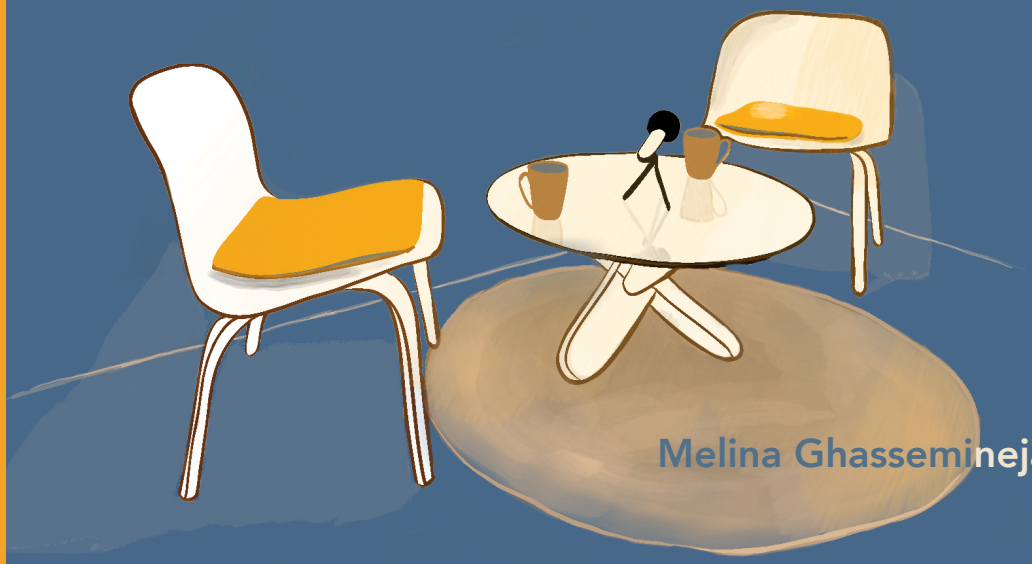
Perceived (Non-)Fictionality and Narrative Engagement

‘But Fiction Does Not Necessarily Mean Not True’



Melina Ghasseminejad

Dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor in Literary Studies at the University of Antwerp to be defended by *Melina Ghasseminejad*

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PhD thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor in Literary Studies at the University of Antwerp
to be defended by
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Baraye
students in Iran, Palestine, DR Congo, and Sudan
and countless others about whom I am ignorant
who could have written this dissertation
had they not been
displaced
incarcerated
slaughtered
or had their universities not been destroyed
from this place of privilege
I hope to turn some eyes on you

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> Art reveals something beyond the message. A story or poem may reveal truths to me as I write it. I don't put them there. I find them in the story as I work.
>
> And other readers may find other truths in it, different ones. They're free to use the work in ways the author never intended.
>
> Ursula K. Le Guin, Teasing Myself Out of Thought in *Words Are My Matter* (2016, 80)

It is not original to say it takes a village to write a dissertation. Nor is it uncommon for someone from my cohort to mention that my PhD journey included a pandemic stint. In fact, almost my entire first year was spent in lockdown. Still, the people in my life were crucial in writing this dissertation and coping with the latter. The last four years have flown by, particularly the final year, which I spent practically in self-imposed isolation. I do not necessarily feel that the experience has changed me profoundly or that I have discovered who I am – I have always had a strong sense of self, as those close to me can attest to. However, I have learned that genuine familial bonds and friendships are unconditional and that I am more resilient and perseverant than I once believed, probably due to their support. This journey has had its share of ups and, unfortunately, quite a few downs. Sometimes, I am amazed that I managed to finish on time, but once again, I have been fortunate to have a strong support network (and I might be a little stubborn). I will undoubtedly forget to mention countless people who have made this experience both wonderful and manageable. To them, I want to apologise; it is not you, it is my PhD brain.

First and foremost, I cannot thank my supervisors enough, each of whom guided me through different aspects of my PhD. I express my immense gratitude to Luc Herman, my day-to-day supervisor at the University of Antwerp. He has mentored me since 2015/2016, when he supervised my bachelor's degree in Linguistics and Literary Studies, and later, my master's degree in English and Literary Theory. If it had not been for him, I would have never taken this path, as he offered me the position immediately after I graduated. So, thank you, Luc, for believing in me and offering me this opportunity. In addition to all the research- and career-related advice you provided, I have met amazing people and had incredible experiences that have enriched my life, and I owe that to you.

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Next, I want to extend my sincere thanks to the doctoral committee, Vanessa Joosen and Mike Kestemont, for their involvement in this process, as well as to my external jury members, Rocío Riestra Camacho and Ralf Schneider, who agreed to critically engage with my dissertation. I am honoured that you were interested in my project and were willing to invest the time and effort to read my work. I am particularly grateful to Vanessa and Mike for their feedback and guidance throughout the years, both as my doctoral committee and as mentors during my time at the University of Antwerp. You have always made me feel like a valued member of the department community, and your belief in me has played an undeniable role in shaping my future career. I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Department of Literature at the University of Antwerp for forstering such an amazing, open and welcoming atmosphere.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the supportive staff at the University of Antwerp. I would have been lost without the many individuals who assisted me with everything administrative and logistical, in particular Elke Nelen. Their assistance would not have been possible without the support of FWO Flanders, who provided the funds necessary not only to conduct this research but also to develop my academic skills, for which I am deeply grateful. Additionally, I want to thank the University of Antwerp for relocating us to the Brain Embassy when our offices were unavailable. This unexpected event allowed me to welcome and interview my participants in the beautiful DoReMi room featured on the cover.

As evident from the acknowledgements above, many people played crucial roles in this journey; however, my research literally would not have been possible without my participants. I am beyond grateful to each of you for being willing to answer my questions for an hour or two (sometimes more) at the Brain Embassy. You all made that part of my project an amazing and enjoyable experience. I could not have asked for kinder and more insightful participants, and I truly cherished every single interview.

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to explain the programme to my students (who I also thank for helping me feel useful to society). Not only did you spare me from explaining it to my students, but your yearly appearance served as a fantastic refresher course for me. I am also beyond grateful to all the scholars I met during conferences who offered their advice and whose lectures were enlightening.

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instrumental role in my life.

Finally, I want to thank María-Teresa Santé-Delgado. Tess, your friendship and support means the world to me. Who could have imagined that one afternoon and 15km of walking through Madrid would be the start of such a special friendship? It took just one afternoon to build a connection that has survived three years (and counting!) despite the long distance. I am still amazed at how we both continuously choose to keep this relationship alive.

I want to express my deep gratitude to my family for their unwavering support. I know you have seen less of me, and I truly appreciate your understanding. To my parents, none of this would have been possible without you. Mama, thank you for encouraging me to follow my passion and supporting my move to Antwerp in every sense of the word. Talking me out of that mini panic attack all those years ago set me on an amazing journey. I am grateful for your practical advice and for always reminding me of what is really important in life. Papa, your love of narratives and storytelling has profoundly influenced my journey. Watching Kurosawa in my early teens surely left a lasting impact. Thank you for listening to my insecurities and making me believe in my abilities. To my little sister Daniela, I still have that little box of affirmations you made for me. Dani, je zal altijd mijn moeshi blijven en ik waardeer de momenten die we samen doorbrengen. Ruben, bedankt voor het steunen van Dani.

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I promise I am almost done! I am just incredibly fortunate to have so many people who have supported me along the way. To my friends Chase & Elli, Giel, and Romain, thank you for sticking by me. I am beyond grateful to Donna & Bram, who have become our family away from home. You are one of the main reasons I got through the lockdown unscathed. I deeply appreciate having you as family and sharing life's milestones with you. Friendships hold a special place in my heart; they require intentional effort. Friendships, especially as adults, take work – you have to continuously choose to be a part of each other's lives. I am so thankful that we keep choosing each other. Like I said at the beginning, there have been many ups and downs, and you have been there for every single one, either celebrating with me or offering

comfort. For that, I am filled with gratitude.

This next part might read as a love letter, and that is okay because it is written to Margot and Laura. I take comfort in the fact that no one will probably get this far since I am already about 2000 words in. Still, I feel I owe it to you both to try and put my feelings onto paper after all the hours you have spent listening to me talk about my PhD. You have both been there every step of the way since we became friends, albeit in different ways, and I am immensely grateful for your unwavering support with my PhD and life in general. I do not like the word blessed (it feels too theological), but I genuinly feel blessed to have you in my life.

Laura, when I reflect on what I am especially grateful for, it is not just your support – which you most definitely provided – but your belief. You have always believed in me. Whenever I doubted myself, your belief pushed me to take the next step. When I was unsure about starting a PhD, you believed in me. When I felt overwhelmed, you believed in me. This is not to downplay the belief others have shown in me, which has also been incredibly important. But Laura, there is something particularly significant about your belief that has meant a great deal, and for that, I am so grateful. You are incredibly strong, and your strength is inspiring. So when you tell me that you believe I can do something, who am I to disagree? I am also grateful to you for opening your home to me – perhaps it is no coincidence that I wrote my most journalistic section in your home – and for our late-night talks over a cuppa (I know we have never called it a cuppa, but how else will people know that you are my friend from London, whom I never shut up about?).

Margot, what stands out most when I think of you is how grateful I am for your constant reminders that having fun and enjoying life is important. You encourage me to read lighthearted books, watch fun TV shows and embrace the silliness. You also remind me that it is okay – necessary, even – to prioritise my own comfort from time to time. Whenever I make life more complicated than it needs to be, you are there to help unravel the threads and simplify things. And when simplicity is not possible, you sit with me, and we crack dark jokes, and we manage to get through it. When I think of you, I think of laughter and perseverance. Thank you for bringing both into my life. I am so glad that one guy in our master's made that one comment, making us bond over our shared annoyance. Thank you for sticking with me all these years, from writing our master's thesis at Cuperus to being part of all my significant life events.

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Melina

SUMMARY

Academics and the general public often find themselves speaking about engagement when discussing narratives. As readers, or narrative engagers in general, we talk about being transported to the storyworld, immersed in the narrative and getting lost in the book. At times, our engagement with narratives evokes a childlike wonder. We recognise ourselves in the characters, sympathise with their struggles and experience various emotions alongside them. These feelings and reactions seem commonplace enough that an entire body of scholarly work is not only dedicated to studying responses to narratives and their potential impact, but has also led to development of concepts based on those feelings, such as absorption and transportation. As these studies often focus on *fictional* narratives, they present an exciting avenue of research: does the *perception* of fictionality affect narrative engagement? In other words, if two different readers are given an identical text, but one is told that the text is fictional and the other non-fictional, will that manipulation alter their responses and affect their narrative engagement? Previous research into lifetime exposure to fiction versus non-fiction by Mar et al. (2006), for example, showed that participants who read more fictional texts were more positively associated with empathy and social abilities. What is more, according to their findings, readers of non-fictional texts "may accrue a deficit in social skills as a result of removing themselves from the actual social world" (Mar et al., 2006, p. 705). These results imply an interesting phenomenon – namely, that fiction and non-fiction affect readers differently.

To explore this question of perceived fictionality, I designed an experiment in which actual readers were interviewed to establish whether their perception of a narrative as fictional or non-fictional affected its reception. To this purpose, Storyworld Possible Selves Theory was used as a framework for the empirical study of narrative engagement, with James Frey's (2003a) book *A Million Little Pieces* as the text material. Storyworld possible selves (SPSs) are defined as "imagings of the self in storyworlds, formally conceived as blends resulting from matching features" across a reader's self-concept and perspectivizer (Martínez, 2014, p. 119). The perspectivizer, or the readers' mental "construct for the narrator or character that perspectivizes a narrative" (Martínez & Herman, 2020, p. 147), is built by readers and narrative experiencers at large through the ascription of properties to those perspectivizing narrative entities. The self-concept, on the other hand, is a notion rooted in social psychology, comprising a person's self-schemas, such as a 'parent' self-schema, and their possible selves. Possible selves represent ideas of "the ideal selves that we would very much like to become" or "the selves we are afraid of becoming", respectively identified as desired and undesired possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954). According to SPSs Theory, when a narrative activates one or more of the experiencer's self-schemas or possible selves, and this overlaps in some respects with a perspectivizer construct, a match can be made, and SPSs can emerge. The SPSs framework distinguishes between *primary SPSs*, connected to culturally predictable responses to narratives likely to emerge in a great number of narrative experiencers, and *SPS slipnets*, connected to idiosyncratic responses that emerge from unpredictable personal experiences (Martínez, 2018). *Secondary*

SPSs fall between the previous two categories and account for SPSs "with predictable emergence in communities of readers with shared practices and cultural models" (Ghasseminejad and Martínez, 2024).

The text material, *A Million Little Pieces*, is a narrative about a man who struggles with severe substance use and is taken to a rehabilitation centre. By the end of the book, he manages to persevere and resist the urge to use both drugs and alcohol. While not everyone from the initial readership believed the text to be authentic, most early readers felt that *A Million Little Pieces* accurately relayed the reality of substance use. This book was especially suited to the study's aim because both Frey and his publisher initially marketed it as a memoir before an exposé revealed that large parts of the book were fabricated, leading to its reclassification as a novel. In short, as the text has both been classified as fiction and non-fiction, it enables the examination of the *perception* of fictionality without needing to manipulate the text to pose as either fiction or non-fiction.

The experiment consisted of interviews with twenty-four participants divided into three equal groups. Each group was ascribed to either a test condition (Fiction or Non-Fiction) or a control condition (Control). Prior to reading excerpts from the book, participants in the Fiction group were told that the text they were given was fiction, the Non-Fiction group was told the text was non-fiction, and the Control group was given no such information. In short, this dissertation focused on people's responses and perceptions when reading a narrative. More specifically, the study aimed to explore how readers' perception of fictionality relates to the nature, construction, and relevance of their projected storyworld possible selves. An additional aim of this research was to contribute to the notion of SPSs Theory, as no empirical research using SPSs Theory as a framework had been conducted at the start of this project.

The results indicate that the readers in the study who read the provided narrative as fiction not only displayed the emergence of a larger number of SPSs of all types (i.e., self-schema, past, undesired and desired), but also were more likely to generate undesired SPSs. This is a surprising finding according to possible selves theory, as people tend to adjust their behaviour to get closer to their desired selves rather than to their undesired or feared selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). However, research into fictional literature and empathy can support the triggering of (more) undesired SPS (e.g., Mar et al., 2006; Bal & Veltkamp, 2013; Koopman, 2015), as fiction has been argued to improve individuals' ability to understand other's (negative) situations (Johnson, 2012). Additionally, Martínez's SPSs theory (2014, 2018) may itself provide another argument for the strong presence of undesired SPSs in this study; according to her, narratives can allow audiences to experience undesired situations safely, teaching narrative engagers what to do or not to do, and thus function as safe simulation environments (Mar et al., 2006) for the trying out of situations and behaviours which would otherwise seem scary or unsafe.

Next, the results show a strong connection between individuals' self-concepts and their narrative engagement. Three of the four participants with the most triggered SPSs all have past experiences with varying degrees of substance use. Incidentally, all of them were randomly

assigned to the Fiction condition, which can possibly suggest that their self-concept played a more prominent role in their narrative engagement than their fictionality condition. However, an equal distribution in the test conditions can be observed. Four participants in the Fiction condition, four participants in the Non-fiction condition, and three participants in the Control condition know or knew a real-life person who shares characteristics with the perspectivizer. This suggests that while the self-concept might play a significant role, the influence of the fictionality condition should not be disregarded.

In short, the results suggest that fictionality affects the construction of SPSs to some extent. Namely, every category of SPS had a higher frequency occurrence in the Fiction condition. However, as this result was only statistically significant for the undesired storyworld possible selves, the results should be interpreted cautiously. Nevertheless, the results provide a strong argument for the enlightening potential of SPSs Theory for research into how fictionality can influence narrative engagement. Additionally, what these findings confirm is that while perceptions of (non-)fictionality may act as a contributing factor, the reader's self-concept also plays an essential role in creating SPSs and, therefore, in narrative engagement.

SAMENVATTING

Academici en het algemene publiek spreken vaak over 'engagement', het aangaan van een 'interactie' of 'betrokkenheid', wanneer ze het hebben over narratieven. Als lezers, of 'narrative engagers' in het algemeen, praten we over het getransporteerd worden naar een verhaalwereld, het verdiepen in een narratief of over het verliezen van onszelf in een boek. Soms roept onze betrokkenheid bij narratieven een kinderlijke verwondering op. We herkennen onszelf in de personages, sympathiseren met hun worstelingen of ervaren verschillende emoties met hen. Deze gevoelens en reacties zijn zo alomtegenwoordig dat een hele reeks wetenschappelijke studies gewijd is aan het bestuderen van reacties op narratieven en de mogelijke impact ervan. Die studies hebben geleid tot de ontwikkeling van concepten gebaseerd op die gevoelens, zoals 'absorption' en 'transportation'. Aangezien deze studies dikwijls gericht zijn op fictieve narratieven, bieden ze een interessante onderzoeksmogelijkheid: beïnvloedt de perceptie van fictionaliteit de betrokkenheid bij narratieven? Met andere woorden: als twee verschillende lezers een identieke tekst krijgen, maar aan de ene wordt verteld dat de tekst fictief is en de andere dat deze non-fictief is, zal die manipulatie hun reacties veranderen en hun betrokkenheid bij het narratief beïnvloeden? Eerder onderzoek naar levenslange blootstelling aan fictie versus non-fictie door Mar et al. (2006) liet bijvoorbeeld zien dat deelnemers die meer fictieve teksten lazen, meer geassocieerd werden met empathie en sociale vaardigheden. Volgens hun bevindingen kunnen lezers van non-fictieve teksten daarentegen een tekort aan sociale vaardigheden oplopen. Dit als gevolg van het zich terugtrekken uit de echte sociale wereld (Mar et al., 2006). Deze resultaten wijzen op een interessant fenomeen, namelijk dat fictie en non-fictie lezers op verschillende manieren beïnvloeden.

Om deze vraag over de waargenomen fictionaliteit te onderzoeken, ontwierp ik een experiment waarin echte lezers werden geïnterviewd. Dit om vast te stellen of hun perceptie van een narratief als fictief of non-fictief de ontvangst ervan beïnvloedde. Als kader voor de empirische studie van betrokkenheid bij narratieven gebruikte ik de zogenaamde Storyworld Possible Selves Theory. Het boek *A Million Little Pieces* – vertaald als *In Duizend Stukjes* – van James Frey (2003a) diende hierbij als tekstmateriaal. Storyworld possible selves (SPSs) worden gedefinieerd als 'voorstellingen van het zelf in verhaalwerelden', formeel opgevat als blends die voortkomen uit overeenkomende kenmerken tussen het zelfconcept van een lezer en de perspectivizer (Martínez, 2014). De perspectivizer, dit is de mentale constructie van de verteller of het personage wiens perspectief we lezen (Martínez & Herman, 2020, p. 147), wordt opgebouwd door lezers en narrative engagers in het algemeen. Ze doen dit door het toeschrijven van eigenschappen aan die narratieve entiteiten. Het zelfconcept daarentegen is een begrip geworteld in de sociale psychologie. Het omvat de zelfschema's van een persoon, zoals een 'ouder' zelfschema, en de mogelijke zelven. 'Mogelijke zelven' vertegenwoordigen de ideeën van de 'ideale zelven' die we heel graag zouden willen worden of van de zelven waar we net bang voor zijn te worden, respectievelijk geïdentificeerd als gewenste of ongewenste mogelijke zelven (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Wanneer een narratief een of meer van de zelfschema's of mogelijke

zelven van de narrative engager activeert – en dit in zekere mate overlapt met een perspectivizer-constructie – kunnen er matches en dus SPSs ontstaan. Het SPSs-kader maakt daarbij een onderscheid tussen *primaire SPSs*, die verband houden met cultureel voorspelbare reacties op narratieven die waarschijnlijk bij een groot aantal narrative engagers ontstaan, en *SPS-slipnets*, die verband houden met onvoorspelbare persoonlijke ervaringen (Martínez, 2018). *Secundaire SPSs* zitten tussen de eerste twee categorieën in en staan voor SPSs met voorspelbare reacties in gemeenschappen van lezers met gedeelde praktijken en culturele modellen (Ghasseminejad en Martínez, 2024).

Het tekstmateriaal *In Duizend Stukjes* is een narratief over een man die worstelt met ernstig middelengebruik en wordt opgenomen in een rehabilitatiecentrum. Aan het einde van het boek slaagt hij erin vol te houden en de drang naar zowel drugs als alcohol te weerstaan. Hoewel niet iedereen van het oorspronkelijke lezerspubliek de tekst als authentiek beschouwde, vonden de eerste lezers dat *In Duizend Stukjes* de realiteit van middelengebruik nauwkeurig weergaf. Wat het boek bijzonder geschikt maakte voor het doel van de studie, is dat zowel Frey als zijn uitgever het aanvankelijk als een memoires op de markt brachten. Een onthullende artikel legde bloot dat grote delen van het boek verzonnen waren, wat leidde tot de herclassificatie ervan als een roman. Aangezien de tekst zowel als fictie en als non-fictie is geclassificeerd, maakt het de studie van de perceptie van fictionaliteit mogelijk, zonder de tekst te moeten manipuleren om fictie of non-fictie voor te stellen.

Het experiment bestond uit interviews met vierentwintig deelnemers die in drie gelijke groepen werden verdeeld. Elke groep werd toegewezen aan een test- (Fictie of Non-Fictie) of controleconditie (Controle). Voorafgaand aan het lezen van fragmenten uit het boek, werden de deelnemers uit de Fictiegroep verteld dat de tekst die ze kregen fictie was, de Non-Fictiegroep werd verteld dat de tekst non-fictie was. De Controlegroep kreeg geen bijkomende informatie. Samenvattend richtte deze dissertatie zich op de reacties en percepties van mensen bij het lezen van dit narratief. Meer specifiek was het doel van de studie om te onderzoeken hoe de perceptie van fictionaliteit van lezers samenhangt met de aard, constructie en relevantie van hun geprojecteerde storyworld possible selves. Een bijkomend doel van dit onderzoek was om bij te dragen aan het concept van SPSs Theory, aangezien er bij aanvang van dit project geen empirisch onderzoek was verricht met SPSs Theory als kader.

De resultaten geven aan dat de lezers die het narratief als fictie lazen, niet alleen een groter aantal SPSs van alle soorten (dit zijn zelfschema, vroegere, ongewenste en gewenste SPSs) vertoonden, maar ook eerder geneigd waren om ongewenste SPSs te genereren. Dit is een verrassende bevinding volgens de theorie van mogelijke zelven, aangezien mensen doorgaans hun gedrag aanpassen om dichter bij hun gewenste zelven te komen in plaats van bij hun ongewenste of gevreesde zelven (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Onderzoek naar fictieve literatuur en empathie bevestigt echter de activering van (meer) ongewenste SPS (bijv. Mar et al., 2006; Bal & Veltkamp, 2013; Koopman, 2015), aangezien fictie zou kunnen bijdragen aan het vermogen van individuen om de (negatieve) situaties van anderen te begrijpen (Johnson, 2012).

Martínez's SPSs Theory (2014, 2018) levert nog een ander argument voor de sterke aanwezigheid van ongewenste SPSs in deze studie. Volgens haar kunnen narratieven het publiek in staat stellen om ongewenste situaties veilig te ervaren, wat narrative engagers leert wat ze wel of niet moeten doen. De narratieven functioneren met andere woorden als 'veilige simuleringsomgevingen' (Mar et al., 2006) voor het uitproberen van situaties en gedragingen die anders eng of onveilig zouden voelen.

Bovendien tonen de resultaten een sterke verbinding tussen het zelfconcept van individuen en hun betrokkenheid bij narratieven. Drie van de vier deelnemers met de meeste geactiveerde SPSs hadden een verleden met verschillende gradaties van middelengebruik. Toevallig werden ze allemaal willekeurig toegewezen aan de Fictieconditie, wat mogelijk kan suggereren dat hun zelfconcept een prominentere rol speelde in hun betrokkenheid bij het narratief dan hun fictionaliteitsconditie. Er kan echter een gelijke verdeling in de testcondities worden waargenomen. Vier deelnemers in de Fictieconditie, vier deelnemers in de Non-Fictieconditie en drie deelnemers in de Controleconditie kennen of kenden een persoon in het echte leven die kenmerken deelt met de perspectivizer. Dit suggereert dat hoewel het zelfconcept een significante rol kan spelen, de invloed van de fictionaliteitsconditie niet mag worden genegeerd.

Kortom, de resultaten suggereren dat fictionaliteit de constructie van SPSs tot op zekere hoogte beïnvloedt. Elke categorie van SPS had namelijk een hogere frequentie van voorkomen in de Fictieconditie. Aangezien dit resultaat alleen statistisch significant was voor de ongewenste storyworld possible selves, moeten de resultaten voorzichtig worden geïnterpreteerd. Desalniettemin bieden ze een sterk argument voor het verlichtende potentieel van SPSs Theory voor onderzoek naar hoe fictionaliteit betrokkenheid bij narratieven kan beïnvloeden. Bovendien bevestigen deze bevindingen dat – hoewel percepties van (non-)fictionaliteit als een bijdragende factor kunnen optreden – het zelfconcept van de lezer ook een essentiële rol speelt in het creëren van SPSs en dus in de betrokkenheid bij narratieven.

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هر کسی از ظن خود شد یار من

از درون من نجست اسرار من

مثنوی معنوی – مولوی

literature is definitely not written for literary scholars,

but for readers.

Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf in *Handbook of Autobiography/Autofiction* (2019, 1)

1. INTRODUCTION[1]

Academics and the general public often find themselves speaking about engagement when discussing narratives. As readers, or narrative engagers in general, we talk about being transported to the storyworld, immersed in the narrative and getting lost in the book. At times, our engagement with narratives evokes a childlike wonder. We recognise ourselves in the characters, sympathise with their struggles and experience various emotions alongside them. These feelings and reactions seem commonplace enough that an entire body of scholarly work is not only dedicated to studying responses to narratives and their potential impact, but has also led to the development of concepts based on those feelings. Transportation, for instance, is a prominent tool used in empirical studies on narrative engagement (see, for example, M. C. Green & Brock, 2000; Appel & Richter, 2010).

Schmidt advocated an empirically oriented science of literature in the 1970s, aiming to bridge the gap between the humanities and the sciences whilst not depending on sociological or psychological procedures. He argued that the empirical science of literature paradigm attempts to "construct a science of literature as a homogeneously founded and oriented net of empirical theory-elements" (Schmidt, 1983, p. 19).[2] As Bortolussi and Dixon (2003) mention, Schmidt's pioneering work led to "a variety of empirical investigations [which] have contributed to our understanding of literature and literary narrative" (p. 23). Within narratology, for instance, empirical narratology came into being as an approach to examining the "psychological mechanisms of text processing" using positivistic methods (L. Herman & Vervaeck, 2019, p. 114). This shift was found necessary by empirical scientists – whether with a literary or psychology background – as:

> How readers process narrative is essentially an empirical question that can only be answered by systematic observation of actual readers reading actual texts; it cannot be answered solely on the basis of intuition, anecdotal evidence, or even sophisticated models of human experience. (Bortolussi & Dixon, 2003, p. 13)

1 Parts of this section have been published as a peer-reviewed article in *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion, 7*(3/4), 2023, as, "Hyper-Diversity in Sampling Strategy for Reader Response Studies in an Urban Context", co-authored with Anneke M. Sools, Luc Herman and María-Ángeles Martínez. The author roles for the article are as follows: (1) Melina Ghasseminejad: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Reviewing & Editing; (2) Anneke M. Sools: Writing – Reviewing; (3) Luc Herman: Writing – Reviewing, Supervision; and (4) María-Ángeles Martínez: Writing – Reviewing. Additionally, parts of this section will appear as a peer-reviewed chapter, "The Power of Perception: The Influence of Fictionality on the Creation of Storyworld Possible Selves", in *Storyworld Possible Selves and Narrative Intersubjectivity*, a collection edited by María-Ángeles Martínez. Finally, parts of this section have been published as a peer-reviewed article in *Frontiers of Narrative Studies, 10*(1), 2024, as "Secondary storyworld possible selves: Narrative response and cultural (un) predictability", co-authored with María-Ángeles Martínez. The author roles for the article are as follows: (1) Melina Ghasseminejad: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Writing – Original Draft, Writing –Reviewing & Editing; and (2) María-Ángeles Martínez: Methodology, Writing – Reviewing & Editing, Supervision.

2 While Schmidt argued that there was no space for value judgments and interpretation in empirical studies of literature, Groeben (1981) was a proponent of the admission of interpretation and advocated for a "mixed system of descriptive and prescriptive sentences" when constructing a theory of literary valuation (p. 381).

Hence, early reader constructs, such as Iser's (1974) implied reader, which is "a textual structure anticipating the presence of a recipient without necessarily defining him" (Iser, 1978, p. 34), or Fish's (1970) informed reader, which is a reader who is capable of handling literary conventions, do not fulfil the above requirement. While, indeed, these shortcuts cannot be seen as dealing with actual readers – in other words, the "flesh-and-blood person reading the text" who is not trained in analysing narratives (Prince, 2013, 'Precursors' section) – implied and informed readers do solve the challenge that reader responses can be highly idiosyncratic, making large scale empirical research complicated.

Nevertheless, scholars are not deterred and use quantitative research methods to examine culturally predictable responses. For instance, frameworks such as absorption[3] (e.g., Kuijpers et al., 2014; Bálint et al., 2017; Kuiken & Douglas, 2017; Lei et al., 2023) and the earlier mentioned transportation[4] (e.g., M. C. Green & Brock, 2000; M. C. Green, 2004; Appel & Richter, 2010; Johnson, 2012; Igartua & Cachón-Ramón, 2023) are used as narrative engagement frameworks and generally employ quantitative research methods in the form of self-reporting questionnaires. This certainly has benefits, as quantitative research methods require large samples which can then be generalised. However, as these studies often measure degrees of engagement, this leads to a lack of in-depth exploration of reader responses and thus tends to omit idiosyncratic responses to narratives (Patton, 2015). In contrast, a methodological framework such as Storyworld Possible Selves Theory allows for the analysis of both culturally predictable and completely idiosyncratic narrative responses, using both qualitative (Martínez & Herman, 2020; Ghasseminejad, 2023) and quantitative (Loi et al., 2023) research methods.

Numerous studies have been conducted on the readerly effects of literature, often focusing on the cognitive and emotional involvement of readers reading fictional narratives (see, for instance, Argo et al., 2008; Mar et al., 2009; Kidd & Castano, 2013; Koopman, 2015; Igartua & Cachón-Ramón, 2023). As these studies often focus on *fictional* narratives, they bring forth an exciting avenue of research: does the *perception* of fictionality affect narrative engagement? In other words, if two different readers are given an identical text, but one is told that the text is fictional and the other non-fictional, will that manipulation alter their responses and affect their narrative engagement? Previous research into lifetime exposure to fiction versus non-fiction by Mar et al. (2006), for example, showed that participants who read more fictional texts were more positively associated with empathy and social abilities. What is more, according to their findings, readers of non-fictional texts "may accrue a deficit in social skills as a result of removing themselves from the actual social world" (Mar et al., 2006, p. 705). These results imply an interesting phenomenon – namely, that fiction and non-fiction affect

3 Kuijpers et al. (2021) define narrative absorption as an "umbrella term for a specific mental state that, in general, can be described as altered embodied, cognitive, and emotional processes of being invested into the content of a fictional story" (p. 279).

