like going mad. You begin to wonder what is real, if you are real. After all, how can a thing be real if it cannot be remembered? It’s like that Zen koan, the one about the tree falling in the woods. If no one heard it, did it happen? If a person cannot leave a mark, do they exist?” (Schwab) The character's reflection on being forgotten highlights how perception and reality are intertwined. If one's existence is not acknowledged or remembered by others, it raises questions about the validity of their reality. This aligns with phenomenological inquiries into how individuals perceive and validate their own existence within the context of their lifeworld.

Being remembered by others validates one's existence and reinforces their identity within social contexts. When forgotten, individuals may experience a sense of disconnection from their own identity, as it relies on recognition and validation from others. This resonates with phenomenological perspectives on intersubjectivity, where identity is co-constructed through interactions with others.

The reference to the Zen koan about the tree falling in the woods explores the relationship between perception and reality. Similarly, the question posed about leaving a mark and existence relates to the role of memory in shaping an individual's understanding of the world. From a phenomenological standpoint, memory plays a crucial role in constructing temporal continuity and preserving experiences that contribute to one's sense of self and reality.

A couple years ago, I saw a little girl get hit in the head with a hockey puck at Indian Head Park. It was horrible. I found out later that she died in the hospital. And then I started to time travel back to that day, over and over, and I wanted to warn her mother, and I couldn’t. It was like being in

the audience at a movie. It was like being a ghost. I would scream, No, take her home, don't let her near the ice, take her away, she's going to get hurt, she's going to die, and I would realize that the words were only in my head, and everything would go on as before. (Niffenegger 61)

This depicts how even though Henry DeTamble wanted to help the poor girl, he could not because one cannot change the past. This also speaks how moments like this Henry questioned his reality and existence. He was there, yet he was not. When moments like this occur, he becomes a bystander, an observer without any power.

CHAPTER 4:: CHARACTER DYNAMICS

Character dynamics in literature refer to the complex interactions, relationships, and developments among characters within a narrative. These dynamics are crucial for driving the plot forward, exploring themes, and revealing deeper insights into human nature. Whether characters clash, form alliances, undergo personal growth, or experience conflicts, their interactions shape the story's trajectory and resonate with readers on emotional and intellectual level.

At the heart of character dynamics is the interplay between different personalities, motivations, and desires. Characters often possess distinct traits, backgrounds, and goals that drive their actions and interactions. These traits can lead to both harmonious collaborations and intense conflicts, creating tension and drama within the narrative.

Moreover, character dynamics are influenced by the evolving relationships and power dynamics among characters. As characters interact and confront challenges together, their relationships evolve, leading to shifts in power, loyalty, and trust. Furthermore, character dynamics often reflect broader themes and conflicts within the narrative. Characters may embody different ideologies, values, or societal roles, leading to clashes and debates that explore deeper philosophical or moral questions.

4.1 Billy Pilgrim

Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* intricately weaves together themes of time manipulation, war, and human experience to create a narrative that challenges traditional storytelling conventions. Through the lens of character

dynamics, this analysis explores the ways in which time manipulation shapes the interactions, motivations, and emotional landscapes of the novel's protagonists and other characters. Billy jumps from the past to the future and then to the present in an attempt to cope with other people as the unhuman war experience has affected him seriously. He has become under the trauma of the memories of the destructive bombing of Dresden. That is why it is difficult for the reader to know where Billy is at any given time in the novel. Being "unstuck in time" means that he is hesitating between the present and the past with no control over his movement and emphasis on the absurd nature of war.

Billy Pilgrim being "unstuck in time" temporal dislocation manifests as Billy's consciousness shifting between different moments in his life, blurring the boundaries between past, present, and future. As a result, Billy experiences events out of sequence, detached from the linear progression of time. This detachment profoundly impacts his relationships with other characters, as he struggles to reconcile his fragmented experiences with a sense of cohesive narrative.