4 Transportation is defined as a "distinct mental process, an integrative melding of attention, imagery, and feelings" and as a "convergent process, where all mental systems and capacities become focus on events occurred in the narrative" (M. C. Green & Brock, 2000, p. 701).

readers differently. There also seems to be some physiological support for these differences; for instance, Altmann et al. (2014) found that fictional and non-fictional texts are processed differently on a cognitive level.

To explore this question of perceived fictionality, I designed an experiment in which actual readers were interviewed to establish whether their perception of a narrative as fictional or non-fictional affected its reception. To this purpose, Storyworld Possible Selves Theory – SPSs Theory henceforth – was used as a framework for the empirical study of narrative engagement. With the emergence of empirical reader-response research, it has become increasingly clear that actual readers – or other narrative audiences – often exhibit unique, idiosyncratic responses based on their own experiences and environments. The challenge in researching these actual readers, then, lies in the vast array of potential responses. Therefore, frameworks such as SPSs Theory have been developed to capture both idiosyncratic as well as culturally predictable responses. The concept of SPSs (Martínez, 2014, 2018) was introduced as a theoretical construct aimed to advance current understandings of narrative engagement and emotional responses, particularly concerning the "dynamics whereby individual narrative experiencers project themselves into storyworlds", a condition "necessary for literary appreciation and artistically motivated self-transformation" (Martínez, 2014, p. 110).

For the experiment, James Frey's (2003a) book *A Million Little Pieces* was used as the text material. *A Million Little Pieces* is a narrative about a man who struggles with severe substance use and is taken to a rehabilitation centre. By the end of the book, he manages to persevere and resist the urge to use both drugs and alcohol. While not everyone from the initial readership believed the text to be authentic, most early readers felt that *A Million Little Pieces* accurately relayed the reality of substance use. This led to Frey's book coming to Oprah Winfrey's attention, after which she chose it for her book club, subsequently raising its popularity. However, this book is especially suited to the present aim because both Frey and his publisher initially marketed it as a memoir before it was revealed in an exposé that large parts of the book were fabricated, leading to its reclassification as a novel.

In short, as the text has both been classified as fiction and non-fiction, it enables the examination of the *perception* of fictionality without needing to manipulate the text to pose as either fiction or non-fiction. My experiment consisted of interviews with twenty-four participants divided into three equal groups. Each group was ascribed to either a test condition (Fiction or Non-Fiction) or a control condition (Control). Prior to reading excerpts from the book, participants in the Fiction group were told that the text they were given was fiction, the Non-Fiction group was told the text was non-fiction, and the control group was given no such information. Therefore, the only manipulation in the experiment was found in the group assignment rather than the text itself. Needless to say, actual readers are *actual readers*. As will become clear, and as the title already indicates, they did not hesitate to complicate the issue by arguing that "fiction does not necessarily mean not true" (participant NF2).

To summarise, in this dissertation, I will focus on people's responses and perceptions when

reading a narrative. To measure this, I employ SPSs Theory as the framework for an empirical study and use James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* as the text material. More specifically, the study aims to explore how readers' perception of fictionality relates to the nature, construction, and relevance of their projected storyworld possible selves. The research question thus becomes: How do readers' perception of James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* as fictional or non-fictional affect its reception and thus relate to the nature, construction and relevance of the projected storyworld possible selves? An additional aim of this research was to contribute to the notion of SPSs Theory, as no empirical research using SPSs Theory as a framework had been conducted at the start of this project.

This introductory chapter will present the theoretical basis that was used to design the experiment and analyse the results. First, in section 1.1, 'Storyworld Possible Selves Theory', SPSs Theory will be explored. In short, SPSs Theory is a tool designed to examine narrative engagement and allows for qualitative research. This framework is especially useful as it allows the exploration of both culturally expected responses to narratives as well as individual, or idiosyncratic, responses. In section 1.2 'Fictionality', I will delve into fictionality studies, which has increasingly gained more interest within literary scholarship. First, traditional approaches to fictionality studies will be briefly explored. Afterwards, I will explore fictionality as rhetoric before ending the section with a discussion on perceived fictionality. I will conclude this chapter by presenting the hypotheses for this study in section 1.3, 'Hypotheses'.

Chapter 2 will present various aspects of the method chosen for the experiment. In section 2.1, 'Participants', I will first present the participant selection strategy employed for the experiment. As the participants were approached in Antwerp, Belgium, a selection strategy was designed to both include actual readers and take the hyper-diverse nature of Antwerp into account (Ghasseminejad et al., 2023). After describing the selection strategy, the deployment of said strategy and the actual participants of the study will be presented. Section 2.2, 'Text Material', will first delve into *A Million Little Pieces*' book's intriguing evolution in its publication and public perception, and then examine the initial audience's reception. After this exploration, I will elaborate on how the excerpts were chosen for the study. This includes an analysis of linguistic anchors that can encourage narrative engagement.

Next, in section 2.3, 'Secondary Storyworld Possible Selves', I describe a theoretical addition to the SPSs framework that came into being after a pilot study I conducted. In short, secondary SPSs are SPSs that are not idiosyncratic but are not culturally predictable either. Instead, they have a "predictable emergence in communities of readers with shared practices and cultural models" (Ghasseminejad & Martínez, 2024). This exploration is necessary to the dissertation as it provides a crucial additional data analysis. Finally, Chapter 2 will conclude with section 2.4, 'Procedure and Data Analysis', describing the steps taken during the experiment and the chosen data analyses.

Chapter 3 will present both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Section 3.1 'Quantitative Analyses' will first provide a global overview of the quantitative data. Next, the section

will delve deeper into the results per test group. In section 3.2, 'Qualitative Analyses', six participants have been chosen as case studies and will thus be explored in depth. The selection of these participants will be expounded on in the chapter. Finally, Chapter 4., 'Discussion', will first provide a research summary. In essence, three fundamental studies – the participant selection strategy, the theoretical addition of secondary storyworld possible selves and the experiment – emerged as substantial assets to exploring the overarching research goals, which will be explored in section 4.1, 'Research Summary'. Next, section 4.2, 'Limitations', will examine the study's limitations, after which I will conclude the experiment and, thus, this dissertation in section 4.3, 'Conclusion'.

1.1 Storyworld Possible Selves Theory[5]

Recent scholarly work has provided numerous insights into why and how literature – and art in general – affects humans. Extensive research has been done by personality psychologists (e.g., Mar et al., 2009; Djikic et al., 2013; Koopman, 2015), literary scholars (e.g., Kuiken & Douglas, 2017; Ghasseminejad, 2019; Martínez & Herman, 2020; Loi et al., 2023), from educational perspectives (e.g., Sklar, 2008; Johnson, 2012) and neuropsychological angles (e.g., Altmann et al., 2014; Wallmark et al., 2018), all suggesting that fiction affects human beings. Many theories and models have been designed to measure the possible effects, including Storyworld Possible Selves Theory. This recent framework can be applied to measure narrative engagement in empirical studies and will be used in the experiment on the effects of *A Million Little Pieces* on actual readers.

1.1.1 The Foundations

In her 2014 essay on narrative engagement, Martínez introduces the concept of Storyworld Possible Selves (SPSs) as a theoretical construct that offers a new approach to examining narrative engagement and emotional responses, particularly concerning the "dynamics whereby individual narrative experiencers project themselves into storyworlds", a condition "necessary for literary appreciation and artistically motivated self-transformation" (p. 110). Storyworld possible selves are "imagings of the self in storyworlds, formally conceived as blends resulting from matching features across a particular reader's self-concept and a focalizer's character construct" (Martínez, 2018, p. 11). The framework combines several theories to establish this definition. Namely, Martínez borrows the cognitive narratological notion of storyworld (Ryan, 1991; D. Herman, 2002, 2005, 2009), the philosophical idea of conceptual blending (Fauconnier, 1985; Fauconnier & Turner, 2002; Turner, 2015), the psychological notion of the self-concept (Markus, 1977; Markus & Nurius, 1986) and the narratological concept of character construction (Emmott, 1992; Margolin, 2005). I will briefly elaborate on the role of each of these theories for SPSs Theory.

1.1.1.1 Storyworld

The concept of storyworld was introduced by David Herman as a way of grasping narrative understanding. David Herman (2002) proposes narrative understanding as a "process of building and updating mental models of the worlds that are told about in stories" (p. 1). He borrows the

5 Parts of this section have been published as a peer-reviewed article in *Frontiers of Narrative Studies, 10*(1), 2024, as "Secondary storyworld possible selves: Narrative response and cultural (un)predictability", co-authored with María-Ángeles Martínez. The author roles for the article are as follows: (a) Melina Ghasseminejad: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Reviewing & Editing; and (b) María-Ángeles Martínez: Methodology, Writing – Reviewing & Editing, Supervision. Additionally, parts of this section will appear as a peer-reviewed chapter, "The Power of Perception: The Influence of Fictionality on the Creation of Storyworld Possible Selves", in *Storyworld Possible Selves and Narrative Intersubjectivity*, a collection edited by María-Ángeles Martínez.

notion of a mental model[6] (Johnson-Laird, 1983) or discourse model[7] (Webber, 1978) from research on linguistic pragmatics and natural language processing and uses these models to describe storyworlds as "global mental representations enabling interpreters to draw inferences about items and occurrences either explicitly or implicitly included in a narrative" (D. Herman, 2002, p. 10). Or, more simply, David Herman (2002) defines storyworlds as "mental models of who did what to and with whom, when, where, why, and in what fashion in the world to which recipients relocate – or make a deictic shift – as they work to comprehend a narrative" (p. 9).

Terms such as mental models and discourse models borrow concepts from meaning-making theory. According to blending theory, mental models consist of mental spaces, which are cognitive constructions that are used to refer to real or imaginary worlds but cannot be referred to in and of themselves (Fauconnier, 1985). Fauconnier and Turner (2002) define them as "small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action" (p. 40). In addition to meaning-making theory, David Herman also turns to possible worlds theory for his definition of storyworld. In essence, possible worlds theory posits that reality consists not only of the actual world but also of possible worlds created by the "mental acts of other individuals" (Ryan, 1991, p. 20). As individuals have their unique views of the world, they have their own representation of the actual world (Ryan, 2001). As Ryan (2013) summarises, "[t]he foundation of PW theory is the idea that reality – conceived as the sum of the imaginable rather than as the sum of what exists physically – is a universe composed of a plurality of distinct worlds", see Figure 1 ("Explication" section, para. 1). These possible worlds are at first non-actual possible worlds until there is a link to the actual world, described as the principle of minimal departure (Ryan, 2001). Once this link is established, the recipient, as mentioned above, can relocate or make a deictic shift to understand the narrative. As David Herman (2002) states, "[f]undamentally, then, narrative comprehension is a process of (re)constructing storyworlds on the basis of textual cues and the inferences that they make possible" (p. 6) and "[i]n other words, story recipients, whether readers, viewers, or listeners, work to interpret narratives by reconstructing the mental representation that have in turn

6 According to Johnson-Laird (1983), mental models are necessary for human beings to understand the world. These mental models are working models that they construct within their minds. Moreover, "since these models are incomplete, they are simpler than the entities they represent" (Johnson-Laird, 1983, p. 10). Consequently, Johnson-Laird (1983) argues, "models contain elements that are merely imitations of reality – there is no working model of how their counterparts in the world operate, but only procedures that mimic their behaviour" (p.10). In other words, the working models are representations of the 'actual' phenomenons used to understand them. This is especially useful when confronted with abstract concepts. Moreover, it is important to note that mental models are incomplete representations of reality as "[p]eople's ability to represent the world is always limited and unique to each individual" (N. A. Jones et al., 2011, p. 1).

7 Webber (1978) defines a discourse model as a "structured collection of entities, organised by the roles they fill with respect to one another, the relations they participate in, etc." (p. 42). That is, the model represents the entities that have been referred to in the discourse. Jurafsky and Martin (2009) elaborate: "[T]here are two components required by a system to successfully interpret (or produce) referring expressions: a method for constructing a discourse model that evolves with the dynamically-changing discourse it represents, and a method for mapping between the signals that various referring expressions encode and the hearer's set of beliefs, the latter of which includes this discourse model" (p. 730).

guided their production" (p. 1). Taking Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* as an example, the principle of minimal departure can apply to the view that the reader has about rehabilitation centres. This could be an actual experience someone has had at a rehabilitation centre, or it could consist of earlier experiences with other memoirs or other types of media on substance use.

1.1.1.2 Blending Theory

Blending, as used by Martínez in her SPSs Theory, is borrowed from meaning-making theory. Fauconnier and Turner (2002) use blending as a means to approach the binding problem, or "the problem of how we can perceptually apprehend one integrated thing" (p. 11). They argue that human beings take the construction of meaning for granted and tend to "take the meaning as emanating from its formal representation, the picture, when in fact it is being actively constructed by staggeringly complex mental operations in the brain of the viewer" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 5). To explain that 'complex mental operation', or "[i]maginative operations of meaning construction that work at lightning speed, below the horizon of consciousness, and leave few formal traces of their complex dynamics", they employ the concept of mental spaces, as explained above, and that of blending theory (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 15). According to them, blending is an unconscious activity crucial to every aspect of human life. Fauconnier and Turner (2002) say,

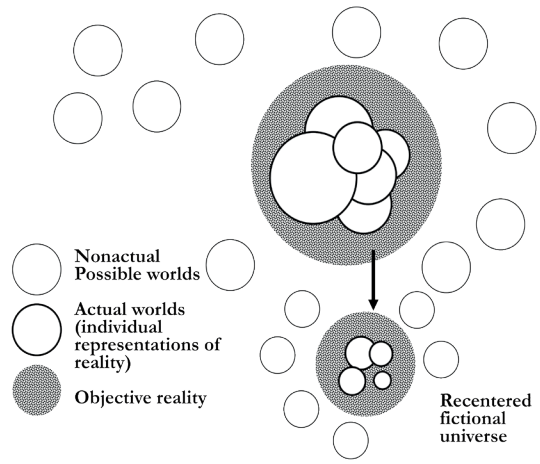

Figure 1. A recenterable possible-worlds model. (Based on Ryan, 2001, p. 102)

> There is no other way for us to apprehend the world. Blending is not something we do in addition to living in the world; it is our means of living in the world. Living in the human world is 'living in the blend' or, rather, living in many coordinated blends. (p. 390, emphasis in original)

In other words, according to Fauconnier and Turner, blending is essential to making meaning of everything humans encounter in their lives.

As mentioned earlier, blending theory uses mental spaces, which are "small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 40). Even though discussing mental spaces and blending in itself is theoretical and abstract, it allows for a means to discuss the unconscious process used when meaning-making. The knowledge present in those 'conceptual packets' refers to how mental spaces are connected to frames. Framing theory argues that when people are confronted with new situations, they will utilise existing structures from their memories to aid them in dealing with said new situation (L. Herman & Vervaeck, 2019).

Goffman (1986) describes frames as tools that allow "its user to locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms" and provide an "understanding, an approach, a perspective" and help to organise experiences and guide actions (p. 21). Fauconnier and Turner (2002) refer to frames as long-term schematic knowledge, "such as the frame of walking along a path," and as long-term specific knowledge, "such as a memory of the time you climbed Mount Rainier in 2001" (p. 40).

These mental spaces, connected to the long-term schematic and specific knowledge, can then be blended to understand new concepts. Figure 2 shows the visualisation of such a blending process. The circles represent separate mental spaces; at the top, there is the generic space; in the middle, there are two input spaces; and at the bottom, there is the blended space. The simplest way of explaining the blending process is by using an example. I will borrow Turner's (2015) example of the stockbroker brother-in-law and slightly simplify it. Let us take the following sentence as an example: 'My sister just started working at a pathology laboratory and is already allowed to do more complicated tasks. This means she must work with human tissue every weekday. If I were my sister, I would be miserable'.

Turner (2015) argues that that last sentence asks us to blend. To understand the example, we need a mental space of my sister and one of me, after which we need to blend those spaces. Additionally, we need the generic space as well. During the blending process, the generic mental space "maps onto each of the inputs and contains what the inputs have in common" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 41). In this example, the commonalities, or features, are that my sister and I are human beings and have jobs. These commonalities are then matched, which is visualised by the lines between the mental spaces. After these matches are found, they are projected into the blending space, or a new emergent space. This mental space did not exist before the blending process. Moreover, as can be seen in Figure 2, the blending space contains some inputs that were not a match but instead are completely new features that did not exist prior to the blending process (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002).

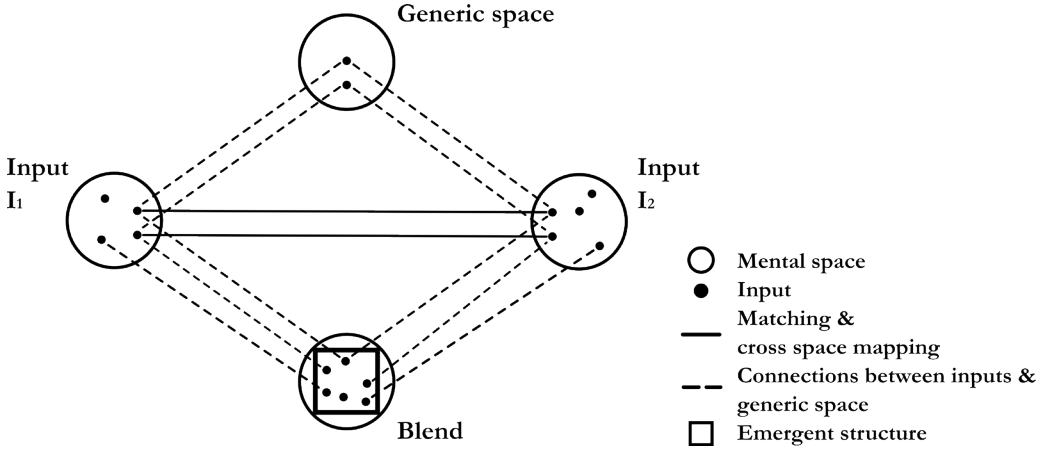

Figure 2. The blending process. (Based on Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, p. 43)

Additionally, some inputs cannot be found in my or my sister's mental space. As Turner (2015) explains in his brother-in-law example, "[t]he result, in the blend, is a man imbued with some of what we think about me and some of what we think about my brother-in-law, but only some in each case" (p. 6). When we look at the blend, namely 'if I were my sister, I would be miserable', I am my sister, to a certain extent. The blend holds my identity, but I have a new profession. It refers to my (new) emotions; namely, I am miserable. But it simultaneously has my sister's competence at her job. This new blended person is not available from any other space in the mental web. It is unique to the blend. I-am-my-sister is "a new idea, and a very complicated one" and "one that emerges only in the blend" (Turner, 2015, p. 6). In addition to the new idea, more information is gained about me because of the blend. Namely, I am squeamish and would not want to work with human tissue. The new blend thus has a reciprocal relationship with the original input spaces.

In short, the process of building a blending network is as follows: it "involves setting up mental spaces, matching across spaces, projecting selectively to a blend, locating shared structures, projecting backwards to inputs, recruiting new structure to the inputs or the blend, and running various operations in the blend itself" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 44). However, it is essential to note that this process has no hierarchy. The blending is done entirely unconsciously and automatically, even though the blend has never been 'run', or taken place, before. As Fauconnier and Turner (2002) state, "you can't fully match the analogues without constructing that imaginative blended scenario, because what counts as a good match depends on whether the match gives you what you need for the blend" (p. 20). In other words, "[a] little matching helps the blend run, and running the blend helps us find matches" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 20).

In addition, blends exist as conceptual integration networks on a continuum of complexity: simplex, mirror, single-scope, and double-scope. In a simplex network, there are no clashes between the inputs. There are no competing frames or incompatible elements; "the relevant part of the frame in one input is projected with its roles, and the elements are projected from the other input as values of those roles within the blend" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 120). Consequently, the simplex network is more of a regular integration network than a blend. To reiterate, an organising frame for a mental space is a frame that "specifies the nature of the relevant activity, events, and participants" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 123). Fauconnier and Turner give the example of 'Paul is the father of Sally' as a sentence that prompts the construction of this blend. In this example, the available frame is 'family' and occupies one space, whereas the other mental space contains two human beings, Paul and Sally.

In a mirror network, all mental spaces – the inputs, the generic and the blend space – share an organising frame (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). When two spaces share the same frame, as is the case in a mirror network, "[e]stablishing a cross-space mapping between inputs becomes straightforward" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 123). The frame in the blend, then, becomes

richer and more complicated. Although there are no clashes on the level of the organising frame, "there will be clashes at more specific levels below the frame level" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 125). For instance, a student reading a story about students would organise a mirror network. Even though the organising frame of being a student is the same, the clashes, or differences, between the reader-student and the narrative-student, will be present in more specific matters, such as the difference in institutes they go to.

A single-scope network has two input spaces with different organising frames, of which only one is projected to organise the blend. Fauconnier and Turner (2002) explain, "[i]ts defining property is that the organizing frame of the blend is an extension of the organizing frame of one of the inputs but not the other" (p. 126), causing a conceptual clash where one organising frame 'overpowers' the other. This can lead to a new insight due to the blend bringing inferences from the framing input, bringing light to existing features in the framing input and evoking emotions because of the clash. Fauconnier and Turner give the example of comparing CEOs in a business competition to a boxing match. In that blend, boxing is the organising frame as we "say that one CEO landed a blow but the other one recovered, one of them tripped and the other took advantage, one of them knocked the other out cold" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 126).

Finally, there is the double-scope network, which has "inputs with different (and often clashing) organizing frames as well as an organizing frame for the blend that includes parts of each of those frames and has emergent structure of its own" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 131). In contrast to a single-scope network, both organising frames contribute to the blend and instead of blocking the construction of a network, the clashes between frames can lead to highly creative blends. According to Fauconnier and Turner (2002), "[d]ouble-scope is what we typically find in scientific, artistic, and literary discoveries and inventions" (p. xiii). The 'I-am-my-sister' example can be categorised as a double-scope blend.

In addition to the networks mentioned above, Fauconnier and Turner (2002) introduce the multiple blend network. The defining features of blending are still present in the network, but instead of four mental spaces, there are multiple spaces. This *megablend* refers to a more complicated "dynamic operation over any number of mental spaces that moreover can apply repeatedly, its output becoming inputs for further blending" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 279).

In SPSs Theory, a reader blends their mental space with that of the 'perspectivizer' of the narrative, or the "mental representation built by readers for an internal agent that provides perspective on the storyworld, be it the narrator or a focalizing character" (Martínez & Herman, 2020, p. 150). In Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*, the reader thus would blend their mental space with the mental space built for James. The following section will explore how readers construct their own mental space and that of the one they construct for the narrative's perspectivizer.

1.1.1.3 The Self-Concept

In her framework, Martínez uses the *self-concept* as the input for the reader's mental space. The self-concept as a notion finds its origins in social psychology and is made up of a person's self-schemata or self-schemas (Markus, 1977) and their possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Markus (1977) argues that a "substantial amount of information processed by an individual [...] is information about the self, and a variety of cognitive structures are necessarily involved in processing this information" (p. 64). She thus introduced self-schemas, or "cognitive generalizations about the self, derived from past experience, that organize and guide the processing of the self-related information contained in an individual's social experience" (Markus, 1977, p. 63). Human beings use these cognitive structures to organise, summarise or explain their behaviour. Like framing theory, which argues that human beings use frames due to overstimulation of information at all times, self-schemata theory falls back on using cognitive structures that allow for efficient cognitive processing. Whereas framing theory focuses on external events, self-schemas address the mental processes regarding people's own behaviour or their 'self'. In short, self-schemas are the beliefs we hold about ourselves. These schemas can be derived from single, specific events experienced by the individual (e.g., 'I tried playing the flute but could not get a single note out of it. So, I do not have the lung capacity for woodwind instruments') or more general, repeated representations (e.g., 'I am helpful because I always pick up pens when someone drops them'). As these examples show, self-schemas can be beliefs about any aspect of a person, whether it is a personality trait, an interest or even a physical characteristic. Once a self-schema has been established and is repeatedly confirmed by experiences of the same type, people can become resistant to contradictory or inconsistent information. This does not mean that self-schemas cannot be altered or entirely dismissed. That said, people tend to adopt related behaviours to their self-schema (Markus, 1977). For instance, in a study on the 'exerciser' self-schema, people with that self-schema not only exercised more frequently but were, amongst other things, also more interested in and committed to "exercising in the future, had made more plans to help themselves to exercise regularly, and had a somewhat greater number of tricks or strategies for getting themselves to exercise on days when they did not feel like exercising" (Kendzierski, 1988, p. 45). On the contrary, when people do not have a certain self-schema (or are *aschematic* in a domain as opposed to *schematic*), they will not invest time or effort in that particular domain (Markus, 1977).

The concept of *possible selves* was introduced as a complement to self-schemas. They represent "individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954). The former is also known as a *desired possible self* (e.g., desired 'successful' possible self), while the latter is also called an *undesired possible self* (e.g., undesired 'unsuccessful' possible self). While self-schemas are cognitive structures of a person's beliefs about themselves, possible selves "can be viewed as the cognitive manifestation of enduring goals, aspirations, motives, fears, and threats" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954). Moreover, Markus and Nurius (1986) state that while self-schemas are solely constructed from past experiences, possible selves are derived from "representations of the self

in the past and that include representations of the self in the future" (p. 954). In addition, a past self, or past self-schema, can become a possible self if they define an individual in the present or future. The past child self, for instance, may remain within the self-concept as a possible self. An adult will never be a child again, but "this self-view may be activated and become influential in directing behavior, such as in a visit home over the holidays" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 955). Markus and Nurius (1986) argue that possible selves are essential as they play a role in the development of individuals, as development "can be seen as a process of acquiring and then achieving or resisting certain possible selves" (p. 955). Moreover, possible selves are tightly bound to an individual; a person's sociocultural and historical context plays a role in creating possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). To summarise, although there is a "significant degree of individual variation in the level of development of possible selves", possible selves are culturally predictable (Knox, 2006, p. 71).

The combination of the self-schema and possible selves, then, constitutes a person's self-concept. As mentioned before, although the beliefs that individuals hold about themselves and, thus, their self-concept are relatively stable, a re-evaluation or deletion of self-schemas or possible selves is not impossible. One way of adjusting or discarding self-schemas or possible selves is simply due to experiencing life events. The SPSs Theory, specifically, allows the examination of the effects of narratives on the narrative experiencer, as including the self-concept in the framework provides a more in-depth examination of the experiencer's responses. James' trials and tribulations could, for instance, reinforce the undesired 'substance user' self that most people will probably hold. Although previous empirical research into narrative engagement has looked at the self-concept (e.g., Kranstuber & Kellas, 2011; Richter et al., 2014; Isberner et al., 2019), these studies are often quantitative, leaving out idiosyncratic responses, as discussed earlier. The distinctive nature of the SPSs framework, namely its ability to register those idiosyncratic responses, may allow for a finer-grained exploration of possible changes to the self-concept.

1.1.1.4 The Perspectivizer Construct

The second input space in the SPSs framework is that of the perspectivizer construct. The perspectivizer is the "construct for the narrator or the character that perspectivizes a narrative" that the experiencer creates when engaging with a narrative (Martínez & Herman, 2020). Martínez uses the cognitive approach to characterisation to construct the perspectivizer input space. Cognitive theories of character regard characters as "text-based constructs of the human mind, whose analysis requires both models of understanding text and models of the human psyche" (Eder et al., 2010, p. 5). Introducing the cognitive approach in the 1980s, Margolin (1990) argues that a character, or non-actual individual, is a member of a possible world who can be identified, located and "endowed with a variety of physical and mental attributes and relations", and thus "may possess inner states, knowledge and belief sets, traits, intentions, wishes, dispositions, memories, and attitudes, that is, an interiority of personhood" (p. 844). Consequently, although descriptive conditions determine characters, they are similarly 'built'

and interpreted as actual individuals (Margolin, 1990).

According to Palmer (2002), the reader "infers the workings of fictional minds, and sees these minds in action, from observation of characters behavior and speech" and that "[m]ost novels contain a wide variety of material or evidence on which readers base their conjectures, hypotheses, and opinions about fictional minds" (p. 30). Thus, similar to how people construct other people's minds in real life, a person constructs a fictional mind from their behaviour and speech. That process of 'assigning a mind' to a character or narrator is also known as characterisation. Eder et al. (2010) define it "in the wide sense" as: "the process of connecting information with a figure in a text so as to provide a character in the fictional world with a certain property, or properties, concerning body, mind, behaviour, or relations to the (social) environment" (p. 32). Characterisation is achieved partly through information provided by the text to the reader and partly through the reader's general knowledge about the world and their own experiences (Schneider, 2001). One approach to explaining this process is the theory of direct and indirect characterisation. Direct characterisation occurs when information regarding the character or the narrator is explicitly communicated by the text, either by the narrator, the character or other characters in the narrative. In contrast, indirect characterisations involve inferences made by the reader based on their general knowledge of the world (Margolin, 1990; Schneider, 2001; Eder et al., 2010; Jannidis, 2013). In other words, indirect characterisation results from conclusions drawn from the text by the reader – partly from their knowledge and partly based on explicitly ascribed traits and textual cues. These characterisations are then used as inputs for the perspectivizer's mental space. For James, the perspectivizer in *A Million Little Pieces*, a direct characterisation input would be his green eyes for instance. An indirect characterisation input could be an ascription of shyness, although not every reader would necessarily come to the same conclusion due to the idiosyncratic nature of inferences.

1.1.2 The Creation of Storyworld Possible Selves

Having discussed the underlying principles of SPSs Theory, it is now possible to examine the process of creating SPSs. Following blending theory, an SPS is constructed by blending two mental spaces, in this case, the reader's self-concept and the perspectivizer construct (Martínez, 2014, 2018).[8] When narrative engagement activates the reader's self-schemas or triggers their possible selves, the blending process will look for matches across the mental spaces, which are then projected (selectively) to a new emergent space, or the SPS. As mentioned in section 1.1.1.2 'Blending Theory', there is no hierarchy in this process as the blend needs to be run to find matches, and matches are necessary to construct the blend. For instance, the prompting of a reader's romantic self-schema can be the reason for their investment in a romance novel. Or, readers of Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* who themselves struggle with substance use can activate

8 Due to the nature of my experiment, I will use 'reader' henceforth when referring to the creation of SPSs. However, it should be noted that SPSs theory can be used as a framework for research into all types of narratives. For instance, during a Master's course on postclassical narratology, SPSs Theory was tested as a framework to examine viewer (TV series) and player (videogame) responses.

their 'substance user' self-schema, leading to a 'substance user' self-schema SPS. James' ability to recover, and thus the feature of 'recovered from substance use', could be projected back into the reader's mental space, leading to that reader starting their journey of sobriety. The latter is not merely a hypothesis, as it already has been observed in actual reader reactions, for instance in Jeff Casey's (n.d.) five-star review: "When I started reading *A Million Little Pieces* I was still an active drug user – by the time I finished the book [...] the desire to continue to use was no longer overwhelming".

Jeff Casey is a clear example of one of the other features of SPSs Theory, namely the transformative effect that engaging with a narrative can have. To reiterate, building a blending network involves "setting up mental spaces, matching across spaces, projecting selectively to a blend, locating shared structures, projecting backwards to inputs, recruiting new structure to the inputs or the blend, and running various operations in the blend itself" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 44). As Martínez (2014) argues, the ability of backwards projecting can account for "the fact that minor changes produced by a narrative in the reader's possible selves may reach the furthermost recesses of the self-concept" (p. 121). That is to say, narratives may change a person's self-schemas or sense of self, or influence their possible selves, introducing new fears or desires.

Having elaborated on SPSs, the question may arise as to why SPSs Theory is necessary when concepts such as immersion, empathy or identification exist. According to Martínez (2018), SPSs can be used "to explain emotion derived from feelings about oneself", as opposed to merely "emotion derived from feelings with and towards characters", as usually measured by notions such as empathy and sympathy, respectively (p. 123). As a result, SPSs Theory allows for a more in-depth exploration of narrative engagement. Consequently, this enables the examination of individual reactions to narratives as well (Martínez, 2014, 2018). Moreover, SPSs have specific properties that cannot be found in the previously mentioned notions, such as immersion, empathy or identification. For instance, immersion and identification suggest a complete overlap between the reader and the perspectivizer. However, Martínez (2014) states that the overlap "occurring during the narrative experience cannot be absolute, as readers, viewers, or players do not wholly, but only partially, abandon their real-world deictic parameters" (p. 112). Storyworld possible selves thus allow the reader to:

> (i) leap in and out of storyworlds;
>
> (ii) function as referents for certain inclusive and indefinite grammatical expressions which involve displaced deixis in narratives;
>
> (iii) opt out of events and situations in the storyworld;
>
> (iv) block out events and situations in the real world;
>
> (v) stop to think at will, even in the midst of emotional or physical turmoil;
>
> (vi) compare the instrumental activity of different fictional minds, including their own. (Martínez, 2018, p. 123)

The word 'prompted' has come up several times during this introduction. In her theory, Martínez argues that certain linguistic expressions can encourage the creation of SPSs. Therefore, the next section will elucidate the theoretical principles for how SPSs can be prompted or triggered. In addition, the section will describe the different types of SPSs that can be triggered, such as the self-schema SPS and undesired SPS that were mentioned above. These are based on the different types of possible selves introduced by Markus and Nurius.

1.1.2.1 The Prompting of Storyworld Possible Selves

As Martínez (2018) mentions, both mental spaces (Fauconnier, 1985) and blending theory (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002) find their origins in linguistics. She states that in most of their analyses, "blends are prompted by linguistic expressions of a more or less entrenched nature, such as words, sentences or stretches of discourse" (Martínez, 2018, p. 41). Fauconnier and Turner (2002), for instance, mention idioms such as 'getting ahead of oneself' as everyday examples of blending. Thus, Martínez also postulates that SPSs can be linguistically traced. This is found in other theories of narrative engagement as well. David Herman (2009), for instance, who works on storyworld, argues that semiotic cues create and update storyworlds, easing the way for a deictic shift. According to him, it is especially story openings that "prompt interpreters to take up residence (more or less comfortably) in the world being evoked by a given text" through "medium-, genre-, and even text-specific worldmaking procedures" (D. Herman, 2009, p. 112). Regarding the text-specific cues, David Herman mentions *referring expressions* (noun phrases with definite articles and demonstrative pronouns, such as *the black laptop*) and *deictic expressions* (such as *last night*). According to David Herman (2009), these expressions encourage the reader to "imaginatively relocate" (p. 113). He states that narrative experiencers map referring and deictic expressions "onto the world evoked by the text rather than the world(s) that the text producer and text interpreter occupy when producing or decoding these textual signals" (D. Herman, 2009, p. 113). The reader, thus, 'relocates' from the here-and-now to the there-and-now.

Martínez (2018) reiterates that SPSs blends are fleshed out with individual experiences but argues that "they must be supported by a common set of linguistic features based on the kind of interactional cognitive arrangements used by humans in other instances of linguistic communication", including deictic and interactional phenomena (p. 43). She proposes some linguistic anchors for the creation of SPSs, expressing "inclusive reference and deictic center shifting" that facilitate matches with the perspectivizer, "while those involved in interactional positioning seem to constantly remind readers of the 'otherness' implicit in the verbalized exchange" (Martínez, 2018, p. 58). Using Cognitive Grammar as her foundation, Martínez looks at the notion of 'ground' for the linguistic anchors of SPSs. Cognitive Grammar states that all linguistic units are "abstracted from *usage events*, i.e., actual instances of language use" (Langacker, 2001, p. 144, emphasis in original). Each usage event consists of a "comprehensive conceptualization, comprising an expression's full contextual understanding, paired with an elaborate vocalization" (Langacker, 2001, p. 144). The speaker and hearer's shared contextual (and

thus cultural) understanding are the building blocks of the shared ground and the discourse space, which individuals in interaction assume as given when engaging in the co-construction of meaning (Langacker, 2001, 2008). The ground (see Figure 3) consists of "the speech event, the speaker (S) and hearer (H), their interaction, and the immediate circumstances (notably the time and place of speech)" (Langacker, 2001, p. 144). When the participants (speaker and hearer) manage successful communication in the interaction, the speaker is able to direct the focus of attention. This is necessary as our limited ability to process information means we cannot take in much information simultaneously (Langacker, 2001, 2008). Thus, the speaker and hearer are subjects of conceptualisation who turn their joint attention to an object of conceptualisation (Verhagen, 2005; Martínez, 2018). Verhagen (2005) explains, "[t]he point of a linguistic utterance, in broad terms, is that the first conceptualizer invites the second to jointly attend to an object of conceptualization in some specific way, and to update the common ground by doing so" (p. 7). As can be seen in Figure 3, the viewing frame is larger than the mere focus region. Attention directed to the focus can be seen as foregrounded, called an onstage region, whereas the outer part represents the offstage region of attention (Martínez, 2018). In order to bring an object from the offstage region to the onstage region, explicit verbal coding is necessary. Martínez applies this notion of conceptualisation to the storyworld. That is to say, explicit verbal coding will bring the attention of the reader to the onstage region. In contrast, the rest of the storyworld (offstage region) is assumed to be there and ready for activation. Categorising different types of verbal coding as linguistic anchors, Martínez (2018) defines them as SPS objectification and grounding, SPS subjectification and accumulation.[9]

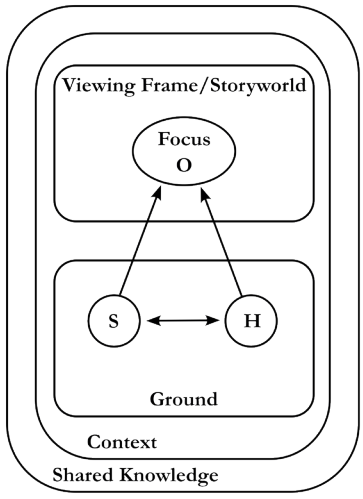

Figure 3. A usage event. (Based on Langacker, 2001, p. 145)

The process of objectifying SPSs, or bringing it onstage within the storyworld, is done by instances of "hybrid inclusive and ambiguous reference which seem to involve both narrator/focalizer [or perspectivizer] and reader as joint mental referents" (Martínez, 2018, p. 60). According to Martínez (2018), the expressions of this kind are the "doubly-deictic *you*; pseudo-deictic, or generic, *you* and *one*; multiply-deictic *one*; and indefinite pronouns and noun phrases" (p. 60). In short, these expressions refer both to the 'you' within the storyworld and the 'you' in the actual world, or the reader. Breaking that deictic border, the objectification of the process allows the reader to look for matches with the perspectivizer more easily. As said before, matches are needed to run the blend (i.e., the process of blending), but running the blend facilitates the search for matches.

9 See section 2.2.2, 'SPSs Linguistic Anchors Analysis' and Appendix B. 'Linguistic Analysis: Coded Lines in Chapter 1 of Frey's *In Duizend Stukjes*' for an analysis of the linguistic anchors that can encourage the creation of SPSs of the text material (the Dutch translation of Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*) for the current study. This analysis was partly used as a control for selecting the excerpts for the experiment.

In contrast to objectifying SPSs, SPS subjectification moves the SPS blend from the ground to the offstage region (Martínez, 2018). To elaborate, instead of being in the focus region itself, the SPS blend is moved "towards a conceptual location near the profiled object", thereby contributing to the meaning-making process of the utterance, or in this case, the perspectivizer's mental space (Martínez, 2018, p. 69). Additionally, this occurs without explicit verbal coding, which is a more frequent occurrence. Martínez mentions several types of expressions that can lead to the subjectification of SPSs, namely: 1) SENSERless transitivity mental processes, 2) Narrated Perception, and 3) facework in the perspectivizer's inner speech. In summary, SENSERless transitivity mental processes are "impersonal constructions which allow the deletion of the semantic Agent when the transitivity process expressed is of a mental type" (Martínez, 2018, p. 70). Martínez further explains that a mental process has two main participants: a SENSER or perceiver and the PHENOMENON or the perceived. Linguistic constructions that are impersonal "allow the syntactic deletion of the semantic SENSER", offering readers a "semantic gap to be shared with the implicit sensing entity" (Martínez, 2018, p. 70). For instance, in *A Million Little Pieces*, the perspectivizer utters the following sentence: "The afternoon and the early evening slide by in a lidded daze where the ability to *think* in any identifiable way disappears and where every moment seems to be an eternity" (Frey, 2003a, p. 37, my emphasis). In this example, the mental process of 'thinking' has no SENSER attached. Thus, allowing room for the reader to share the mental process with the perspectivizer, in this case, James.

Narrated Perception is what Genette (1972) calls a 'descriptive pause', "where some section of narrative discourse corresponds to a nonexistent diegetic duration" (pp. 93-94). Or, as Shen (2005) describes it, a "scenic description from the perspective of the external narrator, a description that takes up textual space but does not take up story time, hence the 'pause' of story time" (p. 144, emphasis in original). Pallarés-García (2012) defines Narrated Perception as a portrayal of "the sensory perceptions of the sensory perceptions of a fictional character by describing events as they are experienced by that character" (p. 170), as can be seen in the following example: "We go to a Room. It has bright fluorescent lights and a large surgical bed and boxes of supplies" (Frey, 2003a, p. 19). Similar to SENSERless transitivity mental processes, Narrated Perception encourages the reader to share the perspectivizer's intradiegetic deictic centre. The technique implies "an invisible spatial path between the hybrid SPS conceptualizer and the object of conceptualization" (Martínez, 2018, p. 74).

The third overarching category of SPS subjectification is interactional facework in the perspectivizer's inner speech and the pragmatics of (im)politeness (Martínez, 2018). This interaction can be divided into *language of connectedness* (positive politeness strategies) and *language of separateness* (negative politeness strategies). The former are strategies in which the speaker presents a certain intimacy and indicates that they want to come closer to the hearer (Brown & Levinson, 1978), prompting a "mental representation of that character as 'one of us'" (Martínez, 2018, p. 75, emphasis in original). Strategies such as using *in-group terminology* ("I want a pipe and some rock" (Frey, 2003a, p. 90)) or *exaggeration* ("Each breath brings the stench of Hell

and death" (Frey, 2003a, p. 55)) can activate linking matches between the reader's self-concept and the perspectivizer.

In contrast to the language of connectedness strategies, a language of separateness strategy reminds the reader of their autonomy or their "right to have freedom of action" (Martínez, 2018, p. 78). Such strategies include *hedging* ("I wonder what is happening to me" (Frey, 2003a, p. 40)) and *understatement*, or the "mitigated expression of a true but unpleasant opinion or description" (Martínez, 2018, p. 79), for example, when James describes his mob boss mentor when he meets him: "He has thick brown hair that is thinning on top and a weathered face that looks as if it has taken a few punches" (Frey, 2003a, p. 46). According to Martínez (2014, 2018), both strategies encourage sharing the perspectivizer's point of view.

Finally, in addition to objectification and subjectification, *accumulation* is another construal operation that points to a "hybrid conceptualizing entity in narrative discourse" and often occurs in narrative openings, and is observed as "clusters of clauses and phrases in quick juxtaposition" (Martínez, 2018, p. 81). Take James' reaction when he gets to the rehabilitation centre, for instance,

> I want to run or die or get fucked up. I want to be blind and dumb and have no heart. I want to crawl in a hole and never come out. I want to wipe my existence straight off the map. Straight off the fucking map. I take a deep breath. (Frey, 2003a, p. 7)

Frey offers several options of how someone could react when confronted with this particular situation. Martínez (2018) explains that in SPSs Theory, accumulation can be understood as "offering variations within a schema or scenario, in this way increasing chances that linking matches are established between readers' and perspectivizer's input spaces" (p. 82). In addition to these construal operations often present in opening paragraphs, Martínez (2018) shows them to be often present *together*, increasing the chances of finding matches. This does not however mean that these devices cannot be found at "other narrative points, particularly on occasions when engagement is geared towards a significant event or revelation" (Martínez, 2018, p. 86).

1.1.2.2 The Types of Storyworld Possible Selves and SPSs Blending Networks

Running an SPS blend, or simply blending, is done similarly to running a meaning-making blend, as described by Fauconnier and Turner. Martínez (2018) explains setting up an SPS blend as follows:

> (i) The building by real world narrative experiencers of mental spaces for the [...] perspectivizer in a narrative, be it the narrator and/or focalizer, on the basis of textual clues, background knowledge, and inferential reasoning.
>
> (ii) The activation of relevant dormant bridges across counterpart elements in the mental space for this [...] perspectivizer, and elements in individual audience members' self-schemas and possible selves.

> (iii) The projection of active matching features in the inputs into the new space, the SPS blend.
>
> (iv) The emergence of new elements and structure in the blend.
>
> (v) Backwards feature projection into the inputs, both the character construct and the real being's self-concept.
>
> (vi) The dynamic readjustment of the inputs and the blend as narrative exposure proceeds and new structure is recruited or activated in the inputs or in the blend. (pp. 121-122)

Similar to how there are different types of possible selves, Martínez (2014, 2018) distinguishes between different kinds of SPSs as well, namely *Self-Schema SPSs* (a match with the reader's self-schemas), *Desired Possible Self SPSs* (prompting of the reader's desired possible selves), *Undesired Possible Self SPSs* (narrative engagement triggers a reader's undesired possible self), *Past Possible Self SPSs* (the prompting of a reader's past possible self, such as a child self) and *Past SPSs* (past SPSs which are subsequently incorporated in the self-concept and thus can be triggered during new narrative experiences). Moreover, Martínez distinguishes between primary SPSs, slipnet SPSs, and secondary SPSs (Ghasseminejad and Martínez, 2024). Primary SPSs networks are SPSs structures that are likely to be "shared by communities of readers due to the socio-cultural pervasiveness of their main matching features", while SPS slipnets refer to idiosyncratic reader responses (Martínez, 2018, p. 170). Secondary SPSs fall between the previous two categories and account for SPSs "with predictable emergence in communities of readers with shared practices and cultural models" (Ghasseminejad and Martínez, 2024). In addition to the types of SPSs, SPSs can be classified according to the blending network type, corresponding to the blending networks introduced by Fauconnier and Turner. This means there are simplex SPS networks, mirror SPS networks, single-scope SPS networks, double-scope SPS networks and multiple SPS blends.

To summarise, a storyworld possible self is a hybrid entity that consists of inputs from the reader's self-concept and inputs from the perspectivizer as assigned by the reader (or any narrative experiencer). The more matches are found between the reader and the perspectivizer mental spaces, the higher the possibility of creating SPSs blends, leading to stronger narrative engagement. In contrast, if there are no or few matches between the reader and the perspectivizer, this "might result in an absence of feelings of self-relevance, so that the reader or TV viewer is likely to drop the book or turn off the TV, in this way opting out of a self-irrelevant narrative experience" (Martínez, 2018, p. 120). Unique to SPSs is that they can measure individual responses to narratives and culturally predictable reactions due to the inclusion of the generic mental space and the reader's self-concept. Instead of looking at merely a couple of traits, such as empathy and sympathy, SPSs take a more inclusive view of the reader into account, leading to an in-depth exploration of their narrative engagement.

1.2 Fictionality[10]

In this section, I will examine the intricate concept of fictionality and the extent to which the fictionality status of a text can affect readers. As my research aims to contribute to understanding the effects of fictionality on readers' narrative engagement, the experiment will not focus on the emotional effects described by Frey's initial readers. Nonetheless, they will briefly be explored in section 2.2.1, 'The Turbulent Journey of *A Million Little Pieces*'. As fictionality is a fundamental concept in literary studies, it carries a rich history with many definitions and approaches and thus does not allow for a single and unambiguous definition (Missinne et al., 2020).[11] Therefore, defining how fictionality will be used as a variable in the experiment becomes crucial. Considering the difference between the academic notion of fictionality and actual readers' perception is especially critical.

The research question and set-up of the experiment, namely empirical research into actual readers, will guide the definition of fictionality used in this dissertation. To recall, the research question for this study is as follows: How does the reader's perception of James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* as fictional or non-fictional affect its reception and thus relate to the nature, construction and relevance of the projected storyworld possible selves? To answer the research question, the following two elements must be examined when defining (non-)fictionality in this dissertation: (1) An exploration of what makes a text fictional to readers and (2) an exploration of how readers' perceptions of (non-)fictionality affect their narrative engagement.

1.2.1 Fiction and Fictionality

Before exploring the two elements mentioned above, it seems prudent to briefly discuss the difference between 'fiction' and 'fictionality'. It is essential to immediately distinguish between the theoretical approach to fiction and fictionality and the general approach to those terms. The use of 'fiction' in the English language is not new or unusual. As Cohn (1999) states, "*fiction* as the designation for an invented narrative – novel, novella, short story – has been current for more than a century and is, of course, a standard term for publishers, book reviewers, and librarians" (p. 1, emphasis in original). In this statement, Cohn appeals to the lay reader's understanding of the term, echoed by Merriam-Webster.[12]

10 Parts of this section will appear as: (1) a peer-reviewed chapter, "The Power of Perception: The Influence of Fictionality on the Creation of Storyworld Possible Selves", in *Storyworld Possible Selves and Narrative Intersubjectivity*, a collection edited by María-Ángeles Martínez; and (2) as a peer-reviewed article in *Narrative Works* as, "Real Readers and James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*: The Mediating Role of Authenticity on Perceived Non-Fictionality".

11 This chapter will not provide an exhaustive overview of all approaches and traditions. For recent overviews of this topic, see Klauk and Köppe's *Fiktionalität: Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch* (2014); *Faktuales und fiktionales Erzählen: Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven*, co-edited by Fludernik, Falkenhayner and Steiner (2015); Lavocat's (2016) *Fait et fiction: Pour une frontière*; *Narrative Factuality: A Handbook*, edited by Fludernik and Ryan (2020); *Travelling Concepts: New Fictionality Studies*, edited by Fludernik and Nielsen (2020); and the volume *Grundthemen der Literaturwissenschaft: Fiktionalität*, edited by Missinne et al. (2020).

12 Fiction as, 1. a: something invented by the imagination or feigned specifically: an invented story [...] b: fictitious literature (such as novels or short stories) [...] c: a work of fiction especially: novel. 2. a: an assumption of a possibility

Within literary scholarship, the concept of fiction "has remained a puzzle" (Gorman, 2005, p. 163), leading to a multitude of definitions and perspectives on fiction and fictionality. Moreover, other terms such as 'narrative'[13] are sometimes used synonymously with fiction. The topic is further complicated by how different scholarly language traditions define these terms.[14] Traditionally, in the English-speaking tradition, fictionality has been used to describe qualities of fictional genres and is "by definition the quality possessed by fiction" (Zetterberg Gjerlevsen, 2016). Nielsen et al. (2015) provide a clear distinction, which I will follow; according to them, "fiction [refers to] a set of conventional genres (novel, short story, graphic novel, fiction film, television serial fiction, and so on) and [...] fictionality [refers to] a quality or fictive discourse as a mode" (p. 62). This aligns with Fludernik and Ryan's (2020) view on the two terms. According to them, fiction "refers primarily to the novel and thus is a generic marker", whereas in theoretical discourse fictionality "can also be used to indicate that one is talking about the *quality* or definition of what is fiction(al)" (Fludernik & Ryan, 2020, p. 6, emphasis in original). As this section wants to examine the quality of what is fictional, I will use fictionality in my theoretical exploration – starting with my discussion of the signposts of fictionality.

1.2.2 Signposts of Fictionality

For the first element, (1) an exploration of what makes a text fictional to readers, I will discuss the concept of signposts of fictionality, as introduced by Cohn (1990, 1999) and which is still often used as a starting point for examinations of fictionality. Cohn introduced the concept of signposts[15] in exploring fictionality after Searle (1975) – who advocated a pragmatic approach to fictionality by using speech act theory[16] – argued that "[t]here is no textual property, syntactical or semantic, that will identify a text as a work of fiction" (p. 324). According to Searle (1975), what makes a work of fiction fictional is the "illocutionary stance that the author takes toward it, and that stance is a matter of the complex illocutionary intentions that the author has when he writes or otherwise composes it" (p. 324). That is to say, the author pretends to make assertions, and the audience accepts them, meaning that rules and conventions determine a text's fictionality. As Genette (1990) summarises Searle's argument, "a fictional narrative is purely and simply a pretence or simulation of a factual narrative, where the novelist just makes

as a fact irrespective of the question of its truth a legal fiction b: a useful illusion or pretense [...] 3: the action of feigning or of creating with the imagination. (*Fictionality Definition & Meaning*, n.d.)

13 For an elaborate treatment of this notion and the related terms narrativeness and narrativity, see Prince (2005) and Abbott (2014).

14 Fludernik and Ryan (2020) have an entire section on the different language traditions. In section, '2.1 Cross-linguistic terminology relating to fact and fiction', they detail the different terms regarding fictionality in the French, German and English language traditions (Fludernik & Ryan, 2020, pp. 6–7).

15 Other scholars that looked at signposts of fictionality include, but are not limited to, Hamburger (1957), Riffaterre (1990), Schaeffer (1999), Fludernik (2005) and Schmid (2010).

16 Speech act theory, introduced by Austin (1962), distinguishes three speech acts: the locutionary act, the illocutionary act and the perlocutionary act. It makes a distinction between uttering sentences that have a sense and reference (locutionary act), utterances that perform, such as giving orders (illocutionary act), and lastly, the acts that are achieved or brought about by saying something (perlocutionary act) (Austin, 1962).

believe ('pretends') that he is telling a true story without seriously asking the reader to believe in it" (757, emphasis in original). Other notable pragmatic approaches to fictionality are Walton's (1990) concepts of representation and make-believe,[17] Lamarque's (1990) fictive stance,[18] and Lamarque and Olsen's (1994) theory of social practice.[19]

In contrast, Cohn opts for a semantic approach to fictionality. She defines fiction as a non-referential narrative, with 'nonreferential' signifying that "a work of fiction itself creates the world to which it refers by referring to it" (Cohn, 1999, p. 13). The nonreferentiality of fiction provides two distinguishing features: "references to the world outside the text are not bound to accuracy", and narratives do not refer "*exclusively* to the real world outside the text" (Cohn, 1999, p. 15, emphasis in original). According to Cohn, this leads to two kinds of narratives. On the one hand, there are narratives such as historical works, journalistic reports, biographies and autobiographies, which are subject to judgments of truth or falsity. On the other hand, Cohn (1999) argues that narratives, such as novels, ballads and epics, are immune to such judgements. The essential difference between these two types of narratives can be found in the signposts of fictionality. In her analysis, Cohn (1999) compares fictional narratives with historical narratives that appear at the centre of a sliding scale, as, according to her, this is where "factual and fictional narratives come into closest proximity, the territory that presents the greatest potential for overlap" (p. 18). Historical narratives, thus, roam the border between fiction and non-fiction. As a result, she introduces three criteria (or signposts) for fictionality: (1) the inclusion of an additional level, *reference*, to the story/discourse levels in historical narratives; (2) the dependence of specific narrative modes on fiction, especially in presenting consciousness; (3) the severance of the narrator from the author, meaning there is a "doubling of the narrative instance into author and narrator" (Cohn, 1990, p. 800).

Applying Cohn's signposts to Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* leads to an interesting analysis. Frey's book has no mention of any referential material. The only reference to the text being non-fiction in the physical book could be found in the blurbs written for the book.[20] Therefore,

17 In presenting his theory of fiction, Walton explores the concept of 'representation' (or mimesis) and the game of 'make-believe' as fundamental to engaging with fiction and art, encompassing not only literary works but also, for instance, sculptures, theatre and children's games. When participating in the act of 'playing' make-believe, the audience both accepts and generates a 'fictional truth' (Walton, 1990).

18 Lamarque (1990) argues that the defining feature of a fictional narrative, or a make-believe fictive utterance, is based on the *fictive stance*. He states, "[t]he fictive stance is not a property of sentences or utterances but is an attitude taken towards them by participants in the 'game' of fiction. The fictive stance is made possible only within a complex conventional practice which determines storytellers' intentions and readers' responses" (Lamarque, 1990, p. 149). With this definition, the audience is invited not to believe what the storyteller tells but to *make-believe* it.

19 Lamarque and Olsen (1994) focus on "the conditions under which they [sentences] are uttered, the attitudes they invoke, and the role that they play in social interactions" (p. 32). In short, fiction becomes a social practice in which the storyteller produces a fictive utterance, and the reader adopts a fictive stance. By adopting this theory, the responsibility for determining fictionality shifts to the interaction between the creator and the audience and not to the narrative itself – regardless of how it is presented.

20 The non-fictionality of the book was also communicated in interviews and was magnified by Frey's interview with Oprah.

the first signpost would imply the text being fictional. The second signpost explores specific narrative modes that can only occur in fiction. Cohn (1990) argues that a historical discourse cannot "present past events through the eyes of a historical figure present on the scene, but only through the eyes of the forever backward-looking historian-narrator" (p. 786). In his analysis of *A Million Little Pieces*, Nielsen (2011) argues that the present tense in Frey "is clearly not a historical present or simply an interior monologue" and compares it to what Cohn called a fictional present (p. 89). According to Nielsen (2011), the narrative "is quite obviously the creation of the author, rather than something the character says, thinks, or even knows" (p. 89). Therefore, analysing the second signpost will also point to the text as being fictional. The third signpost is clearly visible in the text. There is no severance of the narrator from the author in *A Million Little Pieces*, even when disregarding the blurbs or promotional material. The name on the cover is James Frey, and when a nurse asks protagonist-James' name, he answers with 'James Frey'. Therefore, according to Cohn's signpost theory, the third signpost would turn *A Million Little Pieces* into a non-fictional text. Applying Cohn's signposts leads to a mixed result, so applying her theory would not help an actual reader decide the fictionality status of *A Million Little Pieces*.

1.2.3 Theories of Factuality

Another 'meaning of fiction' to consider is fiction as an untruth or a lie. Apart from being used colloquially when we wish to discount a narrative, there are theoretical approaches to fictionality that look at fiction as lies and non-fiction as facts. However, before considering literary theories that examine the notions of factuality, it is necessary to elaborate briefly on the concepts of global and local fictionality, as these terms allow for more nuance in discussions on fictionality. Global fictionality refers to the general framework that determines the status of a text as fiction, non-fiction, or ambiguous (Nielsen et al., 2015). A novel is a globally fictive discourse, whereas an autobiography has a globally non-fictive discourse status. On the other hand, local fictionality refers to fictional techniques that form part of a communicative action. Fictionality is then used as a rhetorical tool to invite the reader to imagine events and scenarios but not to interpret them as invented (see section 1.2.4, 'Fictionality as Rhetoric') (Nielsen et al., 2015). As Phelan (2016) states, "local fictionality within global nonfiction does [...] not create the illusion that its inventions are real. Instead it flaunts its fictionality in the service of altering the audience's understanding of the local and global nonfictionality" (pp. 23-24).

The manner in which global and local fictionality can be used in nuanced discussions of fictionality can be seen in James' (2022) work, who uses the terms in her discussion of autofiction.[21] James (2022) attempts to reconcile theories of fictionality with autofiction and argues

21 The term *autofiction* was coined by Doubrovsky (1977), who on the cover of his *Fils* defined autofiction as "Fiction, d'événements et de faits strictement reels; si l'on veut autofiction". Gronemann (2019) argues that, in this instance, fiction does not refer to "invention in the classical sense, but to the eschewal of intentional subjectivity" (p. 241). Later, Doubrovsky slightly elaborated on this definition, stating that autofiction is "[f]iction, of facts and events strictly real, if you prefer, autofiction, where the language of adventure has been entrusted to the adventure

that autofictional texts are valuable for studies into fictionality, despite traditional approaches tending to "reaffirm the fundamental distinction between fictional and nonfictional narratives, aiming to specify the borders, the autonomy [...] of fiction" (p. 41). According to her, autofictional texts "bring to light disjunctions between theory and practice, as well as divergent understandings of the fact/fiction divide" (James, 2022, p. 42). The ambiguity and hybridity prove autofictional texts to be helpful material for empirical research into theories of fictionality. Stating that both types of fictionality (i.e., fictional and non-fictional fictionality) are not entirely separable in practice, she argues that it is still possible to examine hybrid texts without erasing the border between fact and fiction (James, 2022). She refers to Ferreira-Meyers (2018), who argues that readers remain "very much able to see and keep a line of demarcation between fact and fiction" (p. 42). This can be supported by the theory of global and local fictionality, which argues that, while readers will recognise fictional fictionality strategies, they can still accept the narrative as globally non-fictional. In essence, the distinction between local and global fictionality allows the theorisation of "forms of hybridity that do not erase the border between fact and fiction or require the simultaneous adoption of contradictory modes of reading" (James, 2022, p. 48). This approach is especially useful when analysing the participants in the non-fiction condition in the current study, as the text can be said to apply local fictional fictionality strategies.[22] Especially for the participants in the non-fiction condition who do not have the necessary paratextual information to establish the text's fictionality on their own and thus must rely on the information given, this view of fictionality will support the reading of the text as globally non-fictional while accepting local fictional fictionality strategies in the text. Therefore, even though strategies of local fictional fictionality might suggest another genre, I expect the participants in the non-fiction condition to assume the fictionality status they have been offered during the experiment.

1.2.3.1 The Factual Pact

Inspired by Philippe Lejeune's (1975) *autobiographical pact*,[23] Fludernik (2020) proposes the

of language in its total freedom" (2013, p. 2). According to Gronemann (2019), "[a]n autofictional text purports to be both fictional and autobiographical, and thus represents a paradox in the traditional understanding of genre" (p. 241). This paradox is also evident in Zipfel's (2005) definition of autofiction as a "homodiegetic fiction that declares itself to be fiction – by being called 'novel' in the front page, for example – but actually relates events of the author's own life and identifies the author in the text by his or her real name" (p. 36, emphasis in original).

22 See Nielsen's (2011) analysis in section 1.2.2, 'Signposts of Fictionality', and section 2.2.2, 'The Marketing of *A Million Little Pieces*'.