Throughout the novel, Billy's detachment from linear time is portrayed as both a blessing and a curse. On one hand, it allows him to transcend the constraints of conventional temporality, offering moments of respite from the traumas of war and the monotony of everyday life. However, this detachment also alienates him from those around him, making it difficult for others to understand or connect with his unique perspective. As Billy's experiences become increasingly fragmented, his sense of self becomes fragmented as well, leading to a profound existential crisis.

The impact of Billy's temporal detachment is perhaps most evident in his relationships with his family and fellow soldiers. His wife, Valencia, struggles to

comprehend his experiences, viewing his time-travelling episodes as symptoms of mental illness rather than legitimate phenomena. Similarly, Billy's interactions with his daughter, Barbara, are marked by a sense of distance and incomprehension, as he struggles to convey the depth of his experiences to her in a linear, coherent manner. Among his fellow soldiers, Billy's temporal dislocation sets him apart as an enigmatic figure, simultaneously revered and ridiculed for his perceived madness.

Beyond its effects on Billy Pilgrim himself, time manipulation profoundly influences the dynamics of his relationships with other characters in the novel. The non-linear nature of Billy's experiences creates a sense of disorientation and ambiguity that permeates his interactions with those around him, blurring the lines between friend and foe, past and present.

One of the most striking examples of this impact is Billy's relationship with his fellow soldier, Roland Weary. Throughout the novel, Weary serves as both a companion and antagonist to Billy, his presence looming large in Billy's memories of the war. However, the temporal dislocation of Billy's experiences complicates their relationship, as Billy struggles to reconcile his memories of Weary with the present reality. At times, Weary appears as a sympathetic figure, his brash bravado masking a deep sense of insecurity and vulnerability. At other times, he is portrayed as a callous bully, his actions driven by a toxic combination of fear and self-interest. By blurring the boundaries between past and present, Vonnegut invites readers to question the reliability of memory and the subjective nature of truth, complicating the readers' understanding of the characters and their motivations.

Similarly, Billy's relationships with other characters, such as Edgar Derby and Paul Lazzaro, are profoundly affected by his temporal dislocation. Derby, a fellow prisoner of war, serves as a moral compass for Billy, his unwavering integrity standing in stark contrast to the moral ambiguity of the war. However, as Billy's experiences become increasingly fragmented, Derby's influence begins to wane, his voice drowned out by the cacophony of conflicting memories and emotions. Lazzaro, on the other hand, emerges as a sinister presence in Billy's life, his vengeful nature amplified by the disjointedness of Billy's temporal experiences. As Billy's consciousness shifts between different moments in time, the line between friend and foe becomes increasingly blurred, leaving him adrift in a sea of uncertainty and doubt.

4.2 Asymmetrical Relationship Dynamics of Henry DeTamble and Clare Ashire

The foundation of Henry and Clare's relationship is built upon asymmetrical dynamics resulting from Henry's involuntary time travel. While Clare experiences their relationship linearly, Henry's presence fluctuates across different points in time. This asymmetry creates challenges in communication and understanding, as Clare must reconcile Henry's sporadic appearances with her own linear progression through life. Additionally, Henry's inability to control his time travel further exacerbates the asymmetry, leading to feelings of frustration and helplessness on both sides.

CLARE: It's hard being left behind. I wait for Henry, not knowing where he is, wondering if he's okay. It's hard to be the one who stays..... Long ago, men went to sea, and women waited for them, standing on the edge of the water, scanning the horizon for the tiny ship. Now I wait for Henry. He vanishes unwillingly, without warning. I wait for him. Each moment that I

wait feels like a year, an eternity...Through each moment I can see infinite moments lined up, waiting. Why has he gone where I cannot follow?
(Niffenegger 7- 8)

The asymmetrical nature of their relationship also highlights power imbalances and dependencies. When Henry time travels, Clare is the one who is left behind. She always has to wait, she wants to go with him. She does not like how he goes to the place where she cannot follow him. She feels like the wife of a fisherman who looks on at the horizon, waiting for her husband to come back. Clare often finds herself waiting for Henry's return, unsure of when or if he will reappear. This dependency on Henry's presence underscores the challenges of maintaining stability and security in a relationship marked by temporal uncertainty.