23 Lejeune (1989) defines autobiography as: "Retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality" (p. 4). This definition leads to specific requirements related to (1) the form of the language (must be a narrative and in prose); (2) the subject (a narrative about the author's individual life, mainly focused on the genesis of their personality); (3) the situation of the author (the author and the narrator are identical and the name refers to a natural person); and (4) the position of the narrator (the narrator and principal character are identical and the text is a reflection on the individual's past). Lejeune (1989) concludes, "in order for there to be autobiography (and personal literature in general), the *author*, the *narrator*, and the *protagonist* must be identical" (p. 5, emphasis in original). This identity is affirmed through the autobiographical pact between the reader and the author. That is to say, the author presents

factual pact. A factual pact would describe "the default assumption that a text encountered as a history, critical essay or economic treatise is, by definition, taken to be making statements about the real world" (Fludernik, 2020, p. 62). Failure to follow the pact would then be "interpreted as lying, cheating, misrepresentation or incompetence", with all its possible consequences, including on the "legal or institutional plane" (Fludernik, 2020, p. 62). Nevertheless, the factual pact will still allow for hybridity within its definition. A personal anecdote that is embellished and, therefore, incorporates fictional elements (local fictional fictionality) would still adhere to the factual pact and, thus, would not face any consequences. On the other hand, news reports or academic texts would not adhere to the factual pact if they incorporated embellishments. Fludernik (2020) concludes by stating that the factual pact is simply a:

> Different name for the Gricean maxim of quality (Grice, 1975), which is part of the cooperative principle applying to all communicational exchange. It can be partially violated (or better: set aside) in order to privilege politeness, or irony, and it will be truly violated or infringed upon by lying. (p. 62)

When examining initial reactions to the Frey controversy,[24] it could be argued that Frey had made a factual pact with his readers and did not adhere to it. Some readers felt they were lied to and that he fooled them. Winfrey invites Frey on her show again after the exposé and opens the interview with: "I have to say it is difficult for me to talk to you because I feel really duped. But more importantly, I feel that you betrayed millions of readers" (*Oprah's Questions for James*, 2006). Still, other readers allowed for the hybridity in the factual pact and accepted the discrepancies as embellishments and thus did not think Frey had to face any consequences.

1.2.3.2 Cognitive Narratology and Factuality

Approaching factuality from a cognitive narratological perspective, Caracciolo (2020) provides two meanings for the adjective factual. According to his definitions, "factuality$_1$ is a measure of verisimilitude or correspondence between narrative information and real-world cognitive parameters", whereas factuality$_2$ refers to "the relation between an instance of narration and the *specific real-world events* that are being reported" (Caracciolo, 2020, p. 150, emphasis in original). In other words, factuality$_1$ concerns what people understand to be possible in the actual world, whereas factuality$_2$ is used when events in the actual world are reported on. When examining the notion of factuality, Caracciolo considers whether factuality can be preferred to fictionality by readers until they are reminded or become aware of the fictionality of a narrative. In other words, when readers engage with a narrative, they will assume the storyworld to be factual$_1$ unless the text explicitly challenges it. This happens on an unconscious level where "readers will parse stories as unfolding in a naturalistic scenario (the situation model), by reutilizing patterns and schemata derived from their everyday interactions with the real world" (Caracciolo,

their text as an autobiography, declaring that they write about their own life, and thus, the reader trusts the author to tell them their true story.

24 For a detailed discussion of the initial responses to the controversy, see section 2.2.3, 'The Aftermath'.

2020, p. 155). This could explain why some readers of Frey's text did not believe the text to be non-fictional even before the controversy made clear that certain parts were untrue. It is unsurprising that readers who themselves struggle with substance use challenged factuality$_1$ as they presumably did not recognise the scenario. Alternatively, on a conscious level, "factuality$_2$ and fictionality may prompt different reading strategies: the underlying situation modeling may be the same, but how interpreters use these models can be considerably different" (Caracciolo, 2020, p. 155, emphasis in original). That said, Caracciolo argues that "factuality$_2$ does not take any cognitive precedence over fictionality" (2020, p. 155).

Korthals Altes (2020) uses framing theory as an approach for her examination of how readers decide a text's fictionality. As mentioned before, framing theory is often utilised in cognitive narratology and argues that when people are confronted with new situations, they will fall back on existing structures from their memories to aid them in dealing with the new situation (L. Herman & Vervaeck, 2019). For her discussion of fictionality, Korthals Altes (2020) looks at posture and ethos as cues for framing. Following Meizoz (2007), she defines posture as an author's "mode of self-presentation and self-fashioning, which includes his or her personal way of endorsing or initiating a social role and status, and of affiliating with or setting him- or herself off against socially sanctioned models of being a writer" (Korthals Altes, 2020, p. 569). Moreover, she argues, "[t]hrough their posture(s), authors – and their publishers – also define their position in the literary field and suggest a specific horizon for the reception and valuation of their work" (Korthals Altes, 2020, p. 569). A posture includes elements of an ethos, either projected by the author or attributed to them by their readers. According to Korthals Altes (2020), the concept of ethos refers to "a speaker's effects of character and attitude, as these support or discredit their trustworthiness and authority" (p. 570). The cues for the readers to determine the posture and ethos of an author can be textual, para- and extratextual (Korthals Altes, 2020). In short, readers use frames, cued by posture and ethos, to determine whether the text they read is fictional or non-fictional. In the case of Frey, the frames communicated by his publisher and himself would lead the reader to determine the text as non-fiction. After the controversy, Frey's ethos was affected, leading to losing his trustworthiness and authority in the eyes of some of his readers.

1.2.4 Fictionality as Rhetoric

Introducing the notion of fictionality as rhetoric in *The Rhetoric of Fictionality*, Walsh (2007) caused a paradigm shift from a focus on "fiction as a genre to a focus on fictionality as a rhetorical communicational strategy across genre and media" (Zetterberg Gjerlevsen & Nielsen, 2020, pp. 19–20). This approach sits on a "disciplinary cusp between literary (or narrative) theory and philosophy", making it a complicated topic that is sooner explained as what it is not than what it is (Walsh, 2019b, p. 511). Consequently, this means there is "no unifying or universally agreed upon theoretical take on a rhetorical approach to fictionality" (Gammelgaard, 2019, p. 439). Nevertheless, efforts have been made to present an overarching definition, such as in Nielsen et al.'s (2015) work below, which can serve as a robust theoretical framework for

research into narrative engagement.

The notion of fictionality as rhetoric finds its roots in communication models and argues that fictionality *itself* can act as a communicative resource rather than the result of communication or representation (Walsh, 2019a). Moreover, this approach supports the distinction between *fictionality* and *fiction as a genre*: "[fictionality] is a communicative strategy, and as such it is apparent on some scale within many nonfictional narratives, in forms ranging from something like an ironic aside, through various forms of conjecture or imaginative supplementation, to full-blown counterfactual narrative examples" (Walsh, 2007, p. 7). In other words, "fictionality is a rhetorical resource in a real-world communicative framework that is not restricted only to fictional genres" (Zetterberg Gjerlevsen & Nielsen, 2020, p. 21).

In his rhetorical approach, Walsh includes a cognitive feature in his theory by referencing *relevance theory* as described by Wilson and Sperber (2002), who argue that it should be assumed that a principle of relevance governs communication. They define relevance as "a property of inputs to cognitive processes which makes them worth processing" (Wilson & Sperber, 2002, pp. 600–601). These inputs can be external stimuli (e.g., smell) or internal representations which need to be processed further (e.g., recognising the scent). The notion of relevance instinctively seems logical because, as mentioned earlier, living beings are constantly bombarded with stimuli but do not have the cognitive capability to process all of them simultaneously. According to Wilson and Sperber (2002), "[e]fficiency in cognition is largely a matter of allocating our processing resources so as to maximise cognitive benefits" (p. 601). To clarify, even if all of the information is true, some information will not be processed regardless of its truthfulness. This leads to the question of which information *will* be processed. According to their *First*, or *Cognitive, Principle of Relevance*, "[t]he human cognitive system tends towards processing the most relevant inputs available" (Wilson & Sperber, 2002, p. 603).

Another essential aspect of this theory for Walsh is that Wilson and Sperber (2002) forgo truthfulness as a communication model. They argue that even if a hearer is interested in the truth, they do not necessarily expect the utterance to be true. Moreover, even if the hearer expects to be provided with factual information, there is still some true information that is not worth attending to. Truthfulness, then, becomes just another input that should be processed further (Wilson & Sperber, 2002).

Applying this to fictionality, Walsh (2007) follows Wilson and Sperber's framework and claims that fictionality is not a problem of truthfulness but one of relevance. That is, it is not the expectation of truthfulness but the presumption of relevance that makes the reader look for an interpretative context. Namely, how an audience or reader seeks to realise the relevance of communication minimises the expectations of its direct relevance as information (i.e., the truth) and thus minimises cognitive effort (Walsh, 2019a). Walsh (2019a) summarises, "when we recognise in context that an utterance is exploiting the communicative resource of fictionality, we look to grasp its point without the expectation that it will be straightforwardly informative" (p. 412). Similar to Wilson and Sperber's theory, truthfulness, then, becomes a by-product of

relevance. Walsh (2007) states,

> The relevance theory model allows for a view of fiction in which fictionality is not a frame separating fictive discourse from ordinary or 'serious' communication, but a contextual assumption: that is to say, in the comprehension of a fictive utterance, the assumption that it *is* fictive is itself manifest. (p. 30, emphasis in original)

Building on Walsh's work, Nielsen et al. (2015) aim to present a unified theory of fictionality in their "Ten Theses about Fictionality" by approaching fictionality as a communicative strategy. They emphasise that this approach does not turn fictionality away from the actual world but instead cements it within it. The communicative strategy is a specific strategy within "some context in that world, a context which also informs an audience's response to the fictive act" (Nielsen et al., 2015, p. 63). More specifically, they approach context by referring to the importance of a shared cognitive environment. Intent is an important aspect that is considered when discussing fictionality and context. Nielsen et al.'s (2015) third thesis states: "The rhetoric of fictionality is *founded* upon a communicative intent" (p. 64, my emphasis). To elaborate, they argue, "[i]t makes sense, therefore, to examine narratives and other communicative acts in the pragmatic context of the intent of their producers (however inferred), including the intent to invoke a fictive rhetoric" (Nielsen et al., 2015, pp. 64–65). That is to say, a text is (non-) fictional when the sender intends to speak fictively or non-fictively and, in turn, the hearer interprets that intention correctly. In short, when the shared cognitive environment is manifested between the speaker and hearer, the speaker, or sender, can signal their fictive intent by following context-specific conventions. The hearer, or audience, in turn, assumes fictionality by interpreting context-specific conventions (Nielsen et al., 2015). As Walsh (2019a) argues later, "no one produces fiction by mistake", thus replacing the criteria of reference with the context of communicative intent (p. 402). Additionally, "Ten Theses about Fictionality" follows Walsh's initial argument that fictionality is purely a communicative act and not the object of representation:

> [I]n uses of fictionality outside of generic fictions, a sender does not transform nonfictional subject matter into something fictional but rather adopts a distinct communicative stance, inviting the audience to recognize that she has temporarily stopped conforming to the constraints of referentiality and actuality in order to accomplish some rhetorical end. (Nielsen et al., 2015, p. 65)

A notable consequence of this rhetorical approach is that it does away with paradigms focusing on referentiality. In those paradigms, fictionality is attached to its product, a fictional referent or object, whereas Walsh (2019a) argues that fictionality is a part of the pragmatics of communication and thus necessarily contextual: "It is an assumption about the communicative act, rather than an attribute of some semantic or ontological product of that act" (p. 398). He concludes that fictionality is a "*feature* of the communicative process, rather than a *product* of that process" (Walsh, 2019a, p. 411, my emphasis). This goes against many perspectives focusing on referentiality, such as fictional world and make-believe theories. Walsh's (2019a) main

objection to viewing fictionality as a product of the communicative process is in its double logic, in which:

> Fiction is framed, or disallowed, with respect to the larger context of seriously assertive discourse within which it occurs, and then a secondary mechanism is invoked to put the fiction back into relation with that context and explained why we care about fictions at all. (p. 411)

The result of accepting that fictionality is a part of the pragmatics of communication is that fictionality then relies on context, becoming circumstantial, as seen in the relevance framework. Fictionality becomes a "pragmatic, contextual inference about communicative purposes manifest in the shared cognitive environment between communicator and audience" (Walsh, 2019a, p. 412). According to Walsh (2019a), "[f]ictionality, on this account, is rhetorical rather than just communicative, because it elicits a specific range of cognitive effects; and it is rhetorical rather than just stylistic, because it is a pragmatic, not discursive, feature of communication" (p. 413).

When applying fictionality as rhetoric to the 'journey' of *A Million Little Pieces*, the reader's interpretation of the fictionality status after the controversy complicates the analysis. Prior to the controversy, the speaker's (Frey's) intent when the book was published was non-fictional,[25] and the majority of the hearers (readers) interpreted the text as non-fictional.[26] However, when it became clear that Frey had embellished certain events, the speaker's intent remained non-fictional, but some hearers rejected this communicative stance while others still accepted the work as non-fictional. In his later work, Walsh (2019a) argues that approaching fictionality as rhetoric can encompass texts that hover between fiction and non-fiction. His argument suggests a viable strategy for analysing texts such as Frey's, by accepting hybridity in texts when analysing them instead of trying to force them into one category. According to Walsh (2019a), the generic frame of a novel cues the "assumption of fictionality at the level of the text as a whole, yet readers may justifiably assume the informative relevance of some part of it", particularly in historical novels and texts set in known locations (p. 413). He concludes that "even where the generic context marks fictionality as the presiding dominant regime, there is room for informative relevance"; conversely "local irruptions of fictionality are commonplace in nonfictional discursive contexts where they are clearly subordinate to the overall priority of informative relevance" (Walsh, 2019a, p. 413). This premise could explain why some readers felt that the text conveyed the reality of dealing with substance use, despite knowing Frey's work to be fictional. Instead of rejecting the text on the basis of its lack of truthfulness, as seen in some other readers, they accept the hybridity of the text and even argue that it might *add* to the authenticity of the text. As R. S. Guthrie (2005) writes in their review:

25 Section 2.2.2, 'The Marketing of *A Million Little Pieces*', explores how Frey first tried to sell the book as a novel and thus had a fictional intent. However, the publisher, Nan Talese, decided to market the book as a memoir, after which Frey's intent turned non-fictional.

26 See section 2.2.1.3 'The Initial Response'.

> Was some of this exaggerated or dramatized for impact or for import? Probably, but what good writing is not? Most of our memories are probably romanticized but does that make them any less true or give them any less steely impact on the self? [...] The thing that wouldn't let go of me as I read this book was the reality of the sheer fortitude it must have taken for him to put all this down for the world to see. Who would ever expose themselves in such a way for the simple need of attention? Frey does not glamorize his actions, nor does he claim any glory for himself.

1.2.5 Fictionality as Invention

Finally, another rhetorical approach to fictionality can be found in Zetterberg Gjerlevsen and Nielsen (2020), who include 'invention' as a concept in their definition of fictionality. They define fictionality as "intentionally signaled, communicated invention" (Zetterberg Gjerlevsen & Nielsen, 2020, p. 23). The definition still allows separation of fictionality from fiction and, according to them, "coheres with a view of fictionality as a quality that applies to nonfictional genres and at the same time fundamentally changes our idea of how fictionality works in fiction" (Zetterberg Gjerlevsen & Nielsen, 2020, p. 23). According to Zetterberg Gjerlevsen and Nielsen (2020), fictionality is "distinguished from other rhetorical resources precisely by its *inventedness*" (p. 24, emphasis in original). They state that a speaker must sign fictionality for a receiver to recognise it as fictionality and consequently to distinguish it from other rhetorical resources and discourses. That signalling has to be deliberate; hence, intentionality is used in the definition, separating fictionality from lies. They argue that one of the qualities of fictionality is the "potential diversity of interpretations it creates" (Zetterberg Gjerlevsen & Nielsen, 2020, p. 34). This makes their definition of fictionality interesting for empirical research into reader responses and, thus, the current study.

Their definition is especially useful when discussing hybrid texts such as autofictional texts or cases like Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*. As Zetterberg Gjerlevsen and Nielsen (2020) state, "[f]ictionality is distinct from other rhetorical resources and must be understood as existing in a relationship between an author's intentions and interpretations by readers regarding whether it is signaled and understood as invented" (p. 34). Moreover, they argue that when fictionality is analysed, "the relationship between intentions and interpretations is crucial: the analysis is centred on the way a sender uses fictionality as a strategy to obtain different goals and the way these strategies are interpreted by a receiver" (Zetterberg Gjerlevsen & Nielsen, 2020, p. 34). This could be seen as a pact more accepting of hybrid texts: the author 'promises' either fact or fiction, and the reader accepts either fact or fiction, regardless of the local (non-)fictional fictionality strategies. However, as mentioned earlier, the author's promise does not need to align with the reader's perception of the text. In essence, their approach to fictionality as invention suggests that the reader's narrative engagement is not necessarily affected by the author's intention and the fictionality status of a text, but by the reader's interpretation or perception of the text. Consequently, because fictionality as invention includes the reader's perception, the

theory allows for the exploration of idiosyncratic responses to texts.[27] Moreover, it could be argued that the fictionality status of the text is, then, ultimately determined by the reader.

As this concludes the exploration of the first element, an exploration of what makes a text fictional to readers, the next section will continue examining the second element: (2) An exploration of how readers' perceptions of (non-)fictionality affect their narrative engagement.

1.2.6 Perceived Fictionality

For the next step of defining fictionality, (2) an exploration of how readers' perceptions of (non-)fictionality affect their narrative engagement, I will examine both theoretical and empirical reader studies that include fictionality as a variable. The theories mentioned earlier examined differences in fictionality but did not necessarily consider the audience's perception. Zetterberg Gjerleven and Nielsen's argument introduces an interesting question: do readers process narratives differently if they think that they are reading a fictional or non-fictional text, regardless of the author's intention?

A survey by Argo et al. (2008) shows variation in responses to narratives when considering fictionality. Participants were presented with one of three short stories in that study, which focused on empathy in response to emotional, melodramatic entertainment. The participants had to indicate on a seven-point scale the extent to which they believed the facts recounted in the story were based on a true account. Adding empathy as a variable, their results showed some differences between when participants thought narratives to be high or low in fictionality. Its results showed significant differences between participants who thought the narratives to be high or low in fictionality. For instance, high empathisers favoured stories low in fictionality (Argo et al., 2008). Pouliot and Cowen (2007) similarly looked at perceived realism in films, and examined the influence of fictionality on specific cognitive processes, namely, memory and emotions. Their results showed a difference in the effects of the narrative due to perceived fictionality as well; for example, the intensity of emotional reactions was greater for fictional films (Pouliot & Cowen, 2007).

A study into transportation by Melanie C. Green et al. (2012)[28] took fact and fiction into account. The study examined pre-reading emotional states and the extent to which these might affect transportation within the context of perceived fictionality. The results showed no significant differences in emotional responses based on fictionality, suggesting that "emotional response did not depend on whether the story was true or not" (M. C. Green et al., 2012,

27 See section 1.1.2.3, 'Self-Concept', for an exploration of how the self-concept influences narrative experiences.

28 An earlier study by Melanie C. Green (2004) examined perceived realism and whether prior knowledge affects narrative engagement, in this case, transportation. Her findings showed that "knowing a real-life person who shared a significant characteristic with the main character" increased narrative engagement (M. C. Green, 2004, p. 257). This would mean, for instance, that a reader of Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* who has a relative or friend who struggles with substance use would show a higher degree of transportation. Additionally, Melanie C. Green's (2004) results showed that prior knowledge of the main topic also increased narrative engagement and there was a correlation between transportation and perceived realism.

p. 47). Although the nature of the text being factual or fictional was not the main object of study, this is an interesting result to consider.

More studies that do not focus on perception specifically have been done on the effects of fictionality on readers and its effects on narrative engagement. Research suggests, for instance, that exposure to fiction is more positively related to empathy and social abilities than non-fiction (Mar et al., 2006; Djikic et al., 2009; Kidd & Castano, 2013); support for this difference can also be found in physiological reactions. Namely, when looking at the level of cognitive processing, there seems to be a difference in the brain activity of readers perceiving a text as either fictional or non-fictional depending on how it is presented (Altmann et al., 2014), suggesting that people process the two types of text differently.

Considering James' (2022) argument that autofictional texts are valuable for studies into fictionality, it is interesting to take into account theoretical explorations that focus on autofictional texts when exploring perceived fictionality.[29] For instance, Gibbons (2019), using Text World Theory's[30] cognitive approach, explored readers' interpretations of authors and fictionality. Choosing Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan novels as a case study, Gibbons executes a theoretical exploration of both readers' (mis)classification of the genre, as autofiction or autobiography, and problems posed by an author's pseudonymous identity. Gibbons (2019) shows how, despite the paratextual markers of the novels clearly showing 'signposts of fictionality', "readers and critics often read an autobiographical trace" in the novels (p. 400). Through her analysis of the text, she concludes that autofiction is a literary genre *and* a reading strategy. Gibbons' (2019) analysis suggests that "readers identify, navigate, and even confuse or reject the intended fictionality or referentiality of a work" (p. 392) because their "perceptions of the external realism of the novels and their own self-implications and expressive enactment can make fictions feel more real and thus influence judgments of fictionality" (p. 410). In short, this implies that similar to how the reader's own experience and cultural knowledge can influence their narrative engagement according to SPSs Theory, their experience and cultural knowledge can influence their perception of the text's fictionality as well.

In conclusion, numerous studies on the effect of literature on readers have suggested a difference in how readers react to fictionality. That said, there seems to be a gap in empirical studies that purposively examine *perceived* fictionality. The studies in this section often focus on perceived *realism* (i.e., is it based on a true account), rather than perceived fictionality (M. C. Green, 2004; Argo et al., 2008; Pouliot & Cowen, 2007; M. C. Green et al., 2012), are more general quantitative studies into fictionality (Mar et al., 2006; Djikic et al., 2009; Kidd & Castano, 2013), or are theoretical explorations such as Gibbon's (2019) analysis above. Therefore, this dissertation aims to fill the abovementioned gap by using Frey's novel *A Million Little Pieces* in the light of Zetterberg Gjerlevsen and Nielsen's definition of fictionality – fictionality as

29 See Chapter 4., 'Discussion'.

30 Coined by Paul Werth in the 1980s, Text World Theory is a cognitive-linguistic model of discourse processing. In short, text-world approaches are "based on the notion that human beings process and understand fictional discourse by constructing detailed mental representations of it in their minds" (Gavins, 2005, p. 596).

invention – in order to examine the reader's perception of fictionality on narrative engagement as conceived with the help of SPSs theory. As previously mentioned, the participants in the test condition will be told that the text they are reading is either fictional (invented) or non-fictional (not invented). This manipulation of the provided information will thus function similarly to how the paratext communicates the (non-)fictional global fictionality to readers.

1.3 Hypotheses[31]

As mentioned before, this study will examine to what extent the reader's perception of a narrative as fictional or non-fictional affects its reception by using Storyworld Possible Selves Theory as a framework and James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* as the text material. The study thus researches how the perception of fictionality relates to the nature, construction, and relevance of the projected storyworld possible selves. The previously explored studies suggest the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: *Participants will trigger more secondary SPSs and SPS slipnets than primary SPSs.* This is expected as primary SPSs align with the broadly accepted interpretations of literary criticism and mainstream narrative theory (Martínez, 2018). Additionally, this result has previously been found in Martínez and Herman (2020) and Ghasseminejad (2023).

Hypothesis 1b: *The primary SPSs that are expected to emerge are: the desired 'persevering' SPS, the desired 'supported' SPS, the desired 'hopeful' SPS, the undesired 'substance user' SPS, the undesired 'struggling' SPS, the undesired 'hopeless' SPS and the 'parent' self-schema SPS.* These have been determined by a previous pilot study (Ghasseminejad, 2023).

Hypothesis 2: *Participants who share characteristics with the perspectivizer will trigger more SPSs.* As mentioned, more matches between the reader's self-concept and the perspectivizer will lead to a higher possibility of creating SPSs blends (Martínez, 2014, 2018). Therefore, participants who have struggle(d) with substance use themselves are expected to trigger more SPSs.

Hypothesis 3: *Participants who know a real-life person who shares characteristics with the perspectivizer will trigger more SPSs.* Melanie C. Green's (2004) results regarding perceived realism suggest that when a reader knows someone who shares characteristics with the perspectivizer, narrative engagement will increase. Therefore, it is expected that participants who have someone in their social circle who struggles with substance use will trigger more SPSs.

Hypothesis 4: *Participants in the fiction condition will trigger more SPSs than participants in the non-fiction condition.* As described in section 1.2.6, 'Perceived Fictionality', several studies (e.g., Mar et al., 2006; Pouliot & Cowen, 2007; Djikic et al., 2009) suggest that fictional narratives affect engagement more than non-fictional narratives. Thus, it is expected that the participants in the fiction condition will find it easier to find matches between themselves and the perspectivizer, which will consequently trigger more SPSs.

31 Parts of this section have been published as a peer-reviewed article in *Frontiers of Narrative Studies, 10*(1), 2024, as "Secondary storyworld possible selves: Narrative response and cultural (un)predictability", co-authored with María-Ángeles Martínez. The author roles for the article are as follows: (1) Melina Ghasseminejad: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Writing – Original Draft, Writing –Reviewing & Editing; and (2) María-Ángeles Martínez: Methodology, Writing – Reviewing & Editing, Supervision.

2. ASPECTS OF METHODOLOGY[32]

This chapter outlines the methodological framework employed in this study. Section 2.1, 'Participants', will first present the participant selection strategy that was designed for the present study. This strategy was deemed necessary as the research was aimed at actual readers. Additionally, as the participants would be inhabitants of Antwerp, Belgium, the selection strategy was designed to consider the hyper-diverse nature of Antwerp. Next, the deployment of the selection strategy and the actual participants will be described. Section 2.2, 'Text Material', will explain the selection procedure of the excerpts for the experiment. This will include an analysis of linguistic anchors that can encourage the emergence of SPSs. Section 2.3, 'Secondary Storyworld Possible Selves', introduces an expansion to SPSs Theory, namely *secondary storyworld possible selves*. Unexpected results found during a pilot study[33] conducted for this research highlighted a gap in the theory, which led to the conceptualisation of secondary SPSs. This expansion is necessary as it can lead to an essential additional data analysis. Finally, this chapter will conclude with section 2.4, 'Procedure and Data Analysis'. This section will delve into the steps taken during the experiment and the choice of analyses that were applied to the data.

32 The Ethics Committee for the Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Antwerp approved the data collection, storage, and processing method. They also approved the study's methodology, the experiment's introduction given to the participants, the consent form, and the debriefing of the experiment.

33 An initial pilot study with twenty participants was conducted to evaluate the applicability of SPSs Theory in investigating the influence of fictionality on narrative engagement (Ghasseminejad, 2023). Additionally, the pilot study served to test the methodology that has been applied to the current research. The current study is modelled after the pilot study: 21 participants were divided into three groups and provided with the same excerpts, after which they were interviewed. One group was informed that the text was fiction, another was told it was non-fiction, and the third group received no information information regarding the nature of the text. Due to the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown measures at the time of research, the interviews were conducted online. The study demonstrated that the methodology used was effective in measuring narrative engagement using SPSs Theory as a framework. Furthermore, the pilot study confirmed the presence of substantially more SPS slipnets than primary SPSs, while also identifying a significant number of SPSs that did not fit within the predefined categories (see section 2.3, 'Secondary Storyworld Possible Selves'). As previously mentioned, several primary SPSs were registered, namely: the desired 'persevering' SPS, the desired 'supported' SPS, the desired 'hopeful' SPS, the undesired 'substance user' SPS, the undesired 'struggling' SPS, the undesired 'hopeless' SPS and the 'parent' self-schema SPS. Additionally, fictionality appeared to influence the undesired SPSs results, suggesting that fictionality can affect narrative engagement (Ghasseminejad, 2023). Based on reflections on the pilot study process, slight adjustments were made to the excerpt selection (see section 2.2, 'Text Material') and the questionnaire (see section 2.4.1, 'Procedure Experiment').

2.1 Participants

As mentioned in Chapter 1, 'Introduction', early strategies of researching readers of literary fiction turned literary scholars to hermeneutic shortcuts like Iser's (1974) implied reader, which is "a textual structure anticipating the presence of a recipient without necessarily defining him" (Iser, 1978, p. 34), or Fish's (1970) informed reader, which is a reader who is capable of handling literary conventions. Although these shortcuts cannot be seen as dealing with actual readers – in other words, the "flesh-and-blood person reading the text" who is not trained in analysing narratives (Prince, 2013, 'precursors' section) – implied and informed readers bypass a challenging aspect. Namely, reader responses can be highly idiosyncratic. Moreover, even though there will always be culturally expected responses from readers (i.e., rooting for the hero), "it is the individual that actualizes narrative meaning by anchoring it to some specific context of interpretation and to the deepest and most private recesses of the experiencing mind" (Martínez, 2018, p. 1). Therefore, section 2.1.1, 'Participant Selection Strategy', will present a selection strategy that considers the culturally complex geography of Antwerp, Belgium (Tasan-Kok et al., 2013; Wessendorf, 2014). Next, section 2.1.2, 'Participants Experiment', will describe the actual participants who took part in the experiment.

2.1.1 Participant Selection Strategy[34]

This section presents a participant sampling strategy for empirical reader response research to explore whether the consideration of culturally complex geographies will affect reader responses in empirical research, focusing on the theory that "identifies the significant role of the reader in constructing textual meaning" (Browne et al., 2021, 'General Overview' section). In this sampling strategy, libraries play a central role. The study looks at Antwerp, Belgium, as the location for examining urban readers in a European context. When discussing hyper-diverse locations in the Global North, cities such as New York, Toronto, and London come to mind. Antwerp is a less prominent hyper-diverse city, and while relatively small (26 x 11 km), it houses 172 nationalities (*Antwerpse diversiteit in cijfers*, n.d.). Consequently, the diversity in Antwerp calls for a complex approach to participant selection if the goal is to have a representative sample. In simpler terms, this section introduces the concept of culturally complex geographies in the context of reader response research.

When examining culturally complex geographies, which refers to the "demographic complexity of cities and the multi-categorical differentiations found in specific areas" (Wessendorf, 2014, p. 24), it becomes necessary to simplify the concept. In the context of Britain's social

34 This section has been published as a peer-reviewed article in *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion, 7*(3/4), 2023, as, "Hyper-Diversity in Sampling Strategy for Reader Response Studies in an Urban Context", co-authored with Anneke M. Sools, Luc Herman and María-Ángeles Martínez. The author roles for article are as follows: (1) Melina Ghasseminejad: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Reviewing & Editing; (2) Anneke M. Sools: Writing – Reviewing; (3) Luc Herman: Writing – Reviewing, Supervision; and (4) María-Ángeles Martínez: Writing – Reviewing. The text has been adjusted for readability and to avoid unnecessary repetition.

landscape, Vertovec (2007) argued that the complex social makeup in Britain had outgrown the term multiculturalism, a notion that is often used in politics and mainly focuses on ethnicity. Aiming to re-evaluate the nature of diversity in Britain, he introduced the term superdiversity, arguing that "it is not enough to see diversity only in terms of ethnicity, as is regularly the case both in social science and the wider public sphere" (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1024). He specifically refers to the myriad of additional variables people carry with them, such as differential immigration statuses, age profiles, and spatial distribution patterns (Vertovec, 2007). Building on Vertovec's theory of superdiversity, Tasan-Kok et al. (2013) argue that urban groups have become hyper-diverse, as even when people appear to belong to the same group, they can express different lifestyles, attitudes, and activity patterns. This complexity can also be found in responses to narratives, which may be affected by our personal experiences (Martínez, 2018). As described in chapter 1, 'Introduction', to tackle the difficulty of examining those individual differences in literary processes, literary scholars such as Schmidt advocated for an empirically oriented science of literature in the 1970s, aiming to bridge the gap between the humanities and the sciences whilst not depending on sociological or psychological procedures. Traditional quantitative empirical investigations often require large sample sizes, and this convention has also been translated to quantitative reader response research. As a result, convenience sampling has been commonly adopted as a sampling strategy, wherein "research participants are selected based on their ease of availability" when studying actual readers (Saumure & Given, 2008, p. 124). However, as Patton (2015) argues, "convenience sampling is neither strategic nor purposeful. It is lazy and largely useless" (p. 306). Instead, when studying idiosyncratic actual reader responses, opting for a purposeful sampling strategy is more likely to ensure "insights and in-depth understanding" (Patton, 2015, p. 401).