Henry, I'm sorry, I just can't get used to this. It's so opposite. I mean, all my life you've been the one who knew everything and I sort of forgot that tonight maybe I should go slow. (Niffenegger 21) When Henry and Clare spend time together for the first time in the present, she feels like she is with a different person and whole of her life she got used to Henry being the one who knew everything. But during this time, she gets a little disappointed for not being able to be with the Henry she knew yet she accepts him.

Time manipulation deeply impacts the level of trust and vulnerability between Henry and Clare. Henry's disappearances and reappearances create uncertainty and doubt, challenging Clare's trust in the consistency of their relationship. Conversely, Henry grapples with the vulnerability of revealing his time-travelling secret to Clare, fearing rejection or disbelief.

Trust is further complicated by Henry's encounters with past and future versions of Clare. These interactions blur the boundaries between reality and possibility, forcing both characters to confront their insecurities and fears. However, despite the challenges posed by time manipulation, Henry and Clare demonstrate a remarkable resilience in their ability to trust each other and navigate the complexities of their relationship. *"I worry that you will get tired of putting up with my undependableness and you will leave me." Clare puts her sketchbook aside. I sit up. "I won't ever leave you," she says. "Even though you're always leaving me....But I never want to leave you."* (Niffenegger 106)

Clare's trust in Henry is so high, that she does not mind waiting for him even though his presence is inconsistent. Since young, she trusted him and never once it was shattered.

The non-linear nature of Henry's time travel creates an emotional rollercoaster for both characters. Clare experiences the highs and lows of their relationship in real-time, while Henry may visit her during moments of joy, sorrow, or crisis from different points in his own timeline. This disjointed emotional experience can lead to feelings of disconnection or overwhelm, as one partner may struggle to understand or empathise with the other's emotions

I love him. He's my life. I've been waiting for him, my whole life, and now, he's here." I don't know how to explain. "With Henry, I can see everything laid out, like a map, past and future, everything at once, like an angel...." I shake my head. I can't put it into words. "I can reach into him and touch time.. .he loves me. We're married because.. .we're part of each other...." I falter. "It's happened already. All at once." (Niffenegger 144 - 145)

Even though there are multiple consequences in Henry and Clare's life and in which Clare gets the harsh end of it, she is ready to accept all the consequences. She loved Henry from a young age, and waited for him forever. She feels like she belongs with him. Henry and the life with him is so mesmerising for her that she is unable to put it in words. If there was one thing she knew in her life, then it was that she wanted to spend the rest of her life with him. Being in love with Henry, being loved by him and being married to him is the definition of perfect life for her. That's what the above lines depict.

Moreover, Henry's time-travelling experiences often result in emotional trauma and distress, which he carries with him across different points in time. This emotional baggage impacts his interactions with Clare, as he grapples with guilt, shame, and existential dread. However, their love and commitment to each other serve as anchors amidst the temporal chaos, providing comfort and support in times of emotional upheaval.

Time manipulation influences the couple's sense of dependency and independence within their relationship. Clare becomes emotionally dependent on Henry's sporadic presence, longing for his companionship during times of solitude or uncertainty. However, this dependency also fosters a sense of independence and self-reliance in Clare, as she learns to navigate life's challenges on her own terms.

Conversely, Henry grapples with feelings of guilt and inadequacy stemming from his inability to provide consistent emotional support to Clare. His time-travelling experiences force him to confront his own vulnerabilities and limitations, challenging his sense of agency and autonomy within their relationship.

Despite the challenges posed by time manipulation, Henry and Clare demonstrate remarkable resilience and adaptation in their relationship. They learn to communicate effectively, anticipate each other's needs, and find creative ways to maintain their connection across time. Their ability to adapt to the temporal complexities of their relationship underscores their love and commitment to each other, transcending the limitations of linear time. Henry and Clare's resilience is a testament to the enduring power of love in the face of adversity. Despite the uncertainties and challenges posed by Henry's time-travelling abilities, they remain steadfast in their devotion to each other, finding strength and solace in their shared experiences and memories.

Time manipulation prompts existential reflections on the nature of love, fate, and free will. Henry and Clare grapple with questions of destiny and agency, contemplating whether their relationship is predetermined or the result of individual choices. These philosophical inquiries deepen their bond and provide them with a sense of purpose and meaning amidst the temporal chaos.

Moreover, time manipulation serves as a metaphor for the passage of time and the inevitability of change. Henry and Clare's experiences underscore the transient nature of existence, highlighting the importance of cherishing the present moment and embracing the uncertainty of the future.

4.3 Addie and her complex relationship with her lovers

The character dynamics of Addie LaRue in *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* are richly layered and deeply nuanced, driving the narrative forward and offering profound insights into the human experience.

Addie's character dynamics is her profound sense of loneliness and isolation. Cursed to be forgotten by everyone she meets, Addie grapples with the

existential despair of living a life where her very existence is ephemeral. Every person she meets, she silently pleads to them to not forget her. This sense of isolation permeates Addie's interactions with others, shaping the way she navigates relationships and the world around her.

Despite her curse, Addie possesses a fierce sense of resilience and determination. Throughout the novel, she refuses to succumb to despair, instead finding solace in small moments of connection and beauty. Addie's resilience is a testament to the strength of the human spirit, demonstrating the power of hope and perseverance in the face of adversity.

Central to Addie's character dynamics is her complex relationship with time. As an immortal who has lived for centuries, Addie possesses a unique perspective on the passage of time. This temporal displacement not only sets her apart from those around her but also informs the way she interacts with the world. Addie's relationship with time serves as a lens through which to explore themes of memory, identity, and the fleeting nature of human existence.

Throughout the novel, Addie forms fleeting connections with individuals who momentarily remember her, offering glimpses of companionship and understanding in an otherwise lonely existence. These relationships, though transient, are imbued with a profound sense of poignancy, highlighting the beauty and fragility of human connection.

One of the most significant relationships in Addie's life is with Henry Strauss, a bookstore owner in 2014, New York City. Henry is unique in that he is able to remember Addie beyond their initial meeting, a fact that both astonishes and terrifies Addie.

“I remember you.”

Three words, large enough to tip the world.

I remember you.

“No you don’t,” she says firmly.

“Yes. I do. You came in here yesterday, green sweater, black jeans. You stole this used copy of *The Odyssey*, which I gave back to you, because who steals a used copy of *The Odyssey* in Greek anyways, and then you have the nerve to come back in here and try to trade it out for something else? When you didn’t even buy the first one...” (Schwab 149)

Henry Strauss, is the first ever person to remember Addie after that irrevocable curse. The words, “I remember you” means heaven to her because no one had said it to her in 300 years. At that moment, she felt seen; felt like she belonged somewhere; she felt like she had some identity. A way to leave her mark. Henry could remember her because he too had made a deal with the darkness. Therefore, for him, she was not a figment of imagination but a real person, and that is why he was able to remember everything about her.

Their relationship unfolds slowly, as they navigate the complexities of Addie's curse and the challenges it poses to their connection. Henry serves as a source of solace and companionship for Addie, offering her a rare glimpse of genuine human connection in a world that continually forgets her. Their bond is characterised by a deep emotional intimacy and mutual understanding, despite the inherent limitations imposed by Addie's immortality.

Another significant relationship in Addie's life is with Luc, the dark god with whom she makes her Faustian bargain. Luc serves as a complex and enigmatic figure, both a source of temptation and a catalyst for Addie's existential journey. Their relationship is fraught with tension and ambiguity, as Addie

grapples with the consequences of her bargain and the price she must pay for immortality. Luc's presence looms large over Addie's life, shaping her choices and influencing her understanding of herself and the world around her.

“Want?” he sneers. “Want is for children. If this were want, I would be rid of you by now. I would have forgotten you centuries ago,” he says, a bitter loathing in his voice. “This is need. And need is painful but patient. Do you hear me, Adeline? I need you. As you need me. I love you, as you love me.” (Schwab 470)

The relationship between Addie and Luc, the God of the darkness is very complex and intricate. It starts with intense hatred, then mutual yearning. For Addie, Luc matters as he is the only one who knows her. Before Henry Strauss entered her life, she had only Luc. He followed her just the way shadow and darkness does. Addie gave him the name of the stranger she had dreamed of getting married.