Hence, if a study's research question looks at readers in general, a sample of actual readers brings about a complication when designing an empirical case study: how can it be ensured that the sample consists of actual readers? Moreover, how can the sample be ensured to include actual readers when dealing with a culturally complex population? In other words, I am considering a sample that takes reader diversity into account as well. This section focuses on these issues and aims to present a participant selection strategy for empirical research into actual urban readers by looking at Antwerp, Belgium. Still, the proposed strategy can be used to research readers in any Western urban context. As Flick (2007) argues, "constructing a research design successfully means to define who or what shall be studied (and who or what shall not)" (p. 44). In the case of empirical research, participants must be selected carefully. As Reybold et al. (2013) argue, researchers do not "just collect and analyze neutral data; they decide who matters as data. Each choice repositions inquiry, closing down some opportunities while creating others" (p. 699). When looking at individual and culturally determined responses, it is valuable to have participants that are part of the target group, in this case, the actual Flemish urban reader. A study from 2011 by the marketing research company Synovate found that among 750 Flemish residents spread across cities and rural areas, a little over 50% of the participants reported that they read books as a favourite pastime, with women tending to favour reading more than men.

People from urban areas (66%) slightly preferred reading more than those from rural areas (51%). Regarding age, the category that seems to read the most as a pastime was 55-64 (66%), followed closely by the age category 35-44 with 63 percent. Migration background was not included in the analyses as there were not enough participants with a migration background (3%) to reach reliable and valid conclusions (Synovate, 2011). This is problematic because the latest study into readers in Belgium could not reach a minority population.

2.1.1.1 Traditional Samples: University Student Population

Due to language proficiency, the pool of possible participants may become smaller when studying readers. Hence, reader studies tend to have a sample of highly educated people as participants. In practice, this means that researchers often turn to their student population, raising the question of whether participants in such a sample can be seen as actual readers (Wild et al., 2022). In addition to not being the leading group of Flemish readers, other limits should be considered when working with a student population. Convenience sampling certainly has its advantages, as students are easily accessible, thus affording a large population from which to sample, and they can be rewarded with credits, thus low costs. However, research by Hanel and Vione (2016) that looked at students across 59 countries showed that although their results were as heterogeneous as those of the general public, the differences and variability between students could not be explained. Moreover, in a gambling study, Gainsbury et al. (2014) compared university students to the general public and concluded that using student participants from one university is only appropriate if the study aims to investigate students' behaviours from that specific university. In other words, even though they are part of the same group on the surface, students from separate universities display dissimilar responses, making the results unrepresentative. Hence, if the study aims to investigate the behaviours of the general public, it is not sufficient to only include university student participants in the research sample.

An extra element must be considered when discussing university students' use in empirical studies. The students approached for studies into readers are usually language students. If the target group for a reader response study is a diverse group of urban readers, like a group with demographic complexity and multi-categorial differentiations (Wessendorf, 2014), then those students are not suitable, as they are trained in narrative from day one, turning them into skilled readers. Moreover, the student population is overwhelmingly white, whilst populations of cities that house research institutions, including Antwerp, are ethnically diverse. As Sugden and Moulson (2015) argue,

> [a] sample from the population should include participants representing that population's diversity. If the population is not homogenously or nearly homogenously White, but research samples recruited from the population are nearly ubiquitously White, this disconnect should be probed and remediated. (p. 2)

Moreover, composing a sample out of a student population threatens the internal validity of a study as well, "likely due [to] the differences in knowledge between student participants at

different stages in their education and chosen course of study" (Meltzer et al., 2012, p. 252). Additionally, even though the students might follow the same programme, some major in linguistics and others in literature.

2.1.1.2 Sample Selection: Static Categories

As results from an experiment amongst a student population would not be representative when discussing the urban reader, descriptive categories are necessary to ensure a representative sample. This automatically brings the discussion to the traditional categories, namely the big eight: "race, gender, ethnicity/nationality, organisational role/function, age, sexual orientation, mental/physical ability and religion," with three of those especially prominent in the West, namely gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background (Bührmann, 2015, p. 24).

Gender is understood as the "socially produced differences between being feminine and being masculine" (Holmes, 2007, p. 2) and is generally considered to come in two forms: male and female (Richards et al., 2016). However, in addition to people identifying with the binary system of male and female, some people have a non-binary gender identity – an umbrella term for several identities such as genderqueer, pangender, bigender, and agender – and should be taken into account as well (Richards et al., 2016).

The second descriptive category of ethnicity/nationality is more challenging to examine. As Salentin (2014) states,

> [e]thnic categories are vague and multidimensional, and at the same time essentialist, constructed, and not entirely amenable to objective characterization, often apparently arbitrary and almost always politically contested, embedded in country-specific circumstances, and subject to rapid change; their semantics are language-specific, and their labels change constantly and quickly become pejorative. (p. 27)

Especially in continental Europe, the concepts of race and ethnicity are difficult to broach due to the consequences of the Second World War and Nazism (Salentin, 2014). Hence, I will forgo the terms race or ethnicity, which are mainly used in the American context (Bührmann, 2015). Instead, I will use the term migration background, which is used more commonly in the European context, including Belgium (Salentin, 2014), and is similar to how Wessendorf (2014) uses the term ethnic background, which is a term that refers to "people's references to a common ancestry, shared culture, history and language" (p. 11). That is not to say that the term does not have its shortcomings. The official legal definition of a person with a migratory background given by the European Commission (n.d.) is "a person who has (a) migrated into their present country of residence; and (b) previously had a different nationality from their present country of residence; and (c) at least one of their parents previously entered their present country of residence as a migrant"(para.1). According to Will (2019), this indicates that the concept is "grounded on citizenship, not migration experience" and therefore remains "an 'ethnic' rather than a migration category" (p. 550, emphasis in original). In the context of research on German politics, the statistical category is turned into a social category that

is "framed in terms of language and class" and thus implicitly becomes "ethnic and produces a version of membership in German society that excludes [...] (some German citizens) from the core national group" (Elrick & Schwartzman, 2015, p. 1546). In other words, a necessary consequence is that migrants are still labelled as 'foreigners' based on the public perception of them, regardless of their legal migration status (Asbrock et al., 2014).

The last descriptive category, socioeconomic status, seems straightforward to use – after all, most scholars have a general idea of its meaning – but there are numerous ways to measure and define the construct. The most widely accepted measure of socioeconomic status is a "composite measure of education, income, and occupation" (Baker, 2014, p. 2210). When discussing socioeconomic status, it would be remiss to omit class as a notion, especially as class is often used and preferred in the public sphere instead of socioeconomic status. Class has many definitions, but it generally refers to a "combination of socioeconomic status, parental and educational background, and, related to this, differences in speech, tastes, mannerisms, and other cultural practices" (Wessendorf, 2014, p. 11). I will follow Wessendorf's use of the term class and her accompanying definition.

2.1.1.3 Intersectionality and Superdiversity as a Sampling Strategy

The abovementioned parameters have a history of being studied separately and individually. As classifiers, they often function as a default when defining diversity by making distinct categories and counting the numbers (Meissner, 2016). However, this started to change when Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality in her influential 1989 article "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex," which introduced the importance of the interaction and dynamic between two or more factors. Hence, intersectionality might help design a purposive sample strategy when selecting participants in an urban context. Initially introduced as a term to point out that a "single-axis framework erases Black women in the conceptualization, identification, and remediation of race and sex discrimination" (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 140), the concept was quickly picked up by scholars and applied to fields beyond Black feminist critique and has since seen an increase in interest in academia and a widespread awareness in the public sphere. An earlier manifesto by the Combahee River Collective (1983), a Black lesbian feminist organization, emphasises the inseparability of several systems of oppression with their declaration: "We also find it difficult to separate race from class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously" (p. 212). Accordingly, Crenshaw (2002, p. 177) defines intersectionality as follows:

> Intersectionality is a conceptualization of the problem that attempts to capture both the structural and dynamic consequences of the interaction between two or more axes of subordination. It specifically addresses the manner in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression and other discriminatory systems create background inequalities that structure the relative positions of women, races, ethnicities, classes, and the like. Moreover, it addresses the way that specific acts and policies create burdens that flow along these axes constituting the dynamic or active aspects of

> disempowerment. (quoted in Lutz, 2015, p. 364)

Even though the concept offers a way to look at the interactions between social structures and identity, there are still some gaps in the theory. The main caveat concerns the gender, race, and class triangle and the fact that more categories could play a role, such as religion and geopolitical location (Lutz, 2015). More importantly, although intersectionality makes room for including several categories in an analysis and has been used as a methodology in the past (Acevedo-Garcia et al., 2003; Berger & Guidroz, 2009; Samra & Hankivsky, 2021), it does not suffice as a methodology when it comes to hyper-diverse cities. This can be observed in Marfelt's (2016) development of an "empirically grounded methodology" where he incorporates diversity research as a factor when proposing intersectionality as a methodology (p. 32). Marfelt suggests that intersectionality needs another theory to become a well-defined methodology. Although he acknowledges that intersectionality's "open-endedness and vagueness" contributes to its successes (Marfelt, 2016, p. 34), he also highlights its somewhat ambiguous definition and the lack of a coherent methodology. To transform intersectionality into a methodology, Marfelt (2016) incorporates factors from diversity studies, which are already addressed in hyper-diversity as a framework, namely the fluidity of social categories, as elaborated below.

Before delving further into hyper-diversity, it is helpful to look at superdiversity first. In her book *Commonplace Diversity*, Wessendorf (2014) uses the notion of superdiversity as a lens to "describe an exceptional demographic situation characterized by the multiplication of social categories within specific localities" (p. 2). She criticises how individuals are traditionally described solely based on their social categories without considering the relationships between group and individual. For instance, as Anthias (2011) points out, when only ethnic position is considered as a marker, it is often assumed to imply ethnic identity, which in turn implies "belonging to a particular culture with contents which are generic (and homogeneous) to the group" (p. 205). As mentioned previously, this section aims to present a participant selection strategy for empirical research into urban readers. However, Wessendorf's and Anthias' critiques show that it is insufficient to look at traditional markers when aiming to include the target audience's diversity into the sample, as it fails to incorporate complex social relations, such as differences between class, cultural background, and language.

In its broadest definition, superdiversity refers to a "multi-dimensional perspective on diversity" (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1026), as merely observing ethnicities leads to a one-dimensional understanding of diversity and thus fails to include the "multiplication of significant variables that affect where, how and with whom people live" such as immigration statuses, gender, age, labour market experiences, and patterns of spatial distribution (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1025). In short, superdiversity is a lens with which it is possible to examine intersections in cities where superdiversity has become commonplace, in other words, where "diversity has become habitual and part of the everyday human landscape" (Wessendorf, 2014, p. 3). Additionally, Vertovec (2007) uses superdiversity to transcend traditional scientific framings on multicultural studies that tend to look at cultures as something fixed and bound (H. Jones et al., 2015). Instead, he

describes the often-present interplay of variables in groups and individuals (Vertovec, 2007). Another key feature of the concept is that it acknowledges differences within groups of the same ethnic or national origin (Vertovec, 2007). This notion is in accordance with intersectionality but overcomes the aforementioned triangle problem. As Wessendorf (2014) argues, "it is easy to deconstruct ethnic categories when looking at specific ethnic 'groups' and their members' patterns of identification," but "it is more difficult to write about contexts with numerous migrants and minorities from various ethnic and national backgrounds without using these categories" (p. 11). In addition, there is an increase in mixed-ethnicity populations and established migrant populations, bringing a new type of identity (H. Jones et al., 2015). This complexity thus calls for another way of grouping city dwellers. As Hoekstra and Pinkster (2019) argue,

> [s]uper-diversity invites researchers to go beyond a focus on diversity that is the result of international migration and explore how differences in nationality, race, and ethnicity intersect with other dimensions of difference, such as gender, age, life course, class, religion, migrant trajectories, and language. (p. 223)

That said, critics argue that superdiversity remains to be "tethered to rather more traditional identity categories, even if these are emergent or complicated" (Kraftl et al., 2019, p. 1192). Although it might seem like a case of semantics, Kraftl et al. (2019) argue that although superdiversity begins to emphasise the "dynamic, performative and contingent ways in which superdiverse identities and spaces extend beyond traditional social (and especially ethnic) identity categories", it does not encompass it entirely as these complexities are far more extensive (p. 1192). For instance, "an individual's eating habits, or their leisure pursuits, or even their emotional disposition to particular places in a city, may differ quite markedly from those of others in the same superdiverse sub-group" (Kraftl et al., 2019, p. 1191). Thus, Peterson (2017) argues that urban groups are not merely becoming superdiverse, they are becoming hyper-diverse, "because even people who appear to belong to the same group express different lifestyles, attitudes and activity patterns" (p. 1069). In other words, superdiversity still adheres to static and traditional categories, whereas hyper-diversity takes the complexity of the blurring of traditional categories into account. This distinction underpins the difference between the two terms in secondary literature. As Tasan-Kok et al. (2013) state,

> [p]eople belonging to the same population or ethnic group may show quite different attitudes, for example, concerning school, work, parents and other groups; they may have very different daily and lifetime routines. Some adolescents and adults may exhibit extensive daily mobility patterns, while others may be locally oriented. While the sphere of daily interaction of a native resident may be restricted to his immediate surroundings, his foreign-born immigrant neighbour may be quite mobile both with respect to social and professional relations. (p. 5)

To clarify, although Wessendorf's (2014) research departs from superdiversity, her take on group forming seems to include some hyper-diversity elements. However, to avoid confusion, I will follow Peterson (2017) and use hyper-diversity as a lens when developing a selection

strategy for reader response studies.

2.1.1.4 Hyper-Diversity to Guide Sampling in Superdiverse Cities

This means that an approach must be found to mark boundaries in a hyper-diverse population if opting for using hyper-diversity as a methodology. Wessendorf (2014) suggests taking social milieus into account as a demarcation by using Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) notion of habitus – the system of "durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" which consist of acquired schemes of perceptions and practices (p. 72). By using social milieus, Wessendorf (2014) says it is possible to include and accept that for some people their categorical background (i.e., ethnic, religious, etc.) forms "the primary criterion for social relations" and that for others it is based on "other commonalities that they create their social relations [with]" (p. 32). She emphasises that the kinds of social milieus in a superdiverse context "cannot be defined along the more classical lines of milieu theory," which focuses on "historically grown groups based on social stratification and class hierarchies (e.g., the working-class milieu or the milieu of the educated bourgeoisie)" (Wessendorf, 2014, p. 32). Instead, Wessendorf (2014) argues that a social milieu in a superdiverse context is characterised by "a variety of social groupings with different histories of stratification, education, religious affiliations, etc." (p. 32). In her research into the superdiverse London borough of Hackney, her fieldwork revealed exciting results:

> Although it is impossible to calculate the number of friendships formed across class and ethnic boundaries, my fieldwork has shown that class trumps ethnicity in terms of mixing, and people were more likely to mix with people of other ethnic or racial backgrounds within the same class, than to mix with someone of the same ethnic background but whom they identified as being of a different social class. (Wessendorf, 2014, p. 134)

This suggests that sharing similar backgrounds, values, and attitudes towards life plays a more significant role than sharing traditional markers, which is ingrained in the definition of hyper-diversity. However, this brings with it its own set of difficulties. It raises the question of how social milieus can be charted and, most importantly, how it can be ensured that participants belong to these separate milieus.

2.1.1.5 Social Milieus and Neighbourhoods

While the word hyper-diverse might suggest conviviality, socioeconomic segregation still expresses itself in neighbourhoods. For instance, even though the levels of segregation in Europe are not as high as in the United States, there are still socio-spatial inequalities (Cassiers & Kesteloot, 2012). This mainly concerns urban development and the housing market segmentation, resulting in cities with a prosperous centre and poorer peripheries or, the opposite, a poor centre with affluent suburbs (Cassiers & Kesteloot, 2012). Antwerp is an example of the former, and data shows a clear clustering of migrants and socioeconomic status in Belgian cities (Costa & de Valk, 2018). That is to say, neighbourhoods have socioeconomic profiles.

Although there seems to be an overlap between migration background and socioeconomic status, migration background does not necessarily play a big part in people's construction of their identity in hyper-diverse cities. Noble and Watkins (2014) warn that even though there is some "'cultural coherence' and stability in relation to customs and language" (p. 175, emphasis in original), it does not necessarily mean that people are defined by their origins and are supposed to be determined by them in terms of behaviour. Combined with the hyper-diverse nature of Antwerp, this cultural complexity leads to neighbourhoods playing an essential role in the feeling of belonging.

Referring to the supposed loss of community in city dwellers, Castells (2010) argues that people still cultivate a community in the shape of territorial identities; they "generate a feeling of belonging, and ultimately, in many cases, a communal, cultural identity" (p. 63). Galster (2001) defines a neighbourhood as "the bundle of spatially based attributes associated with clusters of residences, sometimes in conjunction with other land uses" (p. 2112). While this does not mean that neighbourhoods are necessarily homogeneous, a "distribution or profile can be ascertained once a space has been demarcated" (Galster, 2001, p. 2113). Having established that separate neighbourhoods have their own culture, it is possible that living in a certain neighbourhood might influence the results of reader response studies.

2.1.1.6 Recruitment Strategy: Semi-Public Places and Spaces

After recognising that neighbourhoods have an identity and that they can be described as a social milieu, it is now possible to specify the recruitment strategy for the Antwerp context, which can optimally account for urban hyper-diversity in an empirical reader response study. The municipality of Antwerp consists of nine neighbourhoods. Participants from each of these neighbourhoods would be needed to attain representative findings. A viable option would be recruiting participants in public libraries. Aside from the apparent advantage of almost certainly encountering readers in a library, libraries exist as a unique space in cities: the semi-public realm. In addition to the traditional public and private space, Lofland (1998) proposes the third space of the parochial realm (also called the semi-public realm). She defines these semi-public spaces as "characterized by a sense of commonality among acquaintances and neighbors who are involved in interpersonal networks that are located within 'communities'" (Lofland, 1998, p. 10, emphasis in original). In addition, she provides a simple distinction between the three realms or spaces: "[T]he private realm is the world of the household and friend and kin networks; the parochial realm is the world of the neighbourhood, workplace, or acquaintance networks; and the public realm is the world of strangers and the 'street'" (Lofland, 1998, p. 10, emphasis in original). Although semi-public spaces (i.e., community centres, cafes, and libraries) are open to everyone, they have a private character due to "changes in control and behaviour with semi-public spaces possibly imposing stricter rules regarding behaviour than purely public spaces might do" (Peterson, 2017, p. 1071).

A recent study into Antwerp libraries provides an in-depth analysis of customer profiles (van

Geel, 2020). The study shows that 530,000 inhabitants can use the sixteen public libraries, three library buses, and one prison library. Interestingly, the municipal libraries are aware that different neighbourhoods have different needs and aim to fulfill those needs. For instance, the library in the city centre, Permeke, focuses on non-Dutch speakers and people experiencing homelessness in addition to children, teens, and Dutch-speaking adults, thus adapting its collection as such. Hence, it keeps the make-up of the neighbourhood in mind as the library is situated on the border of the Antwerpen and Borgerhout neighbourhoods. Although these aspirations of attracting everyone in the community are commendable, it does not necessarily translate to inclusion. However, the report uses its data to draw up nine client profiles showcasing library-goers' diversity and considering several variables, including age groups, education levels, and socioeconomic status. In other words, the library aims to accommodate the hyper-diversity of the city by developing distinct profiles that cater to the specific needs of its audience (van Geel, 2020).

In practice, this leads to the following selection strategy. First, all settings or organisations where the target group can be found should be listed when looking for participants in an urban setting (David, n.d.). In the case of the present study, the target group is actual readers; there are three options for the target group: bookshops, book fairs, and libraries. However, as this study wants to include a representation of social milieus, the latter is the recommended location for participant recruitment. Hence, the relevant organisation is the city library, and the settings are the various neighbourhoods. After contacting the library representatives to discuss the experiment and the possibility of recruiting participants, the next step in the selection strategy is outlining the inclusion and exclusion criteria before contacting individuals (David, n.d.). This way, the potential participants will know whether they can participate in the study. The most important criterion in this case would be confirming that the participant lives in the same neighbourhood as the library. With that outline, it is possible to start approaching individuals. The library in Antwerp allows the distribution of fliers, but other possible options are contacting individuals by providing an information session or using the organisation's email lists (David, n.d.). However, the latter option may introduce bias, as it relies on internet and email accessibility and should be used as an additional strategy to the former options. The above-described strategy is supported by Roscoe's (2021) strategies for inclusive sampling, as it consists of purposeful sampling (intentional recruitment of specific groups of people), community sampling (recruiting and collaborating with community members) and removing barriers (accessibility regarding distance and finance).

2.1.1.7 Participant Selection Strategy Conclusion

Section 2.1.1, 'Participant Selection Strategy', aimed to present a participant sampling strategy for empirical reader response research with Antwerp, Belgium as the location for a study of urban readers in a European context. In short, the hyper-diversity in Antwerp calls for a complex sampling approach. Dividing the city into neighbourhoods with their own demographics and cultures is a first step in ensuring the inclusion of the target group in reader re-

sponse studies. Using local library branches as recruitment locations ensures that the possible participants are readers and are a part of the neighbourhood and thus are most likely part of its culture. Even though the abovementioned strategy is designed explicitly for Antwerp, it can also be applied to other Western hyper-diverse cities. Applying this strategy can have several implications for reader response research and sampling strategies in qualitative research in general. Turning to local libraries for participant recruitment can help with taking yet another step toward studying actual readers. Stepping into the real world, and thus away from working with skilled readers in the form of students, will lead to a deeper insight into the effects of texts on readers. Moreover, this can lead to the possible inclusion of people often excluded from these types of studies, yet again enriching our understanding of texts. Additionally, obtaining a wider variety of idiosyncratic responses can result in a deeper understanding of subcultural responses to narratives. Moreover, in a time when the call for inclusion has been taken seriously, using hyper-diversity and social milieu as a strategy can ensure an inclusive and representative sample.

2.1.2 Participants Experiment[35]

For the experiment, the above-described participant selection strategy was followed. I set out to recruit twenty-four participants – three groups of eight participants – since the experiment is a multicase study (a research design that closely examines several cases linked together). Therefore, eight cases per group would provide for a sufficient sample size. As Stake (2006) argues:

> Two or three cases do not show enough of the interactivity [...], whereas 15 or 30 cases provide more uniqueness of interactivity than the research team and readers can come to understand. But for good reason, many multicase studies have fewer than 4 or more than 15 cases. (p. 22)

As described in the previous section, the next step in the selection strategy was outlining the inclusion and exclusion criteria. For the current study, the only criteria were the age range (55-64 years old) and location (neighbourhood). As the municipality of Antwerp is large[36] and I was only looking for twenty-four participants, I started with contacting city libraries. This meant in practice that I partnered with three libraries, namely Permeke Library (Antwerp/Borgerhout neighbourhood), De Poort Library (Berchem neighbourhood) and Couwelaar (Deurne neighbourhood). These neighbourhoods provide their services to a range of socioeconomic back-

Table 1. The poverty index of the city of Antwerp. The poverty index from 2015 for the neighbourhoods chosen in the experiment, collected, analysed and calculated by Stad Antwerpen, Studiedienst (2021).

	Poverty index
Antwerp	6,5
Borgerhout	6,6
Deurne	4,4
Berchem	3,8

35 Parts of this section will appear as a peer-reviewed chapter, "The Power of Perception: The Influence of Fictionality on the Creation of Storyworld Possible Selves", in *Storyworld Possible Selves and Narrative Intersubjectivity*, a collection edited by María-Ángeles Martínez.

36 The municipality of Antwerp consists of nine districts: Antwerpen, Berendrecht-Zandvliet-Lillo, Ekeren, Merksem, Deurne, Borgerhout, Berchem, Hoboken and Wilrijk, with each their own library and some of them having multiple locations.

grounds, as seen in the latest research into poverty in Antwerp (Stad Antwerpen, Studiedienst, 2021). Table 1 illustrates the results of a poverty index developed by the Antwerp Studiedienst (2021),[37] with 0 on the scale meaning no poverty and 10 a high degree of poverty.

When the location of the libraries was decided on, fliers[38] advertising the study were distributed at the three city libraries. The flier specified the age range and asked the reader whether they lived in the neighbourhood. The participants could scan a QR code or go directly to a website to fill out a form. Additionally, a call for participants was included in the library newsletter and displayed on the TV screens in the three libraries with the same information, maximising visibility.

Table 2. Participant descriptives. An overview of the participant descriptives, including age, gender and their neighbourhood.

Participant	Age	Gender	Neighbourhood
F1	62	M	Berchem
F2	57	V	Mortsel
F3	57	M	Antwerpen
F4	58	V	Edegem
F5	64	M	Schoten
F6	62	M	Berchem
F7	58	V	Mortsel
F8	56	V	Antwerpen
NF1	58	V	Antwerpen
NF2	60	V	Berchem
NF3	58	M	Ekeren
NF4	63	V	Berchem
NF5	56	M	Melsele
NF6	63	V	Berchem
NF7	58	M	Mortsel
NF8	56	V	Deurne
C1	62	V	Schoten
C2	57	M	Hoboken
C3	56	V	Berchem
C4	61	V	Antwerpen
C5	58	M	Berchem
C6	56	V	Deurne
C7	56	V	Hove
C8	56	V	Kapellen

During the implementation of the recruitment strategy, it became clear that the timeframe would not allow for the recruitment of an adequate number of participants. One contributing factor could be the cyberattack that affected the city of Antwerp soon after the implementation, resulting in the temporary disruption of library services and library-goers being unable to borrow books. Consequently, an alternative plan had to be put into place to recruit sufficient participants. Therefore, new fliers[39] were distributed among five independent bookshops[40] and two chain bookshops throughout the city centre of Antwerp. This approach aimed to engage potential participants who frequent bookshops as an alternative to the library-based recruitment method.

Furthermore, the call for participants was posted in two book club Facebook groups, expanding the outreach to individuals interested in

37 A studiedienst can be translated as a research centre that analyses statistical data.

38 See Appendix A.1 'Recruitment Flier Library'.

39 See Appendix A.2 'Recruitment Flier Bookshop'.

40 These were: De Groene Waterman, Panoply Books & Records, Buchbar, Cronopio, 't Stad Leest, De Slegte and De Standaard Boekhandel.

literature from within the online book community. Finally, the fliers were placed in a communal area at the Department of Linguistics and Literary Studies at the University of Antwerp. Due to time constraints, the call changed from asking whether the participants lived in 'this neighbourhood' to whether they lived in Antwerp to ensure enough participants within the time frame. This meant that five of the participants were from the general Antwerp area, namely from Schoten (2), Kapellen (1), Melsele (1) and Hove (1).

By employing these alternative strategies, the recruitment of a viable number of participants for the research project was ensured. This, however, meant that the eventual sample could not provide a heterogeneous group regarding socioeconomic background and ethnicity. The gender distribution was also slightly skewed, with 63% women and 37% men. However, this corresponds to the most recent research into reading in Flanders, which showed that 64% of women in Flanders prefer to read, as opposed to 45% of men (Synovate, 2011). Table 2 shows an overview of the participants and several descriptives.

2.2 Text Material[41]

This section will present the text material for the study and the selection process of the excerpts used during the experiment. To prevent participants from looking up information about the text and thus being aware of the controversy surrounding it, the participants were asked to read the text during the experiment. Moreover, as the novel never reached the same heights of success in Belgium as it did in the United States, the odds of the participants having come into contact with the text were minimal. Indeed, this was not the case with the current sample. The excerpts were given to the participants in the official Dutch translation *In Duizend Stukjes* (Frey, 2003b), and were stripped of any identifying markers, such as the author's name, title, or book cover. That is to say, they were presented in plain text, and participants could, therefore, not determine the fictionality status of the text by observing paratextual information. Instead, they would need to rely on the information given during the experiment about the fictionality status (novel or memoir) during the experiment.[42]

However, asking the participants to read the entire book[43] in that short timeframe was not feasible. Thus, the decision was made to give the participants excerpts that would encompass vital events and themes within the story, such as the protagonist James' internal struggles and self-destructive thoughts. To this end, first, a master's course on postclassical narratology was used to create a group of people conversant with SPSs Theory and the debate on fictionality. As their assignment, they analysed the text and decided upon excerpts, which they then tested during interviews. A participant in their experiment remarked, "You know, what I found very remarkable. I have read like nine excerpts, but I felt like I had experienced the entire story" (Participant PS_NF6).[44]

The students' selection of excerpts was thus used as a starting point. However, prior to using the excerpts for the actual experiment, I analysed the full text on its SPSs-prompting potential[45] and cross-referenced this with the excerpts from the pilot study. Four conditions were taken into account for selecting the excerpts for the current study: 1) The excerpts must be perspectivizer-centric, meaning excerpts focused on other characters should be omitted; 2) The excerpts must make sense as a whole, ensuring the readers do not become confused about the narrative; 3) The most graphic content, which can be distracting, should be excluded; and 4) There must be a clustering of linguistic anchors, as these can increase the chances of

41 Parts of this section will appear as a peer-reviewed chapter, "The Power of Perception: The Influence of Fictionality on the Creation of Storyworld Possible Selves", in *Storyworld Possible Selves and Narrative Intersubjectivity*, a collection edited by María-Ángeles Martínez; and (2) a peer-reviewed article in *Narrative Works* as, "Real Readers and James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*: The Mediating Role of Authenticity on Perceived Non-Fictionality".

42 The control group was, of course, given no additional information.

43 The *A Million Little Pieces* 2018 reprint is 511 pages long and the 2003 Dutch translation has 381 pages.

44 The pilot and the actual study examine fictionality, so they are coded similarly. To avoid confusion, PS (pilot study) is added to the codes of the participants who took part in the pilot study.

45 See section 2.2.2, 'SPSs Linguistic Anchors Analysis' and Appendix B. 'Linguistic Analysis: Coded Lines in Chapter 1 of *Frey's In Duizend Stukjes*'.

triggering SPSs.

First, section 2.2.1, '*The Turbulent Journey of A Million Little Pieces*', will briefly summarise the book and focus on the book's fictionality status both before and after the controversy. This analysis will explain why the book is an apt choice for a study into perceived fictionality. Next, in section 2.2.2, 'SPSs Linguistic Anchors Analysis', linguistic anchors that can enhance the prompting of SPSs were analysed in the Dutch version of the book, *In Duizend Stukjes*, as the participants were given the text in their native tongue. Finally, section 2.2.3, 'Excerpt Selection', details the exact selection process of the passages read by the participants in the experiment.

2.2.1 The Turbulent Journey of A Million Little Pieces

To evoke the essence of the text material used for the experiment, I would like to open this section with a quotation from Frey's book. On page 210, the book brings up a lecture by a famous rock star who once was a patient at the rehabilitation centre where James, the first-person narrator and protagonist, is undergoing treatment. While listening to the lecture, James angrily reflects:

> To make light of [substance use], brag about it, or revel in the mock glory of it is not in any way, shape or form related to its truth, and that is all that matters, the truth. That this man is standing in front of me and everyone else in this room lying to us is heresy. *The truth is all that matters. This is fucking heresy.* (Frey, 2003a, p. 210, my emphasis)

I would argue that this quotation encompasses the essence of *A Million Little Pieces*. It comes across as a true account of someone who lived the 'addiction experience' and does not glamourise it. In a message to his readers about why he wrote the book, Frey (2002) says, "As a kid I read about addicted writers and rock stars and I thought they were cool [...] My addictions and problems were not cool or fun or glamorous in any way whatsoever" (para. 1).

In this section, I will first summarise *A Million Little Pieces* by James Frey (2003a). Subsequently, I will explore the book's conception, its initial reception and the so-called Oprah effect (the astronomical rise of popularity and boost in sales after an Oprah endorsement), the ensuing controversy initiated by an exposé by *The Smoking Gun* (2010),[46] and the following reception of the controversy. I will end this section by briefly exploring some academic responses to what Frey's text can mean for discussions into fictionality.

2.2.1.1 A Million Little Pieces Summarised

A Million Little Pieces is a first-person narrative about the journey of the protagonist, James Frey, a substance user, and his recovery process in a rehabilitation centre. The narrative explores ten years of intense substance use and involvement in criminal activities, giving the reader a

46 *The Smoking Gun* (2010) is a website that "brings you exclusive documents [...] that can't be found elsewhere on the Web. Using material obtained from government and law enforcement sources" (para. 1). This mainly refers to legal documents, arrest records, and police mugshots.

glimpse of these experiences when James reflects on them during his stay at the Hazelden Betty Ford drug rehab centre and mental health residential treatment facility in Minnesota, USA.

Opening the story in medias res, James wakes up on a commercial flight, disoriented and covered in bodily fluids. He has a shattered face, is missing his front teeth, and is not able to walk without assistance. His parents meet him at his destination, Chicago, and drive him to an in-patient drug rehabilitation centre in Minnesota. The initial detoxification process is gruelling, accompanied by hallucinations and what seems like panic attacks.

After his first night, a doctor prescribes medication, tends to his injuries, and arranges dental care. It is here, early in the book, that James meets Lilly, another patient at the centre, although they are not allowed to interact according to the centre's strict separation of the gendered wards. During his stay, James meets and befriends some other patients, including Leonard, a mob boss, and Miles, a judge. James has a couple of altercations with his fellow patients, but everything runs smoothly after Leonard takes him under his wing. James first came on Leonard's radar after he kept calling Leonard 'Gene Hackman' while detoxing. Not intimidated by the older man, Leonard is quickly impressed by James, and he makes him his protégé. When James wants to leave the clinic, Leonard stops him and convinces him to stay another 24 hours. At the end of the book, Leonard asks James to be his adopted son, to which James agrees.

One notable scene is the dentist procedure, in which James undergoes excruciating dental work without anaesthetics or painkillers. According to the dentist, James must do without the relief because he is a patient at a drug treatment centre. The procedure is thus performed while James is strapped down to a chair, holding *Babar* – a children's picture book – and two tennis balls. Although James survives this ordeal, he leaves against the dentist's advice even though he requires additional medical attention.

After James decides to stay at the centre, he finds *Tao te Ching*, the main text of Taoism, in a stack of books his brother brought him. Although he is sceptical because the text is classified as religious, he quickly finds the poems helpful. He uses those during his rehabilitation process instead of the classic Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) lectures and booklets. James' continuous dismissal of the twelve-step programme causes much friction between him and the staff. They repeatedly tell him that it is impossible to stay sober without the twelve-step programme and regular AA meetings. James, however, does not heed the warning and argues that he knows that AA will not work for him. He tells the staff that he either will be able to stop or not. Another turning point for James seems to be when he unleashes the 'Fury' – the term James ascribes to his urges for substances and his anger – on a tree. During this 'episode', Lilly finds him and holds him, telling him everything will be okay. Lilly and James start a relationship after this meeting.

A distinct part of the novel's second half focuses on James and his parents. Notably, the Fury comes out every time he meets his parents. He is unsure why the Fury is triggered to that extent when he is near his parents, but he manages to work through his issues with them, and they

reconcile. During the meetings with his parents, he consults with the clinic attorney, who informs James that he has outstanding warrants that will probably lead to him going to prison. However, due to Leonard and Miles' influence, James 'only' has to go to county jail for a few months, a significantly better sentence than going to a federal prison.

In line with his refusal to accept the twelve-step programme, James rejects any other causes that might have played a role in his substance use, such as genetic predispositions, past experiences, socioeconomic status and so on. During one of his meetings with his parents, James learns that his grandfather struggled with alcohol use as well and that James spent the first two years of his life in constant pain due to a misdiagnosed ear problem. However, James rejects those factors as a reason for his struggles and vehemently argues that his struggles with substances are a result of his own choices and weaknesses. According to James, addiction is not a disease; addiction is a decision. Seeing this as accepting responsibility for his actions, the on-staff psychologist Joanne – one of the few councillors with whom James has a good relationship – sees it as a valuable step in his recovery. James tells his parents, "Every time I want to drink or do drugs, I'm going to make the decision not to do them. I'll keep making that decision until it's no longer a decision, but a way of life" (Frey, 2003a, p. 387). This philosophy becomes his mantra: 'Hold on'.

Meanwhile, James and Lilly's relationship progresses, and the couple exchanges 'I love yous'. However, the staff at the centre discover their relationship and tells them they must break it off. Lilly disagrees and is sent away from the centre. James, knowing that Lilly will go back to using drugs, follows her into an abandoned building where he finds her using crack. Lilly resists following James, but James removes her from the building and returns to the clinic. During this rescue operation, James manages to resist the temptation to use any substances present in the building. Lilly is allowed to enter and stay at the rehabilitation centre again, and James promises to continue their relationship after he has completed his stay at the county jail.

Before James can leave the centre to turn himself in to go to jail, he must complete a confession step. James writes down an inventory of everything he has done, apart from one incident where he almost killed a priest in Paris for trying to coerce him sexually. He ends up with twenty-two pages, which he describes as: "Twenty-two pages filled with my wrongs, my mistakes, my lapses in judgment and my bad decisions. Twenty-two pages filled with my anger, rage, addiction, self-hatred and Fury. Twenty-two pages documenting my disgraceful, embarrassing and pathetic life. Twenty-two pages" (Frey, 2003a, p. 472). He shares his twenty-two pages of confessions with the priest at the rehabilitation centre and chooses to include the incident with the priest in France in his list.

The final scene of the novel is just as gripping as the opening. Leaving the centre, James' brother picks him up together with a friend. James wants to test himself to know whether he can 'hold on'. So, he demands his brother to drive him to a bar, which his brother reluctantly does, and with money borrowed from his brother, James orders a pint glass filled with bourbon. The Fury demands him to drink it and James leans down until the tip of his nose touches the liquid. He resists the Fury, straightens up and asks the bartender to throw away the liquor. The book ends

with James joining his brother and friend in a game of pool.

2.2.1.2 The Marketing of *A Million Little Pieces*

Before moving on to the discussion of the book's reception, it is vital to briefly examine the communication surrounding the book by the publishing house and Frey himself. Before the book's release on April 15th, 2003, Frey was interviewed by Joe Hagan for the *Observer*. In the interview, which Hagan flatteringly titled "Meet the New Staggering Genius", Frey introduces himself as an outsider of the literary world, remarking that:

> I don't give a fuck what Jonathan Safran whatever-his-name does or what David Foster Wallace does. I don't give a fuck what any of these people do. I don't hang out with them, I'm not friends with them, I'm not part of the literati. I think of myself as outside of this publishing culture. (Hagan, 2003, para. 29)

That interview earned him the reputation of a 'literary bad boy' whose attitude might endanger his literary future. In the interview, he tells Hagan that he initially shopped the book as a work of fiction, but that Nan Talese declined to publish it as a novel for her own imprint and published it as a memoir instead. Frey mentions that "he hoped Ms. Talese's imprint would deflect the characterisation of his book as part of the sentimental recovery genre" and that the imprint "lends a lot of credibility to what otherwise be considered a recovery memoir" (Hagan, 2003, para. 12). It is unclear then, what Frey meant the book to be, as he claims in the same interview that everything that happens in the book is genuine. Hagan (2003) quotes him saying: "When I think about writing, I have a very simple formula: Where was I? Who was I with? What happened? And how did it make me feel?" (para. 38). Responding to allegations by experts who questioned the aeroplane and dentist scene, Frey reiterates the truthfulness by saying, "I wrote what was true to me and true to the experience [...] If people want to pick the facts apart, they can" (Rybak, 2003, para. 4). Nevertheless, he writes in his book, "He's gone, but my memory isn't and it won't be for a long time. It has always been a fault of mine. I hold my memory" (Frey, 2003a, p. 17). In another interview, with First Vision Productions (2004), when he is asked what prompted him to write *A Million Little Pieces*, Frey answers:

> I really wrote it because I wanted to write a great book [...] The intentions were more to write a work of literature than to write a self-help book [...] It was written to be a work of art that hopefully would change people's lives. I think I probably succeeded on both levels.

From the start, Frey himself has been vague about the text's literal truthfulness. He does not deny its truth but implies embellishments, which is unsurprising to readers when they look at the book's writing style. See, for instance, the following excerpt, where James talks to a councillor after attacking another patient at the facility:

> Roy got in my face. I got him out of my face.
>
> Ken speaks.
>
> Why'd he get in your face?

> No idea.
>
> He just did it?
>
> He's been giving me shit the whole time I've been here. I have no idea why.
>
> What's he been doing?
>
> Telling me I'm breaking all the Rules, telling me I'm doing everything wrong, telling me he's gonna get me thrown out of here.
>
> Lincoln speaks.
>
> And you don't like that, do you?
>
> I didn't do anything. He had no right to say shit to me.
>
> And did you have any right to attack him?
>
> Once he got in my face I did.
>
> What if I got in your face?
>
> I'd get you out of it.
>
> Lincoln stares.
>
> The Tough Guy act isn't gonna get you very far.
>
> I stare back.
>
> Won't get you very far either. (Frey, 2003a, pp. 63–64)

The lack of punctuation, the random capitalisation of nouns, and the seemingly perfect and sharp memory convey to readers that the author takes some creative license. However, despite these creative licenses or local fictional fictionality strategies,[47] readers have no reason to believe these events did not happen because Frey told them they did happen. This can be explained by Grice's (1975) maxim of quality, which essentially means that, in the example of Frey, readers have no reason to suspect that Frey is lying about whether these events happened. Additionally, and in fact most importantly, the blurbs referred to the book as a memoir. Thus, because of these aspects, the general initial readership of Frey's book read it as a memoir.

2.2.1.3 The Initial Response

As the summary shows, *A Million Little Pieces* is the gripping story of someone who hit rock bottom and recovered by simply deciding to 'hold on'. Almost all the early reader reviews on websites such as *Amazon* and *Bookbrowse* laud the memoir. Commenting on the fact that James Frey lived to tell his story, James Sullivan (2003), a journalist, concludes: "How that came to be would be a first-rate tale of suspense, if it weren't drawn so hideously from an actual life" (para. 18). He even claims that it could "well be seen as the final word on the topic [of substance use]" (Sullivan, 2003, para. 1). Both critics and lay readers alike were positive. Another critic, despite calling it "downright sentimental, even amid the repulsive imagery" and it being grandiose and egocentric, argues that it portrays "what it really looks like while you're in the midst of

47 See section 1.2.3, 'Theories of Factuality'.

[struggling with substance use]" (Murphy, 2003, para. 14). The review blurbs on the *Amazon* webpage also sing the book's praises. Even critics who are less impressed with the memoir, such as Bayard (2003) – "*A Million Little Pieces* is mannered, exasperating, far too long, stiff with masculine posturing, at times disingenuous" – praise the honesty in the text: "[a]nd yet it's a fierce and honorable work that refuses to glamorize that author's addiction or his thorny personality" (para. 14).

The positive reviews by critics aside, it is the readers' reactions to the memoir that are truly interesting. A reader review on *BookBrowse*[48] says the following:

> As an individual that has just entered the world of sobriety after 13 years of heavy drug use, this book was a God send. I found so much I could relate to and so much that gave me hope. I'm also young and angry and struggling to be free. I wanted to call James on the phone and ask him to sit me down and tell me how he did it. I was amazed, amused, saddend [sic], and so much more. This is a wonderful book that while it may have it's [sic] low points is an inside look at addiction that no other book has ever provided in such a striking way. I am honored to have had the opportunity to buy it and read it. I've actually bought several copies for my friends who are also recovery addicts. Thank you James! (Nina, n.d.)

Or take the already mentioned Jeff Casey (n.d.), who writes in his five-star review:

> When I started reading *A Million Little Pieces* I was still an active drug user - by the time I finished the book (the first book I ever finished reading) the desire to continue to use was no longer overwhelming and to that I owe it to the author James Frey.

On the same website, Sonia (n.d.) writes: "If his narrative is true and it probably is since part of his drive is committing to the 'Truth', Frey has my full attention and admiration as a writer and human being" (emphasis in original). On *Amazon*, one reader, Jan R. S. (2005), mentions that he is "raising a 16-year-old grandson who is currently in rehab" and who called him to tell Jan R. S. "that he could hear his own words coming out of the book and it sounded like him". In this emotional review, Jan R. S. (2005) tells us that this was the first time his grandson had been honest about his struggles with substance use, and the reader expresses their gratitude to Frey: "God, thank you James!". In an interview with Nester (2005), Frey tells the interviewer that immediately following the publication of *A Million Little Pieces*, he received a thousand letters a week from readers who wanted to meet him and talk about his recovery. By the time of the interview, the summer of 2005, that number had gone down to about a hundred a week.[49] Commenting on the readers' reactions, Frey says that the book "has definitely helped people, which has been a very cool part of it, probably the best part [...] It's always very satisfying and very humbling in a weird way, when somebody comes up to you and says you changed their life" (Nester, 2005).

48 *BookBrowse* (n.d.) is a website that curates the "best of contemporary fiction and nonfiction, with an emphasis on books that not only engage and entertain but also deepen our understanding of ourselves and the world around us".

49 It is important to note that Frey himself gives these estimates.

Both critics and lay readers see honesty as one of the novel's crucial elements. The honesty makes it a fantastic read, even if it sometimes seems exaggerated or embellished. James Frey lays his soul bare for the readers, does not hold back the gritty and visceral truths of substance use, and does not shy away from showing his 'bad' side. As he told Oprah, "If I was gonna write a book that was true, and I was gonna write a book that was honest, then I was gonna have to write about myself in very, very negative ways" (Winfrey, 2005). Even reviews that are less generous about his writing (Kamp, 2003; Melissa, n.d.; Anne, 2013) do not doubt the narrative's truthfulness. As Frey (2003a) writes when he imagines his obituary in *A Million Little Pieces*, "[My obituary] tells the truth, and as awful as it can be, the truth is what matters. It is what I should be remembered by, if I am remembered at all. Remember the truth. It is all that matters" (p. 112).

Nonentheless, there were some negative reviews as well. One notable and well-known review is the 'take-down' by Dolan (2003), who starts his article with: "This is the worst thing I've ever read" (para. 1). Interestingly, Dolan does not seem to question the book's truthfulness, while this scepticism does appear in many other negative reactions. In a *New York Times* review, Maslin (2003) questions the truthfulness by writing, "This story is supposed to be all true" (para. 10). Rybak, a journalist at the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, spent time investigating the parts of the book where Frey is on an aeroplane while blacked out and covered in bodily fluids and the scene in which Frey undergoes dental surgery without anaesthetics. Interviewing a flight attendant and a dentist, they both tell Rybak (2003) that this would be impossible – "No way. No how. Nowhere" and "Absolutely false", respectively.

Some initial readers of the memoir shared their suspicions as well. One reader who says he has a history of substance use writes that they "have never read a 'true' story that reeked so much of fiction" (Brian S., n.d., emphasis in original). Payne (2005) copies Frey's style, writing: "James Frey is in Love with himself. Addicted to himself. Addicted to the Pale Green of his own eyes. To the sound of his own Words. To the Drama of being addicted. I don't believe Most of what he wrote," and that "MOSTLY, I believe that his book is an Insult to all Recovering Addicts and the Families of those Addicts". Notably, it mainly seems to be readers who have been in rehabilitation centres or have struggled with substance use in the past who seem to doubt the book's truthfulness. The following reader's review will provide a bridge to the next section in this chapter, namely Oprah picking Frey as her choice for her book club and the ensuing controversy. Although this review by hiway12 (2006) was posted after the controversy, it communicates the feelings of readers who struggled with substance use both succinctly and colourfully:

> So satisfying to have this creep exposed as a liar and plagarist [sic]. As a recovering addict myself, I felt his drug history never rang true and then the whole 'I don't need a program or support and can do this on willpower alone' flies totally in the face of conventional wisdom. It smacks the face of the over 4 million people who are recovering in the rooms of AA and NA. So happy to see the smug sh*t fumbling thru [sic] interviews today. I only wish there were negative star ratings. (Emphasis in original)

These reviews highlight that, regardless of the communication around the book, its proposed status as an example of non-fiction did not consistently align with readers' perceptions of the work.

2.2.1.4 The Oprah Winfrey Effect

After being chosen by Oprah Winfrey for her well-known book club, or as Bastone (2006) describes it: "the world's most powerful book club", Frey's book sales rose astronomically. The paperback edition with the 'Oprah's Book Club' sticker sold more than 3,5 million copies and sat on *The New York Times* non-fiction paperback best-seller list for fifteen weeks. Three months after the book was chosen, "more than two million copies were sold, making it the fastest-selling book in the club's 10-year history" (Wyatt, 2006, para. 4), showing the impact Winfrey's golden touch can have on book sales and how she influences readers across the United States.

James Frey was invited to the Oprah Winfrey Show, and on October 26, 2005, the episode "The Man Who Kept Oprah Awake At Night" aired. The episode, unfortunately, cannot be found.[50] However, a couple of quotes from the episode have survived in Bastone's (2006) article on Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*:

> In an October 26, 2005 show entitled "The Man Who Kept Oprah Awake At Night," Winfrey hailed Frey's graphic and coarse book as "like nothing you've ever read before. Everybody at Harpo is reading it. When we were staying up late at night reading it, we'd come in the next morning saying, 'What page are you on?'" In emotional filmed testimonials, employees of Winfrey's Harpo Productions lauded the book as revelatory, with some choking back tears. When the camera then returned to a damp-eyed Winfrey, she said, "I'm crying 'cause these are all my Harpo family so, and we all loved the book so much". (p. 1)

In the beforementioned letter to his readers from 2002, Frey writes that he created the book for several reasons. One of the reasons is that, according to him, books about addiction seem to romanticise or dilute addiction. Frey (2002) says that he hopes that his book, his "often painful honesty, can cut through some of that and grab at least one person, and make them look at who they are and what they're doing, and change" (para. 1). His second reason is that he wanted to give people "an alternate way" of thinking about addiction, as he believes that addiction is a weakness (Frey, 2002, para. 2). Finally, he wanted to write a tribute and memorial to the friends he made while he was in the treatment centre.

And it is that first reason, the honesty, that mesmerises Winfrey and her audience. During the episode, Winfrey tells the audience she could not put the book down; the book is a "gut-wrenching memoir that is raw and it's so real" (quoted in Bastone, 2006, p. 2). She later describes Frey as "the child you pray you never have" and that after "turning the last page [...] You want to meet the man who lived to tell this tale" (quoted in Bastone, 2006, p. 2). When

50 I contacted the Oprah Winfrey Show on December 7, 2023, to inquire about obtaining the episode or receiving a website link. However, as of the completion of this dissertation I have not yet received a response.

Frey later joins her on the stage, he tells Winfrey, "I think I wrote about the events in the book truly and honestly and accurately" (quoted in Bastone, 2006, p. 2). He is even flown out to a rehabilitation clinic for the episode, where he "gave an on-camera pep talk to Sandie, a viewer who checked herself into rehab after learning about Frey's book via an e-mail from the Oprah club", telling her "if I can do it, you can do it" (Bastone, 2006, p. 4). Personal experiences such as Sandie's led to the Oprah Winfrey Show planning a second episode, "with her web site [sic] seeking viewers whose lives have been 'dramatically' impacted by Frey's book" (Bastone, 2006, p. 4, emphasis in original).

2.2.1.5 The Smoking Gun Exposé

Three months after Oprah's emotional laudation, *The Smoking Gun* published an exposé that revealed extensive fabrication within the alleged memoir. According to Bastone, *The Smoking Gun* never set out to investigate Frey's book thoroughly (Keefer, 2006). The website provides its visitors with primary source materials, such as mugshots, which are then used by journalists from other news outlets to write articles. When looking for Frey's mugshot, the team at *The Smoking Gun* struggled to find a booking photo. Bastone tells Keefer (2006), we "had trouble finding anything on him, bought the book, read the book and determined that according to his account, he'd been arrested 13 or 14 times, and we were having trouble finding any of this stuff" (para. 5). This sparked their interest and led to the thirteen-thousand-word article titled: "A Million Little Lies: Exposing James Frey's Fiction Addiction", with the tagline, "Oprah Winfrey's been had" (Bastone, 2006). The exposé is ruthless and thorough, with the main points of contention being Frey's criminal past and his supposed role in a tragic train accident that took the lives of two female high school students, with the latter being called the "most crass flight from reality" by Bastone (2006) and his team (para. 5).

While Bastone focused on Frey's claims about his criminal history and his role in the train accident, Rybak had already written on two other questionable sections of the book in 2003, namely the aeroplane and dentist scene. In her article, Rybak looked at expert opinions on the likelihood of the events described by Frey. In Bastone's (2006) piece, the unearthing of the facts has a more 'gotcha' feel, leading to an intense backlash by Winfrey and, subsequently, the general public. During the investigation by *The Smoking Gun* editorial team, Frey was interviewed twice by them, and throughout those interviews, he admitted that he had embellished and exaggerated some of his stories. However, he kept maintaining that he had a criminal history and that, generally, the accounts in *A Million Little Pieces* were true. When confronted with the final report, Frey rejected the conflicts between his story and *The Smoking Gun*'s findings, instead posting a message to his readers that 'haters' were trying to discredit him (Bastone, 2006). However, despite Frey's efforts, the damage was already done, and Oprah Winfrey invited James Frey to her show for a second time. Not to talk to viewers whose lives were 'dramatically impacted' but to chastise him.

2.2.1.6 The Oprah Winfrey Effect: The Backlash

After the publication of the exposé, a storm descended on James Frey. Dozens of articles were written about the truthfulness of Frey's tale, often referring to fiction and fact. Larry King invited Frey to explain his side of the story. He tells King that a "memoir is a subjective retelling of events" and that it is thus not "necessarily appropriate to say that I've conned anyone" (CNN Transcripts, 2006). During that interview, Winfrey was called in to defend Frey, saying that although she is "disappointed by this controversy [...] because I rely on the publishers to define the category that a book falls within and also the authenticity of the work," she accepts that "maybe the names and dates and the times have been compressed, because that's what a memoir is" (CNN Transcripts, 2006). Winfrey ends the conversation by saying that she still recommends the book and that it is "irrelevant discussing, you know, what – what happened or did not happen to the police" when there are people who have been moved and helped by the story (CNN Transcripts, 2006).

Three weeks after that phone call, that kind sentiment had made way for a public chastisement. Once again invited on the Oprah Winfrey Show,[51] Winfrey immediately set the tone of the conversation:

> James Frey is here and I have to say it is difficult for me to talk to you because I feel really duped. But more importantly, I feel that you betrayed millions of readers. I think it's such a gift to have millions of people to read your work and that bothers me greatly. So now, as I sit here today I don't know what is true and I don't know what isn't. So first of all, I wanted to start with The Smoking Gun report titled, "The Man Who Conned Oprah" and I want to know – were they right? (*Oprah's Questions for James*, 2006, p. 1)

During the interview, Frey never refutes his struggles with substance use or his time at the rehabilitation centre. However, he admits that he exaggerated and embellished his experiences, such as his time in jail and the timeline of certain events. He tells Winfrey,

> I think one of the coping mechanisms I developed was sort of this image of myself that was greater, probably, than – not probably – that *was* greater than what I actually was. In order to get through the experience of the addiction, I thought of myself as being tougher than I was and badder than I was – and it helped me cope. When I was writing the book... instead of being as introspective as I should have been, I clung to that image. (*Oprah's Questions for James*, 2006, p. 4, emphasis in original)

Also interesting to the present study is the conversation that Winfrey had with Nan Talese, the publisher and editor-in-chief of *A Million Little Pieces*, in the same episode. As mentioned earlier, Frey initially shopped his book around as a work of fiction. Talese tells Winfrey that when the book came to her, she "read the manuscript as a memoir" (*Oprah's Questions for James*,

51 Similarly to the first episode, "The Man Who Kept Oprah Awake At Night" (2005), this second episode, "James Frey and the A Million Little Pieces Controversy" (2006), is also unavailable. However, a presumed full transcript of the conversation with Frey and the head of the publishing company Doubleday, Nan Telese, was available on the Oprah website at the time of writing (*Oprah's Questions for James*, 2006).

2006, p. 10). Additionally, Winfrey keeps repeating what she sees as the responsibility publishers have towards their readers regarding truthfulness. She says, "As the consumer, the reader, I am trusting you. I'm trusting you, the publisher, to categorize this book whether as fiction or autobiographical or memoir. I'm trusting you" (*Oprah's Questions for James*, 2006, p. 12). This back-and-forth can lead to an interesting theoretical discussion regarding fictionality. However, for Winfrey, the end of this conversation seems to narrow down what is truly important to her. When Talese says the controversy is a sad experience for everyone involved, Winfrey replies: "It's not sad for me. It's *embarrassing* and disappointing for me" (*Oprah's Questions for James*, 2006, p. 14, my emphasis).

2.2.1.7 The Aftermath

On February 1st, 2006, about a month after the exposé and a few days after his second Oprah Winfrey episode, Frey published a note to his readers on *The New York Times* website. Frey (2006) writes that he "embellished many details about my past experiences, and altered others in order to serve what I felt was the greater purpose of the book" (para. 1). He also apologises to the readers who have been disappointed by his actions. While some readers accepted the discrepancies as embellishments and thus did not think Frey had to face any consequences – as seen in a review by David Seaman (2011) entitled "this is VERY moving; will the rest of you grow up?" – readers such as Grits Girl (2006) were not as forgiving, as can be gleaned from her *Amazon* review:

> I bought this thinking I was reading a true story and now I know it was not truthful. I feel like I was taken advantage of and my time was wasted. I am disappointed that Amazon would carry a book like this. I feel like anyone who bought this book should get a full refund. I don't think this author should make money by lying. If he wanted to sell a fiction book, it should have been labeled fiction.

Grits Girl predicted exactly what would happen to the book after the exposé. After Winfrey retracted her support for the book and after the countless opinion pieces about the controversy, the book is now generally considered fictional. On *Goodreads*, for instance, the book is assigned the fiction label, although the fourth genre marker is 'biography memoir'. The Dutch equivalent of *Amazon*, *Bol*, sells the book as a novel and thus fiction. *Amazon* itself, however, lists it as a biography. Still, when looking at recent website reviews, almost all reviewers are aware of its contested truthfulness. Newer editions of the book include statements from the publisher and the author noting that facts have been altered and events have been embellished (Wyatt, 2006). Interestingly, my reissued UK edition published by John Murray in 2018, does not include a disclaimer.[52] However, the blurbs in this specific edition do not suggest non-fictionality, instead focussing on Frey's mastery.[53]

52 That year, the screen version *A Million Little Pieces* directed by Taylor-Johnson (2018) came out, leading to a reprint with "soon to be a major film" on the 2018 John Murray cover.

53 On the cover, for instance, Bret Easton Ellis is quoted: "inspirational and essential" (Frey, 2003). Before the title page, one of the blurbs is by *The Daily Telegraph*, who wrote "Frey is an unusually powerful writer, propulsive and

The eventful history of A Million Little Pieces has led to rich text material for the current study. That said, outside of academic interests, ultimately, it does not matter whether James Frey has gone to a rehabilitation centre, has a criminal past or has even struggled with substance use. The only way to truly know what part of his story is factual is if extensive paperwork regarding his history would be shared. Still, what matters regarding the text's fictionality is the public's reaction to the text. Ironically, it was Frey's narrator who captured the majority of the public's opinions on this matter:

> To make light of [addiction], brag about it, or revel in the mock glory of it is not in any way, shape or form related to its truth, and that is all that matters, the truth. That this man is standing in front of me and everyone else in this room lying to us is heresy. *The truth is all that matters. This is fucking heresy.* (Frey, 2003a, p. 210, my emphasis)

2.2.1.8 The Academic Response

The situation surrounding Frey's text offers academics an interesting case study. Unsurprisingly, the controversy sparked philosophical debates on fraudulent memoirs and ethics in general. Landy (2022), for instance, writes a treatise on how it is "imperative to make sure things labeled 'memoir' are not just a pack of lies" (p. 149). He ends his article by providing a moral for academics and readers, namely that they should keep their standards high and not feed the liars, respectively (Landy, 2022). In his comparison of truth in Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* and Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, Emblidge (2008) argues that Frey's lies were "literary conceits; they were obfuscations" (para. 36), in contrast to Thoreau, whose lies served a higher purpose, namely meant to provoke the reader "into some philosophical thinking" (para. 15). Emblidge (2008) concludes that Frey could have either written a relatively objective memoir or an autobiographical novel, but that he cannot have it both ways.

Approaching the discussion from a cultural criticism point of view, Borst (2010) and Gilmore (2010) point to how this controversy shows the failure of self-help and self-invention. Specific attention is given to the role of Oprah Winfrey. Birdsall (2013) reiterates Bastone's claim that Oprah's book club is the world's most influential book club. She adds that Winfrey is a powerful woman who "wields immense cultural capital in the United States" (Birdsall, 2013, p. 85). Winfrey's passionate reaction to the headline 'The Man Who Duped Oprah' becomes less surprising when considering that aspect of the situation.

A Million Little Pieces has also been used in research by literary scholars. Korthals Altes (2014) uses Frey's book as one of the case studies in her book on authors' and narrators' *ethos*. She defines *ethos* as the author's "basic communicative attitude", seen by readers as sincerity, reliability and authority (Korthals Altes, 2014). In her book, she argues that the characters', narrators' and authors' *ethos* play a role before readers even start reading and thus start the interpretative process. She argues that Frey deceptively promised his readers an authentic real-life experience by displaying "topoi of authenticity and truthfulness" (Korthals Altes, 2014, p. 59). She includes

engaging" (Frey, 2003).