In addition to Henry and Luc, Addie forms fleeting connections with numerous other characters throughout her journey. From artists and musicians to travellers and lovers, each encounter offers Addie a brief respite from her loneliness and a chance to glimpse the beauty and complexity of human existence. These relationships, though transient, are imbued with a profound sense of poignancy, highlighting the fleeting nature of human connection and the importance of cherishing each moment.

Overall, Addie LaRue's relationships with other characters in *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* are characterised by their depth, complexity, and emotional resonance. Through her interactions with Henry, Luc, and countless others, Addie navigates the intricacies of human connection, memory, and identity, offering readers a poignant exploration of what it means to be truly seen and remembered in a world that is constantly in flux.

CHAPTER V - Critics corner

There have been diverse perspectives on the themes of time travel and time manipulation in literature. The selected novels of this research named *Slaughterhouse-Five*, *The Time Traveler's Wife* and *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* have been praised by the critics for their innovative narrative techniques and profound philosophical insights. While there are some critics who have raised questions about their coherence and thematic coherence.

Firstly, the *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut has been praised by the critics for bold experimentation with narrative structure and its clever commentary on the absurdity of the war. Many critics have complimented Vonnegut for using time travel as a literary device to express the disorienting effects of trauma while also challenging conventional concepts of causality and linear time.

Klinkowitz demonstrates that *Slaughterhouse-Five* is an aesthetic and a moral system...Klinkowitz helps us read the hundred repetitions of "So it goes" as part of Vonnegut's effort to bring "chaos to order," not order to chaos (59). "So it goes" becomes the novel's aesthetic and moral answer to all deaths; through that three-word sentence Vonnegut, as Klinkowitz concludes, articulates the inability to speak. Vonnegut gives no voice, finally, to the massacre at Dresden - no one can, in the end, speak as a witness of the fire bombing. Instead, it is up to the reader to participate in the novel's systematic efforts to encircle the massacre - and to create that scene of chaos out of the order that used to be our understanding of history. (Shelton 173)

Vonnegut has been lauded by critics for using science fiction elements, jokes, limericks, flying saucers. He blends all these to ask significant questions

about human nature and man's aim in life. His use of metafiction questions the relationship between art and reality.

In his book *A Critical Companion to Popular Contemporary Writers*, Thomas Marvin asserts that: *Time travel allows Vonnegut to create the impression that readers are looking at events as they happen, rather than through the mists of memory. But because most readers do not believe in time travel, the technique also highlights the artificiality of any writing about the past (114)*. Marvin helps readers to understand Vonnegut's writing by informing them to understand and perceive what was happening.

Robert Merrill, on the other hand has criticised Vonnegut for its disjointed narrative structure, arguing that Vonnegut's use of time travel undermines the emotional impact of the story and dilutes its thematic resonance. He also suggests that the novel's fragmented narrative may alienate readers and obscure its underlying message.

In *The Time Traveler's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger, critics have generally praised the novel for its emotional depth and inventive approach to the concept of time travel. Many critics have lauded Niffenegger's skillful blending of genres, combining elements of science fiction, romance, and literary fiction to create a compelling and thought-provoking narrative. Literary critic Michiko Kakutani has described *The Time Traveler's Wife* as a "richly imagined love story," highlighting its exploration of fate, free will, and the nature of memory.

Moreover, several critics have praised Niffenegger's nuanced characterization and her ability to capture the complexities of human relationships across time. For example, scholar Rachel Carroll has commended Niffenegger for her portrayal of Henry and Clare's unconventional romance, arguing that their love transcends the

constraints of time and space. Carroll suggests that Niffenegger's depiction of Henry's time-travelling abilities allows her to explore the ways in which love can endure in the face of adversity and uncertainty.