Goffman's framing theory as the explanation for how readers decide on the factuality of the text (Korthals Altes, 2014).[54]

Nielsen (2011) argues that *A Million Little Pieces* can be read as fiction, non-fiction or both. He puts forth that from the beginning, the fictionality of the text was ambiguous. The text was never called a memoir by either the author or the publisher; instead, as mentioned earlier, this was communicated by the blurbs. According to Nielsen (2011), the problem with the book was not necessarily that it was ambiguous about it being non-fiction, but that "it was *not* labeled a fiction" (p. 87, emphasis in original). He then uses the text to examine the fictionalisation techniques used by Frey, analysing instances of local and global fictionalisation.[55] In addition, he proposes rethinking the author's role instead of the narrator's when looking at fiction as an invention. Nielsen (2011) concludes his analysis as follows:

> The lesson from *A Million Little Pieces*, then, is threefold: that the narrative is openly and undisguisedly fictionalized; that this fact does not in itself turn the work into fiction; and that fictionalization cannot be explained by assuming the existence of a narrator other than the author. (pp. 91-92)

Although most scholars mention the readers and the effects of lies and obfuscations on them, academics mainly refer to the controversy and not to the text itself. However, by approaching Frey's book from a narratological point of view, Nielsen shows that fictionality is more complicated than simply something being true or not. His analysis and conclusion bring about another interesting conclusion as well. Namely, Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* is both a memoir and a novel at all times. In essence, *A Million Little Pieces* is reminiscent of Schrödinger's Cat – a thought experiment designed by theoretical physicist Erwin Schödinger that states, in short, that a hypothetical cat in a closed box can be simultaneously considered dead and alive until the box is opened and someone can observe whether the cat is dead or alive (Matthias, 2023). In the case of *A Million Little Pieces*, it could be argued that before it is read, the text is simultaneously fiction and non-fiction. The moment it is read, depending on the reader and their knowledge of the situation, the text is assigned a fictionality status, becoming either fictional or non-fictional. Consequently, this means that *A Million Little Pieces* is particularly well-suited for the current study since it is uniquely associated with both fiction and non-fiction categories. In other words, this text enables an experiment in which all variables apart from the test condition are independent, thus allowing for an examination of the effect of perceived fictionality on the reader.

54 See section 1.2.3, 'Theories of Factuality'.

55 See section 1.2.3, 'Theories of Factuality'.

2.2.2 Storyworld Possible Selves Linguistic Anchors Analysis

To fulfil the fourth condition for the selection fo the excerpts, 'there must be a clustering of linguistic anchors', the Dutch translation of *A Million Little Pieces*, *In Duizend Stukjes*, was analysed using Martínez's (2018) subjectification and objectification methodology.[56] As explained in section 1.1.2.1, 'Prompting of Storyworld Possible Selves', Martínez (2018) argues that linguistic features can support the creation of SPSs by facilitating matches with the perspectivizer. This is especially the case when there is an abundance of various linguistic anchors. Therefore, after coding the text with those anchors, a document comparison chart was run in MAXQDA to locate clusters of numerous linguistic anchors. After analysing the document comparison chart, the sections in the book that showed a clustering of linguistic anchors were further examined. Figure 4 illustrates the clustering in the excerpts that were ultimately chosen after applying the four conditions.[57] Subsequently, the events in those sections were summarised to ensure conditions one to three – 1) The excerpts must be perspectivizer-centric, meaning excerpts focused on other characters should be omitted; 2) The excerpts must make sense as a whole, ensuring the readers do not become confused about the narrative; 3) The most graphic content, which can be distracting, should be excluded – were met.

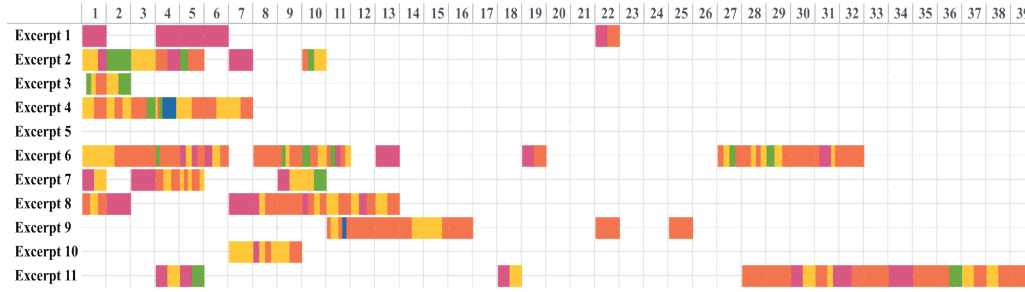

Figure 4. Document comparison chart: excerpts. This document comparison chart of the excerpts shows on which line the linguistic anchors are present and where they are clustered. Note that these lines correspond to the excerpts and not to the location in the chapters themselves. Appendix B. 'Linguistic Analysis: Coded Lines in Chapter 1 of Frey's *In Duizend Stukjes*' and Appendix C. 'Document Comparison Chart: All Chapters' correspond to the lines in the chapters. See Appendix B. Supplementary Table 1. 'Legend codes used in the linguistic analysis of Frey's *In Duizend Stukjes*' for the legend of the linguistic anchors.

2.2.3 Excerpt Selection

As mentioned above, the sections that showed significant clustering of linguistic anchors were summarised and assigned a general category corresponding to that section's topic.[58] The categorisation was done to facilitate the analysis of condition one, 'the excerpts must be perspectivizer-centric', and three, 'the most graphic content, which can be distracting, should be excluded'. This led to fifteen general categories, as seen in Table 3.

56 An example of the analysis can be found in Appendix B., 'Linguistic Analysis: Coded Lines in Chapter 1 of Frey's *In Duizend Stukjes*'.

57 See Appendix C., 'Document Comparison Chart: All Chapters'.

58 See Appendix D., 'Linguistic Analysis: Summary Linguistic Anchor Clusters'.

Considering the four conditions, this eventually led to the selection of eleven passages, consisting of 7,272 words across twelve A4 pages.[59] The average reading time for a text this length is 24 minutes (*Online Word Counter Tool*, n.d.). A summary of those excerpts and their corresponding categories can be found in Table 4.

Table 3. Identified topics in linguistic clusters. Categories assigned to clustered sections, ranked by the number of times each category appeared.

Category	# times
Secondary character	12
The Fury	6
Injury	5
Rehabilitation process	5
James' ideology	5
Mental state: sadness	4
Effects substance use	3
Mental state: fear	2
Effects detoxification	2
Mental state: agitation	2
Self-harm	2
Twelve steps	2
Blackout	1
Description environment	1
Minor character	1

The first condition, 'the excerpts must be perspectivizer-centric', was fully met. All the excerpts focus on James, even when other characters, such as his parents, are present. The passages always centre on James' experiences. The second condition, 'the excerpts must make sense as a whole', has also been met, as the passages depict an evolution of James' rehabilitation process. Specifically, the excerpts describe 1) James' dependency on substances; 2) his arrival at the rehabilitation centre; 3) the mental effects of the detoxification process; 4) James' emotional turmoil which he identifies as a reason for his substance use; 5) the psychologist's assessment of James' personality and mental state; 6) the Fury and its destructive potential; 7) an explanation of why and when the Fury gets triggered; 8) a description of an unhealthy mechanism of coping with the Fury; 9 and 10) a description of a healthy mechanism of coping with the Fury; and 11) a final test of resisting substances and succeeding.

Condition three, 'graphic content will be excluded', has been partially met. In excerpts #4 and #8 (see Table 4), there are brief mentions of self-harm deemed necessary to convey the feelings of sadness and hopelessness fully (excerpt #4) and a negative coping mechanism when dealing with the Fury (excerpt #8). The final condition, 'there must be a clustering of linguistic anchors', has been met apart from excerpt #10. However, it was decided to include the passage as it provides a succinct description of James' personality and state of mind. Additionally, since his psychologist offers it, it appears as an objective observation.

To summarise, participants were given eleven passages, consisting of 7,272 words across twelve A4 pages. The passages were presented to the participants in the official Dutch translation *In Duizend Stukjes* (Frey, 2003b) so they could read them in their mother tongue. Additionally, the text was stripped of paratextual information and thus presented in plain text. Therefore, the participants had to rely on the information provided during the experiment regarding the fictionality status (novel or memoir) during the experiment. The control condition, of course, received no additional information regarding the fictionality status.

59 See Appendix E.1 'Experiment Excerpts' and Appendix E.2 'Dutch Experiment Excerpts' for the Dutch translation.

Table 4. Excerpt event summaries. Summaries of the events in the excerpts and the category assigned to the passage from which the excerpt was chosen. The lines correspond to the position of the passage in the MAXQDA document.

	Lines	Summary	Category
Chapter 1 (excerpt #1)	66-86	James is picked up by his parents who are distraught by the state of him. The reader is made aware of the extent of James' substance use without the use of graphic content.	Effects substance use
Chapter 2 (excerpt #2)	1-12	James is driven to the rehabilitation centre by his parents and brother. When he arrives, he describes his fear of entering the centre.	Mental state: fear
Chapter 4 (excerpt #3)	270-271	A description of James' agitation, both mentally and physically, due to the detoxification medication wearing off.	Mental state: agitation
Chapter 8 (excerpt #4)	28-34	James reflects on his loneliness and the connection of it to his substance use.	Mental state: sadness Graphic content: self-harm
Chapter 10 (excerpt #5)	104-150*	Description of James' mental state and personality by his psychologist.	Summary state of being
Chapter 11 (excerpt #6)	274-308	The Fury takes over and James takes it out on a tree in the woods. Description of his urge for substances and his loneliness/ mental state in general.	The Fury Mental state: sadness
Chapter 14 (excerpt #7)	151-191	A clear explanation of when and why the Fury gets triggered. In this case it is during a conversation with his parents. Additionally, the reader is presented with the aftermath of James feeling the Fury.	The Fury
(excerpt #8)	401-413	A description of an unhealthy way of coping with the Fury. The excerpt is stopped before the injury is described.	The Fury Graphic content: self-harm
Chapter 15 (excerpt #9)	156-180	James manages to 'defeat' the Fury in a healthy way for the first time. This happens during a conversation with his parents.	The Fury
Chapter 16 (excerpt #10)	520-528	James manages to 'defeat' the Fury in a healthy way for the first time. This happens during a meeting with his parents.	The Fury
Chapter 20 (excerpt #11)	222-288	James has his final 'test' of resisting alcohol and succeeds.	Rehabilitation process

*No linguistic anchors present

2.3 Secondary Storyworld Possible Selves[60]

As discussed in section 1.1, 'Storyworld Possible Selves Theory', the SPSs framework distinguishes between primary SPSs, connected to culturally predictable responses to narratives likely to emerge in a great number of narrative experiencers, and SPS slipnets, connected to idiosyncratic responses found in only one or just a few readers because it emerges from extremely idiosyncratic and unpredictable personal experience (Martínez, 2018). Storyworld possible self slipnets, thus, bring idiosyncratic narrative responses within the scope of narratological examination, while primary SPSs align with the broadly accepted interpretations of literary criticism and mainstream narrative theory (Martínez, 2018).

However, when actually getting down to empirical reader response research, methodological problems may be caused by the vague description of the numeric difference between primary SPSs and SPS slipnets. In other words, how many idiosyncratic responses are *very few*, and where can the line be drawn between universally predictable SPSs, such as those emerging in narratives of personal damage or loss, and other, more minoritary but still predictable, based on specific cultural models (Holland & Quinn, 1987; Vaeßen & Strasen, 2021). To address this issue, this section aims to propose an expansion of the original SPSs framework (Martínez, 2014, 2018) by introducing the concept of *secondary storyworld possible selves*, intended to encompass SPSs emerging in multiple individuals but not a majority in a data sample. This would render three SPS types, instead of only two, regarding criteria of cultural predictability: (a) *primary SPSs*, predictable in a vast majority of narrative experiencers; (b) *secondary SPSs*, with predictable emergence in communities of readers with shared practices and cultural models; and (c) *SPS slipnets*, unpredictable and based on idiosyncratic, individual experience. In this way, the analytical affordances of SPSs Theory may become better suited to help bridge the gap between broadly shared narrative responses and highly individual, idiosyncratic ones, by allowing for the scrutiny of majority responses within non-dominant cultural models alongside those predictable as hegemonic, culturally dominant, or even phylogenetic ones, such as those involving undesired 'injured' SPSs, or desired 'happy' SPSs.

The section first delves into the need for a finer-grained approach to the bearing of culture on the emergence of storyworld possible selves. The concepts of cultural models (Holland & Quinn, 1987; Vaeßen & Strasen, 2021) and cultural hegemony (Ewick & Silbey, 1995; Cortes-Ramirez, 2015) are then briefly discussed. This is followed by an overview of the role of cognition in categorisation (Rosch, 1978; Mervis & Rosch, 1981; Dirven & Verspoor, 2004; Geeraerts, 2006; Dollinger & Froeschle, 2017), and its connection to the proposed new SPSs category and its nature. Finally, the concept of secondary SPSs is introduced and illustrated

60 This section has been published a peer-reviewed article in *Frontiers of Narrative Studies, 10*(1), 2024, as "Secondary storyworld possible selves: Narrative response and cultural (un)predictability", co-authored with María-Ángeles Martínez. The author roles for the article are as follows: (1) Melina Ghasseminejad: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Reviewing & Editing; and (2) María-Ángeles Martínez: Methodology, Writing – Reviewing & Editing, Supervision. The text has been adjusted for readability and to avoid unnecessary repetition.

with the beforementioned empirical pilot study and examples of minoritary yet culturally consistent queer readings of narratives customarily interpreted as non-queer, in this case, the *Harry Potter* book series.

2.3.1 Storyworld Possible Selves as a Methodology: Some Limitations

To briefly summarise section 1.1 'Storyworld Possible Selves Theory', the theory addresses the study of narrative engagement from the standpoints of cognitive narratology, cognitive linguistics, and social psychology, and provides an analytical framework which encompasses the literary, linguistic, sociological, and empirical study of individuals' responses to narrative experiences. The capability to measure both types of responses is exemplified in Martínez and Herman's (2020) SPSs empirical study of the graphic narrative *City* (Wasco, 2015). The study of this space exploration narrative shows the emergence of both primary SPSs, such as the 'traveller' self-schema SPS, as well as idiosyncratic responses, such as the 'homesick' self-schema SPS. More importantly, the authors' research confirms the hypothesis that narratives significantly elicit more idiosyncratic responses, or SPS slipnets, than collectively predictable ones, or primary SPSs, a result also reported by Loi et al. (2023) and Ghasseminejad (2023). Interestingly, in the latter study, there seemed to be many SPSs that could not be classified as either primary or slipnets, since they were neither completely individual responses nor shared by a vast majority of respondents.

These unexpected findings are additionally reflected in one of my personal experiences. Recently, I was reminded of Zach Snyder's film *300* (2007), a fictionalised retelling of the Battle of Thermopylae (480 BC) during the Persian Wars, based on the comic of the same name by Frank Miller and Lynn Varley (2000). The film has a critic score of 61% on Rotten Tomatoes, an American review aggregation website for film and television that is open to English reviews from audiences. The general reception of the film is even more favourable, with an 89% audience score (Rotten Tomatoes, n.d.). This high audience score may be due to the film's visuals and heroic undertones, as illustrated in the following audience review:

> In the end, Dilios's speech makes it is made clear [sic] what "300" is: a tale of courage and triumph. Butler's performance as Leonidas easily takes the cake as the best in the film. There's a sense of pride, strength, brotherhood, and courage in his own words and actions. He manifests who the Spartans truly are (at least in the film). (Critic M, 2022)

It could be argued that the narrative experience of the film has activated this critic's desired 'hero' possible self SPS. In fact, scanning other reactions, this seems to be an SPS emerging in most of the film viewers. However, this was not my reaction to the film. It would be safe to say that, apart from being irritated, there were no matches between my self-concept and the character construct that I was building for King Leonidas, king of Sparta and leader of the 300 Spartan soldiers that engrossed the Greek army against the Persians at the Battle of Thermopylae. I would have turned it off if I had not been watching the film with others. As mentioned earlier, Martínez (2018) argues that not finding matches with the perspectivizer "might result

in an absence of feelings of self-relevance, so that the reader or TV viewer is likely to drop the book or turn off the TV, in this way opting out of a self-irrelevant narrative experience" (p. 120).

In that particular moment, while seated among friends in the Netherlands, I reflected that my (lack of) reaction and wish to turn off the film was idiosyncratic. After all, the other individuals in the room, mostly Dutch, exhibited a culturally predictable response to the movie, seemingly enjoying its heroic echoes. However, shortly afterwards, when I came across the following NBC News (2007) article: "Iranians outraged over hit movie '300'", I realised that my response was not unique after all. Although I would not say that I was outraged, I was quite irritated due to the depiction of the Persians in the film. As an Iranian myself, I fully understood the Iranians who said that the "Greeks-vs-Persians action flick insults their ancient culture" ('Iranians Outraged over Hit Movie "300"', 2007). Suddenly, my reaction turned out not to be idiosyncratic after all, but, rather, shared with the larger community of my Iranian heritage and its cultural models. Initially, when in the company of my friends, I believed my reaction to illustrate an SPS slipnet. However, it soon became apparent that an entire group shared my response, stripping it of its SPS slipnet status.

These results and anecdote raise the question of how to categorise those SPSs shared by certain communities of readers but not vastly predictable. That is to say; if a majority of narrative experiencers have a specific SPS, that would be primary. Conversely, if only one reader has a specific SPS, this would be an SPS slipnet. But what about those SPSs that fall between these two categories? In other words, what about the SPSs that do not emerge universally but are prompted in more than just a few readers or viewers? The impossibility of categorising these cases in hands-on SPSs reader response research as related to either broadly shared, primary SPS blending, or to idiosyncratic SPS slipnets, suggests the need to approach the issue of cultural predictability within SPSs Theory in terms of graded category membership, strongly connected to cultural models and cultural hegemony.

2.3.2 Cultural Models

Cultural models, or CMs, can be defined as "a particular type of schematic knowledge that is established through repeated (embodied) socio-cultural experience and thus shared by people who belong to the same (sub)culture" (Vaeßen & Strasen, 2021, p. 81). As a type of cognitive model, these abstract conceptual structures are experientially and intersubjectively developed; that is, they arise "in terms of our collective biological capacities and our physical and social experiences as beings functioning in our environment" (Lakoff, 1987, p. 267). They also involve interactional schemata, such as the mother-child interaction schema, which form the basis of situated social understanding (Newen, 2018) and grounded cognition (Barsalou, 2010). Shared cultural models underlie narrative responses and meaning construction on the part of readers or viewers, as they are the building blocks of the shared ground which participants in interaction assume as given when engaging in the co-construction of meaning (Langacker,

2008). As Vaeßen and Strasen (2021) note, however, literary communication differs from face-to-face interaction in that "senders in those contexts can merely guess at the receivers' cognitive environments" (p. 83). But this, rather than a hindrance, is probably one of the reasons behind the appeal of artistic production in general and literary production specifically, since it enables audience members to make use of their own contextually relevant cultural models when responding to a narrative experience.

Undoubtedly, though, members of a certain community of readers (Fish, 1980) can be expected to share a high number of cultural models drawing on shared sociocultural and historical background, which function as "interpretive patterns" (Vaeßen & Strasen, 2021, p. 88). Accordingly, in their exploration of the role of cultural models in the construction of literary characters, Vaeßen and Strasen (2021) highlight the relevance of cultural models to an understanding of,

> how contextualization works in literary communication in the absence of a situational common ground, because culturally shared cognitive activation patterns are the safest bet for the sender when it comes to the necessary prediction of the meaning attribution process on the receivers' side. (p. 85)

Furthermore, the predictive power of assumed shared cultural models in implied readers (Iser, 1974) and, more recently, in rhetorical readers (Phelan, 2017) – those responsive to the author's intent and strategies – does not at all rule out the possibility that members of communities with shared cultural models other than the dominant one can construct narrative meaning and emotionally respond to it within their own CM, even if this differs from the expected, as in the case of the Iranian community's response to *300*. Further still, the role of CMs in narrative meaning construction does not rule out, either, completely idiosyncratic responses, even by a single individual: on the one hand, the embedded and embodied nature of people's schemas encompasses a high degree of non-shared, even privately kept experience; on the other hand, in its narrowest sense, 'culture' is a multi-layered concept which ranges from the shared CMs of large communities, such as nations, to those shared by smaller groups such as families and even couples, down to its smallest instantiation in the self. All these layers dynamically act upon one another, shaping and, in turn, being shaped in what Markus and Kitayama (2010) refer to as a "cycle of mutual constitution" (p. 420). In terms of the bearing of cultural models on the classification of SPSs, it can thus be expected that primary SPSs owe their predictability to their being a part of an assumed dominant cultural model in a certain community of readers. On the other hand, SPS slipnets encompass those unpredictable responses which have their origin in idiosyncratic, personal experience, but which cannot be ruled out from the scope of narrative inquiry and empirical reader response research, since their analysis can provide valuable insights on how individuals and cultures interact and build on each other in what Nünning (2020) denominates narrative communities, "forged and held together by the stories their members tell about themselves and their cultures, as well as by conventionalized forms of storytelling and cultural plots" (p. 61). As Luc Herman and Vervaeck (2019) put it, as cultural

templates, narratives may "actively create and transform mental schemes and cultural norms" (p. 612). In other words, not only do cultural models shape narrative responses, but they are also liable to be shaped by them.

2.3.2.1 Cultural Hegemony

While CM theory includes the notion of sharing a cultural model with others, cultural hegemony delves deeper into the cultural dominance of a majority. As Cortes-Ramirez (2015) notes, the term 'cultural hegemony' was coined by Antonio Gramsci in the 1920s/1930s in his prison notebooks, to refer to how the ruling class validates its domination through not only coercion "but also through consensus, managing to impose their worldview, a philosophy of customs and 'common sense' that favour the recognition of its domination by the dominated classes" (p. 117). Additionally, according to Cortes-Ramirez's (2015) reading of Gramsci, the concept of hegemony is "much broader than that of ideology, because it refers to the process of construction of the collective experience" (p. 127). Lears (1985) simplifies this by stating that discussing cultural hegemony fundamentally concerns the question: *Who has power?* Examining the dimensions of *who* and *power* further unveils the norms and values that act as the dominant framework in a community.

Ewick and Silbey (1995) use the concept of cultural hegemony to analyse the cultural aspects of narratives and their effects on decision-making in law and litigation. The authors argue that cultural hegemony is present in narratives because "storytelling does not occur randomly" and narratives are told with a goal, with "particular interests, motives, and purposes in mind" (Ewick & Silbey, 1995, p. 206). Consequently, the content of narratives is influenced by social norms and conventions, which determine what "serves as validating responses" (Ewick & Silbey, 1995, p. 207), and make narratives a social practice (De Fina et al., 2006; De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008). Ewick and Silbey (1995) further argue that, because "narratives are social practices that are constitutive of, not merely situated within, social contexts, they are as likely to bear the imprint of dominant cultural meanings and relations of power as any other social practice" (p. 211). In other words, narratives express cultural hegemonic assumptions, as they are ruled by social norms and conventions, and reactions to those narratives are also governed by those same norms and conventions. More importantly, when looking at literature, readers use these same social norms and conventions, sometimes in the form of genre conventions (L. Herman & Vervaeck, 2009; Schneider & Hartner, 2014; L. Herman & Vervaeck, 2019):

> Even the most personal of narratives rely on and invoke collective narratives [...] without which the personal would remain unintelligible and uninterpretable. Because of the conventionalized character of narrative, then, our stories are likely to express ideological effects and hegemonic assumptions. (Ewick & Silbey, 1995, pp. 211–212)

Naturally, the concept of cultural hegemony calls forth cases of countercultural hegemony as well. Ong (2022), for instance, analyses multicultural children's picture books with a focus on

countercultural hegemonic elements, and on how they can help promote and encourage multicultural education. Recently, research on cultural and countercultural hegemony focuses on gender roles, specifically masculinity (e.g., Spector-Mersel, 2006; Peukert, 2018; Marshall et al., 2020; Kostas, 2021). Andreasson and Henning (2022), for example, examine how women challenge cultural hegemony through narratives where they centre their experiences with image and performance-enhancing drugs and thus become the standard and new norm. In a woman-only online forum, the participating women did not encounter male commentators who would espouse misogynistic discourse and thus were able to become the standard and new norm in their discussions (Andreasson & Henning, 2022). This shows that minority groups can challenge mainstream hegemony by centring their own experiences, and thus establish a new dominant hegemony in their own spaces.

To summarise, mainstream narratives inherently encompass a cultural hegemony that prompts culturally predictable responses in readers or viewers with shared dominant CMs. These responses can thus intervene in the emergence of primary SPSs, alongside universal, phylogenetic fears – death, injury, danger – and wishes – happiness, health, and well-being.

2.3.3 SPS Cultural (Un)Predictability and Categorisation

To substantiate the proposed inclusion of secondary storyworld possible selves as an analytical category, the horizontal dimension of cognitive psychologist Eleanor Rosch's principles of categorisation will be utilised. Rosch's (1978) work examines how humans categorise the stimuli which they perceive, emphasising that "[w]hen we speak of the formation of categories, we mean their formation in the culture" (p. 28). This is remindful of the model of 'Membership Categorisation Analysis' (MCA), which Dollinger and Froeschle (2017) apply to the study of the narrative self-construction of young defendants' criminal history in penal contexts. Membership Categorisation Analysis is an ethnomethodological approach to categorisation with strong links to Conversation Analysis and Pragmatics. Cognitive approaches to categorisation based on Rosch's seminal studies, however, seem better suited to the study of SPSs categories as here proposed, particularly due to the way in which they incorporate issues of membership gradability and category boundary fuzziness which are crucial to the complex endeavour of categorising human emotional and ethical responses to narratives. Pragmatic approaches to categorisation such as MCA, though, share with cognitive models the underlying assumption that "categories are negotiated in and bound to specific contexts of interaction. They exist because people are doing categorization work" (Dollinger & Froeschle, 2017, p. 71).

This makes approaches based on the cognitive underpinnings of categorisation even more interesting in the context of expanding the SPSs categories, particularly when considering cultural models and cultural hegemony. In her theory, Rosch (1978) draws attention to the role of the 'knower', or perceiver of the world, and the knower's context. She argues that "[o]ne influence on how attributes will be defined by humans is clearly the category system already existent in the culture at a given time" (Rosch, 1978, p. 29), suggesting that cultural models

influence the way in which people categorise stimuli.

Rosch's category system introduces a vertical and horizontal dimension. The vertical dimension concerns "the level of inclusiveness of the category", whereas the horizontal dimension is utilised to "increase the distinctiveness and flexibility of categories" (Rosch, 1978, p. 30). For the expansion of the SPSs framework, the latter will be particularly useful, since here Rosch introduces the notion of prototypicality. She states that categories always have a clear case of membership that is "defined operationally by people's judgments of goodness of membership in the category" and gives the example of robins and penguins as members of the 'bird' category (Rosch, 1978, p. 36). Both robins and penguins are associated with birds; they both have wings, beaks and lay eggs. However, to most people, a robin is the prototypical bird and thus is 'more bird' than a penguin, even though both are birds (Rosch, 1978). As Dirven and Verspoor (2004) explain, "[t]he best member, called the prototypical member or most prominent member of a category, is the subtype that first comes to mind when thinking of that category", while less prototypical members are called peripheral, or marginal members (p. 17). Moreover, categories have fuzzy boundaries (Dirven & Verspoor, 2004) – for instance, a penguin can walk on two legs like a human and swim like a fish – so that "not every member is equally representative for a category" and "categories are blurred at the edges" (Geeraerts, 2006, p. 146). As Mervis and Rosch (1981) put it, "category boundaries are not necessarily definite" (p. 109).

In essence, Rosch's horizontal dimension can be seen as ranging from peripheral category membership in 'somewhat a bird' (penguin) to central, or prototypical, category membership in 'very much a bird' (robin). Extrapolating this to SPSs category membership, it is possible to design a horizontal dimension of cultural predictability, with idiosyncratic responses on one end and highly predictable and even universal responses on the other. The SPSs prompted between those two extremes on a scale of predictability can be seen as more or less widespread, even if not necessarily universal, simply by emerging in a majority of respondents within a dominant CM. More interestingly, this category can also be applied to instances where an SPS is specifically widespread within a certain community whose members share CMs other than the dominant. In other words, the proposed revision of SPSs Theory (see Figure 5) sees cultural (un)predictability as a graded category which spans:

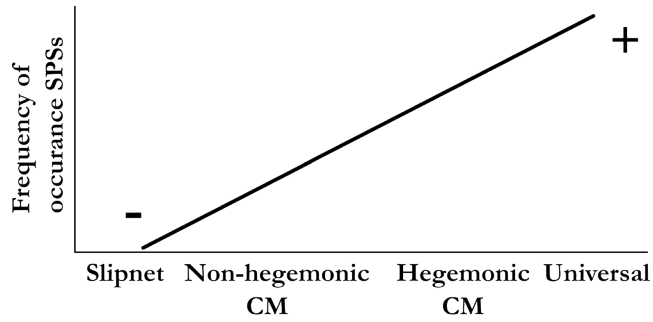

Figure 5. Visual representation of the SPSs graded scale.

- Primary SPSs, with maximal predictability if what are activated by a narrative experience are (a) universally, phylogenetically shared desired and undesired possible selves or self-schemas, such as the desired 'healthy' self or the undesired 'injured' self; and (b) culturally predictable aspects of the self within a contextually dominant CM;

- Secondary SPSs, with relative predictability if the narrative experience activates culturally predictable aspects of the self within a non-dominant CM; and

- SPS slipnets, with minimal predictability, as they involve idiosyncratic individual experience.

2.3.3.1 Categorical probability

Although this predictability scale solves the issue of SPSs categorisation regarding SPSs that emerge between two extremes, the secondary SPSs category still encompasses a significant range of responses, and this prompts the need for a numeric specification which targets prototypical membership of each subcategory, and in this way guarantees analytical reliability and cross-comparison in empirical reader response research. For example, in an experiment involving a hundred participants, an SPS triggered by both two participants and ninety-nine participants would fall within the secondary SPS category, even though this positions the former distinctly toward the 'almost idiosyncratic' end of the dimension, and the latter toward the 'almost universal' end. As an idiosyncratic response involves a single individual's reaction to a narrative, enhancing the distinction between primary and secondary SPSs is especially valuable so that readers sharing non-dominant CMs can be duly accounted for. To this purpose, a specific cut-off point needs to be implemented in the data to differentiate between these categories more precisely.

This can be achieved by converting the quantitative information derived from the qualitative analysis into count variables. For instance, if the desired 'hero' possible SPS emerges in all participants in a dataset of a hundred, the SPS is counted one hundred times (or the actual count). After transforming the variables into actual counts, the data can be manipulated to determine potential category cut-off points. Following statistical traditions, the dataset will be divided into quartiles and consider a cut-off point of the top percentile or above 75% (van Peer et al., 2012).