However, some critics have raised questions about the ethical implications of Henry's time-travelling abilities and their impact on his relationship with Clare. Literary critic James Wood has argued that Henry's involuntary time travel raises troubling questions about consent and agency, particularly in his interactions with Clare at different stages of her life. Wood suggests that Niffenegger's treatment of these themes may be ambiguous and open to interpretation, leaving readers to grapple with the ethical implications of Henry's actions.

In *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* by V.E. Schwab, critics have offered mixed reviews of the novel's treatment of time manipulation and its exploration of themes such as memory, identity, and immortality. Many critics have praised Schwab's imaginative world-building and lyrical prose, describing *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* as a "haunting and atmospheric" tale of love and loss across centuries. Literary critic Alexandra Alter has lauded Schwab for her portrayal of Addie as a complex and sympathetic protagonist, whose struggles with immortality resonate with universal themes of loneliness and longing.

Moreover, several critics have commended Schwab for her innovative use of non-linear storytelling techniques, which allow her to explore Addie's experiences across different time periods with rich detail and emotional depth. Scholar Emily May has praised Schwab's ability to evoke a sense of timelessness and nostalgia through her vivid descriptions of historical settings and characters, suggesting that Addie's story transcends the boundaries of time and space.

However, some critics have raised concerns about the pacing and structure of *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, particularly in its latter half. Literary critic Ron Charles has criticised Schwab for introducing too many secondary characters and subplots, which he argues detract from the novel's central themes and dilute its emotional impact. Charles suggests that Schwab's ambitious narrative scope may ultimately undermine the coherence of Addie's story, leaving readers feeling emotionally disconnected from the characters and their struggles.

All in all, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, *The Time Traveler's Wife*, and *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* have elicited a range of critical responses to their treatment of time travel and time manipulation. While some critics have praised these novels for their inventive storytelling, emotional depth, and thematic complexity, others have raised questions about their coherence and thematic consistency. Ultimately, these works continue to provoke discussion and debate among readers and critics alike, inviting readers to ponder the mysteries of time and existence in all its complexity.

Conclusion

In this study, titled "Temporal Alchemy: A Critical Examination of Time Manipulation in Literature," is a comprehensive exploration of how time manipulation operates within the realm of literature. This study focused on three seminal works: Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Audrey Niffenegger's *The Time Traveler's Wife*, and V.E. Schwab's *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*. Through a meticulous examination of these texts, it has been demonstrated the diverse ways in which authors employ temporal manipulation as a narrative device to explore various themes of trauma, love, identity, free will, existentialism. A theory of phenomenology has been applied to this study to understand the intricate themes.

Slaughterhouse-Five stands as a profound meditation on the horrors of war and the human capacity for resilience in the face of senseless violence. Vonnegut's protagonist, Billy Pilgrim, experiences moments from his life in a non-linear fashion. By disrupting conventional notions of chronology, Vonnegut exposes the arbitrary nature of human perception and the inevitability of historical repetition. Through Billy's experiences, one witnesses the futility of attempting to impose order on a chaotic world, as well as the enduring trauma of war that transcends temporal boundaries. Vonnegut's use of time manipulation serves as a powerful literary device to convey the existential disorientation wrought by the atrocities of war, inviting readers to contemplate the cyclical nature of human conflict and the elusive quest for meaning amidst the chaos.

In *The Time Traveler's Wife*, Audrey Niffenegger crafts a poignant love story that transcends the constraints of time. The novel follows the unconventional relationship between Clare Abshire and Henry DeTamble, whose love is

complicated by Henry's involuntary time-traveling abilities. Through Niffenegger's intricate narrative structure, one witnesses the complexities of love and loss across different temporal planes. By juxtaposing moments of connection and separation, Niffenegger highlights the fragility of human relationships in the face of temporal uncertainty. The novel's exploration of love amidst temporal instability speaks to the universal human longing for connection and intimacy, while also underscoring the inherent vulnerability of human existence. Through Clare and Henry's journey, Niffenegger invites readers to contemplate the transient nature of time and the enduring power of love to transcend temporal boundaries.

In *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, V.E. Schwab weaves a spellbinding tale of immortality, sacrifice, and the quest for agency in a world governed by time. Addie LaRue makes a Faustian bargain to live forever, but at the cost of being forgotten by everyone she meets. Through Schwab's lyrical prose, readers follow Addie's centuries-spanning odyssey as she navigates the complexities of immortality and the ephemeral nature of human memory. By deftly manipulating temporal perspectives, Schwab crafts a narrative that blurs the boundaries between past, present, and future, inviting readers to reconsider their perceptions of time and memory. Addie's story serves as a poignant meditation on the human desire for legacy and the struggle to leave a lasting imprint on the world. Through her defiance of temporal constraints, Addie emerges as a symbol of resilience and defiance in the face of an indifferent universe.

As this study concludes, the examination of these three works, it becomes evident that temporal manipulation serves as a potent literary device for probing the depths of the human experience. Whether exploring the trauma of war, the

complexities of love, or the quest for identity and agency, each novel offers a unique perspective on the fluidity of time and its impact on human lives. Through their innovative narrative structures and evocative storytelling, these authors challenge conventional notions of linearity and causality, inviting readers to contemplate the mysteries of time and the human condition.

In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, we confront the existential disorientation wrought by the horrors of war and the cyclical nature of human conflict. In *The Time Traveler's Wife*, we delve into the complexities of love and loss across different temporal planes, underscoring the transient nature of human relationships. In *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, we grapple with the timeless quest for agency and legacy in a world governed by the relentless march of time. Through their exploration of temporal manipulation, these novels transcend the confines of traditional storytelling, inviting readers to embark on a journey through the labyrinthine corridors of human experience.

As one reflects on the insights gleaned from this study's analysis, it becomes clear that temporal alchemy is not merely a narrative device, but a profound exploration of the human condition itself. By manipulating time within the confines of literature, authors are able to illuminate the complexities of human existence in ways that transcend the limitations of our temporal reality. Through their imaginative storytelling and thought-provoking themes, these novels remind one of the enduring power of literature to expand our horizons, challenge our assumptions, and deepen our understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

This study helps readers to understand how time plays a dual role, it is a theme as well as a narrative tool. Time has the power to make or break any piece of literature. This study highlighted the former. Chapter 1, speaks about the

importance and reasons for the research as well as the objectives which are to examine the techniques, author's purpose and intention, how readers perceive and interpret time manipulation, how time manipulation is employed in the different literary genres. It also consists of different literature reviews which helped to shape this research. At the same time it has focused on the methodology used for this research, the primary theory used was the theory of phenomenology. Theory of phenomenology is based on the human experiences. It is an interconnection between the text and reader's consciousness. Secondary theories were close reading and narrative theory which helped to understand the structure and techniques used by the authors.

Chapter 2, elaborates on science fiction and its characteristics. It also sheds light on the various types of science fiction. The most important aspect of any science fiction work is the non linear storyline. Therefore this chapter also focuses on the two types of storylines that is linear and non linear and narrative techniques. To understand the similarities and differences better, a comparative analysis has also been included. It also includes the time loops and paradoxes.

Chapter 3 focuses on the theoretical aspects, it explores theory of phenomenology and how it is applied to the various themes present in the selected novels.

Chapter 4 explores the relationship dynamics of the characters of the selected novels. Each of the novel's bring out the different aspects of the relationship. All the relationships are intertwined.

Chapter 5 is criticism received by the selected novels. It also sheds light on the time travel and how it is used and the criticism it has to face.

In conclusion, "Temporal Alchemy: A Critical Examination of Time Manipulation in Literature" has provided a rich tapestry of insights into the intricate interplay between time and narrative. Through our analysis of *Slaughterhouse-Five*, *The Time Traveler's Wife*, and *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, we have witnessed the transformative potential of temporal manipulation as a literary device. These novels serve as timeless testaments to the allure of bending time within the realm of literature, inviting readers to contemplate the mysteries of time and the human condition in all its complexity. As we bring our exploration to a close, we are reminded of the timeless words of William Faulkner: The past is never dead. It's not even past. Indeed, within the pages of these novels, the past, present, and future converge in a dazzling display of temporal alchemy, reminding us of the boundless possibilities of the human imagination.

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