In order to employ statistical analysis to determine these categories, it is necessary to establish the variable distribution. To facilitate data analysis, the data must be treated as random variables, and the actual counts need to be converted into cumulative counts. This step enables the calculation of a cumulative distribution function (Dekking et al., 2005), which essentially describes the "probabilities of a random variable having values less than or equal to x" (Frost, n.d.). For instance, in a qualitative study with twenty participants, the SPSs emerging in all the participants would be prototypical primary SPSs, thus maximally predictable, either universally or within the dominant CM in the particular reading/viewing situation. Accordingly, those emerging in more than 75% of participants – that is, fifteen in this example – would

still qualify as primary SPSs. Conversely, those emerging in two to less than 75% of the participants would be categorised as secondary SPSs, with those scoring under the 75% mark as prototypical members of the secondary SPSs category, and those found in just two or three respondents as peripheral members, closer to the fuzzy edge between this category and that of SPS slipnet, a term referring to responses found in just one participant.

2.3.4 Illustrating Secondary Storyworld Possible Selves

As previously described, the results of the pilot study confirm Martínez and Herman's (2020) and Loi et al.'s (2023) findings, namely that more SPS slipnets emerge than primary SPSs (ninety-one and four, respectively, in the twenty-participant sample) (Ghasseminejad, 2023). However, the results also showed that a high number of the SPSs found could not be categorised as either primary SPSs or SPS slipnets, because they were neither completely idiosyncratic, nor shared by all or a vast majority of the participants. For instance, the desired 'person in recovery' SPS was a clear primary SPS, triggered in 90% of all participants, as illustrated by participant PS_NF6[61] (1):

> (1) "I think it's a beautiful story of resilience, as in, if you are surrounded by the right people, perhaps sooner or later, there is an opportunity to escape from that vicious circle."

However, sixty of the ninety-eight prompted SPSs would fall in the secondary SPSs category. Among these is the desired 'responsible' SPS, which was found in eleven participants (55%), as illustrated by participant PS_F4 (2), or the 'angry' past possible self SPS, which emerged in two participants (10%), as communicated by participant PS_C3 (3):

> (2) "[One of the excerpts I was touched by] is, on the one hand, the effort, well effort, on the one hand not putting the blame on his parents, but really on himself."

> (3) "Angry, anger, that excerpt 5, yeah, yeah. The being angry, I've had that for a long time. Very long."

Most unexpectedly, however, Frey's text appeared to trigger the 'parent' self-schema SPS in three-quarters (75%) of the participants, recruited following the selection strategy presented in Ghasseminejad et al. (2023),[62] and aged between 50 and 64, a demographic in Flanders which significantly favours reading as their favourite pastime (66%) (Synovate, 2011). For instance, consider participant PS_C7's reflection (4):

> (4) "But as a parent, that is, yeah, you do everything for your child. You don't give up, right?"

Upon reflection, though, and if the category *secondary SPSs* is introduced to the analysis, this outcome becomes less surprising since James' hard struggle out of substance use includes a

61 The pilot and the actual study examine fictionality, so they are coded similarly. To avoid confusion, PS (pilot study) is added to the codes of the participants who took part in the pilot study.

62 See section 2.1.1, 'Participant Selection Strategy'.

substantial element of confrontation and reconciliation with his parents. Examining the participants' age group (50-64) more closely, it becomes apparent that the probability of them being parents with children in James' age range is high. Consequently, the activation of the 'parent' self-schema SPS in these participants entirely falls within the expectations generated within a CM containing the cultural experience shared by this age group in a 21st-century European urban setting.

Furthermore, while the 50-64 age group represents the largest demographic in Antwerp, it still only accounts for slightly less than 30% of the population (Stad in Cijfers, n.d.). It can thus be argued that the likelihood of other cultural age groups, particularly the younger ones, generating a 'parent' self-schema SPS might be lower. Although this is speculative, additional research across various age groups and their respective CMs would be needed to validate or negate this hypothesis, related to the possibility that certain SPSs are not really universally predictable but just prominent within specific cultural groups sharing a culturally hegemonic, dominant CM.

In other words, secondary SPSs can facilitate the study of unconventional narrative interpretations, allowing for a richer exploration of narrative response and engagement. This can provide enlightening insights regarding specific communities' reactions to a narrative, as exemplified by the Iranian community's reception of the film *300*. A community can be defined as a "*group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings*" (L. W. Green & Mercer, 2001, p. 1929, emphasis in original). It is important to note that this does not imply that community members form a homogeneous entity. As Bradshaw (2008) posits, "community solidarity may not directly lead people to act collaboratively or to even congregate as a whole" (p. 13). Thus, it is important to emphasise that, although the prevalence of a certain secondary SPS within a group does not guarantee its emergence in every individual in that group, the proposed conceptualisation of SPS cultural (un)predictability along a graded scale, with more and less prototypical category members, serves to account for non-prototypical primary and secondary SPSs, depending on how close these are to a neighbouring category in terms of the relative number of respondents in a given study. Moreover, this cultural model approach to (un)predictability in SPS classification can also be used to explore the effects of dominant CMs within which critics and researchers – readers themselves, and thus culturally delineated – implement their analyses.

2.3.4.1 Case Study: Harry Potter, The Boy Who Came Out

These insights will now be used to generate hypotheses regarding the emergence of secondary SPSs in the *Harry Potter* series in connection to its queer readings. Introducing the *Harry Potter* series is unnecessary, as it has permeated the cultural landscape extensively. An impressive number of people are familiar with the 'Boy Who Lived', whether through the books or films. Nonetheless, the series' profound impact on countless people is undeniable. An entire

generation, often referred to as the 'Harry Potter generation', grew up alongside Harry and his friends, aligning their ages with the protagonists throughout each book and subsequently introducing the series to their own children. With a substantial global readership – the book series had already sold over 500 million copies worldwide by 2018 – the series has led to a multitude of interpretations, including a queer reading (*20 FACTS ABOUT THE HARRY POTTER BOOK SERIES*, n.d.).

Bronski (2003) contends that, despite Rowling never explicitly stating or implying that her books are a gay allegory, "her language and story details effortlessly lend themselves to such a queer reading" ('Coming Out' section). This thematic lens is notably evident in Nylund's (2007) work, in which the author employs a cultural studies-informed approach. Similar to the SPSs framework, this underscores the integration of the self-concept into the analysis, in this instance utilised as a narrative therapy strategy.[63] In his article, he delves into a case study involving a young gay man named Steven, who uses the *Harry Potter* series as a tool to shape and define his own sexual identity. The meticulous portrayal of Steven provides a foundation for the analysis of matches between himself and the perspectivizer in the *Harry Potter* series, in this case, Harry Potter himself (Nylund, 2007).

Similar to the main character and perspectivizer, Steven is a teenager, an orphan, and has faced physical abuse in prior foster placements (Nylund, 2007). Like Harry, he also finds a new chosen and accepting family. Considering these matches and consequent blends, it becomes highly possible that the books have imparted self-transformative effects on Steven, who mentions how he felt "a lot less alone" upon discovering his chosen family, and states that he imagines that "that's how Harry felt when he went to Hogwarts and found out there were other kids who were different", interpreting this as Harry being queer: "I think Harry is sort of coming out in a way" (Nylund, 2007, p. 20). This reading of Harry Potter is intriguing, particularly given that the books are not universally perceived as queer literature. As Turner-Vorbeck (2003) states:

> The *Harry Potter* books feature images of nuclear families without the inclusion of representations of the divorced, step, single, gay or lesbian, or adoptive or foster families of our contemporary society. The books also reinforce cultural stereotypes of power and gender, consistently portraying women as secondary characters. In addition, there is little cultural diversity represented and, when, it is presented, it is in the form of tokenism and colonialism... What appears to be represented in the *Harry Potter* books, then, is an aggregation of quintessential, hegemonic, hierarchical middle-class social and cultural values. (p. 20)

In an analysis also closely aligned with the SPSs approach, Ehnenn (2007) states: "My discussion of Rowling's texts, then, will highlight the importance of individual responses in making meaning, while it also will examine what kinds of readings, meanings, and possibilities the Harry Potter books invite its readers to easily imagine" (pp. 229–230). Her text opens with

63 It is interesting to note that Abeer Hakami (Universidad de Alcalá & Jazan University) currently uses the SPS framework to study Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) narratives, and Rocío Riestra Camacho (Universidad de Oviedo) uses it to analyse anorexia narratives.

the statement, "Harry Potter looks like a lesbian", immediately introducing an idiosyncratic perspective on the character (Ehnenn, 2007, p. 229). Much like Steven, a lay reader who perceives Harry as 'different', Ehnenn emphasises how this perceived divergence from the norm can offer unique pleasures for young readers and viewers like Steven. Moreover, she argues that this divergence is not rooted in the conventional outsider-hero narrative often present in these types of stories, where the hero gains acceptance by overcoming obstacles. Instead, she says that Harry gains acceptance by,

> discovering another society, a complex subculture that contains its own obstacles and challenges, but most importantly for my argument, a society filled with outcasts, in short, people like him. Harry finds happiness and earns a place for himself, but Harry never becomes normal – in the Muggle or in the wizarding world [...] In other words, Harry Potter has the potential to foster and perhaps even inspire fantasies about a secret culture where no one is 'normal,' and difference is 'natural,' as the reader understands normal and natural to be. (Ehnenn, 2007, p. 233, emphasis in original)

Ehnenn's analysis of Harry Potter exemplifies that Steven's reaction to the series is not as unique as it might appear at first glance. In fact, her analysis supports Steven's interpretation of the narrative as a portrayal of Harry's coming out: "All of these textual events [in the *Harry Potter* series] could have particularly poignant resonances for readers who have, themselves, experienced closeting, come to terms with new identities and shared coming out stories" (Ehnenn, 2007, p. 237). It is important to reiterate that these readings of the text do not assert the character's queerness. However, as Ehnenn (2007) argues, "the text definitely invites a host of queer appropriations" (p. 241). Furthermore, this perspective extends beyond just Harry's storyline. Notably, many fans consider the romantic pairing of Remus Lupin and Sirius Black as 'canon' – or as an established aspect of the actual storyworld – despite the absence of explicit statements on the topic (Tosenberger, 2008).

Given that these queer readings are not universally shared among all Harry Potter readers, but rather potentially widespread within the LGBTQIA+ community, classifying those responses as secondary SPPs underscores the significance of this subcultural reaction to the narrative within shared CMs. According to Nylund (2007), these readings emerge from individuals reading against the grain of a text, repurposing it to serve their ends, such as in identity construction. Approaching this from the SPSs framework, reading against the grain leads to an alternative characterisation of the perspectivizer. Consequently, the reader can then align more aspects of their self-concept with the former, leading to the emergence of more SPSs and, thus, enhanced opportunities for narrative engagement.

Finally, it is important to note that queer readings of supposedly non-queer narratives, and the consequent activation of secondary SPSs, extend beyond the realm of *Harry Potter*. Doty (1993), for example, presents instances of queer interpretations within mainstream, heterosexual culture media such as *Laverne and Shirley*, a sitcom television series about two friends and roommates from the '70s and '80s. He posits that, "unless the text is *about* queers, it seems

to me the queerness of most mass culture texts is less an essential, waiting-to-be-discovered property than the result of acts of production or reception" (Doty, 1993, p. xi, emphasis in original).

2.4 Procedure and Data Analysis[64]

2.4.1 Procedure Experiment

The participants' personal data was anonymised by using the A-B-pseudonymised data key (UAntwerp Ethics Committee for the Social Sciences and Humanities, n.d.). In short, personal data has been linked to Code A. In a separate file, Code A was connected to Code B. After which, Code B was linked to the pseudonymised data in a third file. The three files were saved separately and were encrypted as well. Participants would be randomly assigned to one of three groups before the experiment: the Fiction group (F), the Non-Fiction group (NF), or the Control group (C), using the key. In this case, Code A was a random number between 1 and 100, determined using a randomiser website (*Random Integer Generator*, n.d.). Code A would then be connected to Code B, the participant code. This was done to avoid the personal data file order from corresponding to the participants' order (i.e., the first participant = participant F1). The participant code would be determined using the randomiser website to choose a number between 1 and 8 (*Random Integer Generator*, n.d.) and the test condition (Fiction - F, Non-Fiction - NF or Control - C) by using a list randomiser (*List Randomizer*, n.d.). If the code was already assigned, the next option would be used until all participants were assigned a code. Finally, the participant code (Code B) would be linked to the pseudonymised data.

Each participant received the same eleven fragments from Frey's novel during the experiment, and semi-structured interviews with the participants aimed to explore the SPSs triggered by the fragments. This meant that a set list of questions was always asked, but the interviewer had the flexibility to ask follow-up questions or delve deeper into the responses (see Table 5). The questionnaire used in the interviews was adapted from Martínez and Herman's article on Wasco's *City* (2020) and tested during the pilot study (Ghasseminejad, 2023).[65] As a final question, the control group was asked whether they thought the text they read was fictional or non-fictional. This question was posed to the test conditions as a thought experiment. The purpose was to confirm whether the participants' perception of the text corresponded to their assigned test condition.

The interviews ranged from 15 to 90 minutes, depending on the participant, and were all in

64 Parts of this section will appear as a peer-reviewed chapter, "The Power of Perception: The Influence of Fictionality on the Creation of Storyworld Possible Selves", in *Storyworld Possible Selves and Narrative Intersubjectivity*, a collection edited by María-Ángeles Martínez.

65 After reflecting on the pilot study, slight changes were made to the questionnaire. One significant modification involved the removal of the question, 'Is there a fragment in which you could recognise yourself in James?' This question was omitted because the responses predominantly focused on the substance use aspects of the narrative rather than exploring matches between the participants' self-concept and the mental space they created for the perspectivizer. Additionally, questions 5 ('What was your impression of James' parents?') and 6 ('Could you describe James' parents in excerpts 7 and 10?') were switched in order. This adjustment allowed participants to express their opinions before being asked to focus on specific aspects related to their perception of the parents.

Table 5. The experiment questionnaire. The questionnaire used for the experiment, translated from Dutch.

1. Can you briefly summarise the story?
2. Which excerpt stood out the most to you and why?
3. What was your impression of James?
4. Could you describe James in excerpts 2, 3, 4 and 6.
5. What was your impression of James' parents
6. Could you describe James' parents in excerpts 7 and 10? You may make a distinction between the parents if necessary.
7. Does this story bring back any memories?
7a. This could be things you have read, seen or things you have experienced yourself.
8. James' family drops him off at the rehabilitation centre in the second fragment, how would you feel in that moment?
9. What do you believe the message of this story to be?
10a. Control group: When you were reading the text, did you think you were reading fiction or non-fiction? Why?
10b. (Non-)Fiction group: When you were reading the text, did you think you were reading fiction of non-fiction? Why?
11. Is there anything you would like to add that has not been brought up or discussed?

Dutch.[66] Participants were welcomed at the Brain Embassy in Antwerp, Belgium, a co-working space equipped with a soundproof room featuring a coffee table and two chairs, comfortably accommodating two individuals. Following a brief introduction about the procedure, the text material was introduced as excerpts from, depending on the condition, a novel, a memoir or were assigned no specific category, and I would elaborate on those terms by using 'made up' or 'true', following Zetterberg Gjerlevsen and Nielsen's (2020) definition of fictionality as invention. Afterwards, the participants were left to read the provided fragments independently and were allowed to take as much time as they needed. Once they finished reading, they were asked to sign a consent form, and the interview proceeded, with the conversation being recorded. To reiterate the test conditions as often as possible, the questions were slightly altered depending on the condition to which the participants were assigned. For instance, 'What was your impression of James?' in the Control group would become 'What was your impression of the protagonist James?' in the Fiction condition, or 'What was your impression of the author James?' in the Non-Fiction condition. Follow-up questions were asked when necessary, for instance, when the answer was unclear or when I believed the answer could be elaborated on.

After the interview, the participants were provided with a debriefing, during which the nature of the experiment was explained. I would always allow the conversation to conclude naturally. One participant was excluded from the dataset due to emotional distress related to personal experiences they expressed during the interview. To respect the participant's well-being, I chose not to proceed with difficult questions, allowing the interview to end naturally. As a result,

66 I have personally translated all the quotations by the participants from Dutch to English

several questions were left unasked. Therefore, an additional participant was sought out for the experiment.

2.4.2 Data Analysis[67]

Following the interviews, the recordings were transcribed by the automatic transcription software Happy Scribe (n.d.), after which I reviewed and refined the transcripts. Next, the software tool MAXQDA 2024 was used to code the data and conduct further analysis (VERBI Software, 2021). A deductive category formation approach (i.e., categories decided upon before coding) was employed for the hypothesised primary SPSs (i.e., culturally predictable responses) to achieve reliability in the analyses. To repeat, those primary SPSs were determined by the pilot study results and are the following: the desired 'persevering' SPS, the desired 'supported' SPS, the desired 'hopeful' SPS, the undesired 'substance user' SPS, the undesired 'struggling' SPS, the undesired 'hopeless' SPS and the 'parent' self-schema SPS (Ghasseminejad, 2023). An inductive category formation approach (i.e., categories created during coding) was used for the secondary SPSs and SPS slipnets (i.e., subculturally predictable and idiosyncratic responses, respectively).

Both inductive and deductive categories were documented in a codebook, with the deductive categories being created before the coding process and the latter during it.[68] To be specific, the categories – in this case, the SPSs – are given clear descriptions that establish the coding rules (Rädiker & Kuckartz, 2020). For instance, the description for the undesired 'substance user' SPS reads: Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards substance use; this includes negative (physical or emotional) consequences in recovery. An example of a coded segment for this SPS is: "No, no, no, I also don't think it's very pleasant to be a junkie. I think that, I've never been one, but I don't think it's much fun. Or being addicted. Constantly craving, I don't think so" (participant F5). If multiple coders are involved, as is the case in the present study, they agree upon the descriptions during the deductive category formation phase to ensure consistent rule application. During the inductive category formation phase, coders(s) independently ascribe descriptions and add examples (Rädiker & Kuckartz, 2020).

Additionally, the process of assigning SPSs to the interviews was modelled after the coding process in Martínez and Herman (2020). Although the coder must sometimes infer, SPSs are linguistically clear to code. Self-schema SPSs are recognisable because of the expression of statements. Participant F5 remarks, for instance, "but as an old man, I have often noticed", leading to coding this segment as the 'old' self-schema SPSs.

On the other hand, past possible self SPSs are revealed in the form of memories, as can be seen in participant NF4's comment, "And I know that as a close family member, I was so angry too. And why did you let go like that?", which was coded as past possible self 'angry' SPS. Desired

67 The data collection, storage and processing method has been approved by Ethics Committee for the Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Antwerp.

68 See Appendix F. 'Codebook'.

and undesired SPSs, then, are recognised through the expression of wishes, hopes and fears. It is here that the coder must do most of the inferring, as not all wishes are linguistically introduced with, for instance, 'I like to' or 'I should be', nor are most fears introduced with 'I would (not) want to' or 'I am afraid for'. For instance, the following fragment has been coded as desired 'persevering' SPS,

> Because then they must be very strong to reach for a full glass of whiskey in front of you, really get their nose in it and then not touch it, that's very impressive. And then I hope that by the next glass of whiskey, that he can do it too. (Participant C1)

Finally, an example of the identification of an undesired SPSs, in this case, categorised as an undesired 'defeated' SPS: "I would, if James was my son, I would take him [to the rehabilitation centre] too. I would be broken though" (participant NF5). In short, the coding process is based on statements about who someone is, their memories and how they encode wishes and fears.[69]

In the current study, two researchers independently coded 10% of the interviews to minimise research bias during coding. An intercoder agreement was then calculated with Cohen's Kappa, a statistical measure of agreement. Although the divisions for the strength of the agreement are considered "clearly arbitrary", the Kappa statistic provides valuable benchmarks (Landis & Koch, 1977, p. 165). As expected, the initial agreement was "moderate" ($k = 0.56$) (Landis & Koch, 1977, p. 165). Following the Kappa result, any discrepancies were discussed between the coders and the codebook was revised and refined accordingly (Rädiker & Kuckartz, 2020). This process involved incorporating the inductively formed categories, which led to most of the revisions. The revisions and refinements ranged from discussions about the interpretation of the rules or defining them more precisely to simply assigning a different name to an SPS. For example, one coder named a code undesired 'angry' SPS while the other called it undesired 'mad' SPS.[70]

The coders then performed another round of independent coding. This process resulted in an "almost perfect" intercoder agreement ($k = 0.86$) (Landis & Koch, 1977, p. 165). The principal researcher coded the remaining interviews independently using the revised codebook. Any unclear cases after the initial revision process were discussed and resolved before coding. As an additional control, an intracoder check was performed a year after the design of the codebook.[71] The intercoder agreement calculated for the intracoder check yielded a similar result ($k = 0.86$). For several analyses, the mean was calculated for each SPS per group, allowing for meaningful comparisons to be made. The analyses focused on whether the SPS was

69 See Appendix G. 'Illustration Coded Interview (C5)' for an example of a full interview and the coded segments that led to the assignment of the specific SPSs. To reiterate, assigning SPSs to utterances involves a combination of linguistic markers and the coder's inferences.

70 The revision and refinement process went exceedingly well, and the two coders effortlessly reached a consensus on all discussion points.

71 For the intracoder check to be valid, the recoding must take place at least two weeks after the previous coding cycle (Rädiker & Kuckartz, 2020).

triggered by the participant rather than the frequency at which the SPSs were present. The SPSs were categorised as primary, secondary or slipnet according to the calculation described by Ghasseminejad and Martínez (2024).[72]

A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was applied for the analyses. The quantitative analyses consisted of a *top-level code statistics* analysis, which provides an overview of the triggered SPSs and their frequency of occurrence. A t-test was run to compare the number of triggered SPSs per group with each other as the data was normally distributed. The latter should be taken with caution as the sample size is insufficient for quantitative measurements.

For the qualitative analyses, the participants were treated as case studies for an in-depth examination. To determine which participants would be used for this analysis, a Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) was performed. This method allows for "studying the association between two or more qualitative variables" and was used to explore the association between the identified SPSs (XLSTAT, n.d., section 'What is Multiple Correspondence Analysis'). Specifically, for each participant, or case study, the SPSs are categorised as present or absent, and the Euclidian distance is calculated between the case studies based on all SPSs. The plot generated by the MCA (see Figure 6 in section 3.1.3, 'Multiple Correspondence Analysis') visualises the two axes that explain the most variation within the dataset. In other words, it enables visual observation of individual case studies and "the distances between the categories of the qualitative variables and between the observations", highlighting the 'outliers'[73] in the dataset by presenting the participant distribution (XLSTAT, n.d., section 'What is Multiple Correspondence Analysis'). These outliers represent the most intriguing participants for the case studies, as they cluster separately from the other datapoints. Colour-coding based on metadata allows for observation of whether the case studies are arranged in a certain way and whether the metadata explains the differences between the data. The data case studies will be colour-coded on the 'recoded fictionality group' for this study.[74]

Additionally, as an MCA turns data from many variables into plots with two axes, it provides information on which SPSs play an important role in explaining the distribution. A contribution plot visualises the percentage of those specific SPSs in each dimension. In other words, it helps identify which SPSs are crucial when examining the nature, construction and relevance of the projected SPSs. It is important to note that the map does not show significant differences or associations but offers support when examining the data for patterns.

72 See section 2.3, 'Secondary Storyworld Possible Selves'.

73 Since an MCA is a visualisation tool for data variation rather than a statistical test, it does not identify 'true' outliers (i.e., statistical anomalies). Instead, it highlights which variables explain the most variation in the data. Consequently, this means that averages or baselines cannot be established in the data. This aligns with SPSs Theory, which suggests that there is no such thing as an average reader (i.e., a reader who only triggers primary SPSs). For convenience, however, the term 'outliers' will refer to the case studies in this dissertation.

74 See section 3.1.2, 'Results per Group'.

3. RESULTS[75]

As a considerable amount of data has been collected, this chapter presents the results relevant to the research question. To reiterate, this study is interested in how the reader's perception of James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* as fictional or non-fictional affects its reception and thus relates to the nature, construction, and relevance of the projected storyworld possible selves. As the experiments yielded quantitative and qualitative data, the chapter will first provide an overview of the quantitative analyses. This will include a comprehensive examination of the SPSs triggered across all participants, followed by a more detailed breakdown of the results per test group. Additionally, the MCA will be interpreted to establish the case studies for the qualitative analyses

Next, this chapter will delve into the analysis of six case studies. These participants have been selected based on the number of SPSs they triggered, with a focus on those who triggered the most SPSs (>40) or the least (<20) to ensure the exploration of participants with both high and low narrative engagement. These cut-off points were decided upon to guarantee sufficient case studies for an adequate qualitative analysis. As argued by Stake (2006),

> Two or three cases do not show enough of the interactivity [...], whereas 15 or 30 cases provide more uniqueness of interactivity than the research team and readers can come to understand. But for good reason, many multicase studies have fewer than 4 or more than 15 cases. (p. 22)

Additionally, the MCA will ensure the inclusion of participants who do not meet this condition but are 'outliers' in the MCA and, therefore, interesting to the qualitative analysis. To be specific, this means participants F1 (45 SPSs), F3 (36 SPSs), F5 (57 SPSs), NF6 (13 SPSs), C1 (44 SPSs), and C2 (17 SPSs) will undergo a thorough analysis to provide deeper insights into their individual responses.[76] In addition to an examination of their perception of fictionality in regard to Frey's narrative, an analysis of their blending network types will be conducted to further explore the nature, construction and relevance of the projected SPSs.

75 Parts of this chapter will appear as a peer-reviewed chapter, "The Power of Perception: The Influence of Fictionality on the Creation of Storyworld Possible Selves", in *Storyworld Possible Selves and Narrative Intersubjectivity*, a collection edited by María-Ángeles Martínez.

76 As can be seen, participant F3 does not adhere to the mentioned criteria. However, a Multiple Correspondence Analysis showed him to be an 'outlier'. This is elaborated on in section 2.4.2, 'Data Analysis' and section 3.1.3, 'Multiple Correspondence Analysis'.

3.1 Quantitative Analyses

3.1.1 Overview Triggered SPSs

A total of 126 SPSs were recorded,[77] of which nine were primary SPSs (see Table 6). These SPSs are categorised as primary according to the calculation described in Ghasseminejad and Martínez (2024), according to which SPSs found in over 87.5% of the participants in this study would qualify as primary SPSs; those emerging in only one participant would be considered idiosyncratic, SPS slipnets; and those occurring in between one participant and 87.5% of the participants would be considered secondary SPSs. The hypothesis regarding primary SPSs can be accepted for the undesired 'struggling' SPS, undesired 'substance user' SPS, desired 'persevering' SPS and the desired 'supported' SPS. Although the other hypothesised SPSs – 'parent' self-schema SPS (83%), desired 'hopeful' SPS (79%) and undesired 'hopeless' SPS (54%) – were found, they did not emerge as primary SPSs in the current study, since they fell under the threshold of 87,5%. In addition, 41 individual reactions, i.e., SPS slipnets, were found.[78] Amongst these are, for instance, the undesired 'regretful' SPS and 'old' self-schema SPS. Additionally, 76 secondary SPSs were found, ranging from SPSs found in 8% of the participants to 83% of the participants. It should be noted that the hypothesised SPSs rejected as primary SPSs for the current study all range towards the 'almost universal' end of the secondary SPSs scale. That is to say, they are still triggered by a significant number of participants. Interestingly, in contrast to Loi et al.'s (2023) results, more undesired SPSs (43) were triggered than desired SPSs (30) and self-schema SPSs (28). This could be due to the text portraying such an undesired or feared situation that the participants created the undesired SPSs without difficulty.[79] Additionally, 23 past possible SPSs were prompted, based on readers' past experiences.

Table 6. Primary SPSs. The emergent primary SPSs and the frequency of occurrence in percentages.

Emergent SPS	% of participants
Undesired 'struggling' SPS	100
Undesired 'substance user' SPS	100
Desired 'open' SPS	100
Desired 'persevering' SPS	100
Undesired 'angry' SPS	96
Undesired 'self-destructive' SPS	96
Undesired 'distancing' SPS	88
Undesired 'lonely' SPS	88
Desired 'supported' SPS	88

77 See Appendix H. 'Overview Prompted Storyworld Possible Selves', Supplementary Table 4 for an overview of the SPSs ordered by frequency of occurrence.

78 See Appendix H. 'Overview Prompted Storyworld Possible Selves', Supplementary Table 5 for an overview of the SPSs ordered by SPSs category.

79 See Chapter 4., 'Discussion', for an elaboration.

3.1.2 Results per Group

To compare groups to each other, the number of times a specific SPS was mentioned in the Fiction, Non-Fiction, and Control groups was calculated. For example, the primary desired 'open' SPS was counted eight times per group to give it the proper weight. Table 7 shows the number of SPSs triggered per SPS category. As can be observed, the Fiction group displays a larger number of emergent SPSs in all categories, with a statistical significance in the case of undesired SPSs ($t(13) = 2.3$, $p = < 0.05$) with a remarkable difference between the Fiction ($M = 16.6$, $SD = 2.1$) and Non-Fiction group ($M = 13.8$, $SD = 2.9$).

Table 7. Overview emergent SPSs. The number of triggered SPSs per SPS category per group.

	Fiction	Non-Fiction	Control
Desired SPSs	96	74	77
Undesired SPSs	133	110	127
Past Possible SPSs	25	12	10
Self-Schema SPSs	41	31	36
Primary SPSs	69	67	69
Secondary SPSs	201	153	172
SPS Slipnets	25	7	9

This means that the Fiction group significantly triggered certain undesired SPSs more often, as can be seen from the undesired 'aggressive' SPS (7 times triggered in the Fiction condition and twice in the Non-Fiction condition) and the undesired 'powerless' SPS (6 times in the Fiction condition versus twice in the Non-Fiction condition). Other SPSs that showed a large difference between the number of times the SPS was triggered between the test conditions can be found in Table 8. Note that these differences are not statistically significant, but offer a pattern that can be examined further.

Table 8. Overview triggered undesired SPSs. An overview of the undesired SPSs with the greatest difference between the test conditions Fiction and Non-Fiction. USPS = Undesired SPS, DSPS = Desired SPS, S-SSPS = Self-Schema SPS, PPS SPS = Past Possible Self SPS.

	Fiction	Non-Fiction	Fiction%	Non-fiction%	Δ%
Aggressive USPS	7	2	87,5	25	62,5
Forgiving DSPS	6	1	75	12,5	62,5
Loving DSPS	6	2	75	25	50
Struggling PPS SPS	4	0	50	0	50
Powerless USPS	6	2	75	25	50

The final question – posed as a thought experiment for the test conditions – during the interviews ('When you were reading the text, did you think you were reading fiction or non-fiction? Why?') led to an interesting result, too. It was found that participants' perceptions of the text as fiction or non-fiction were not influenced by the information provided to them. As previously mentioned, the excerpts given to the participants lacked any identifying markers, such as the author's name, title, or book cover. Therefore, when the participants were informed that

the excerpts were taken from a novel or a memoir, they had no reason to doubt that information. As mentioned earlier, the terms 'novel' and 'memoir' were explained to ensure participants understood their meaning, using phrases such as 'made up' and 'true', and the fictionality markers were reiterated during the interview. However, in many cases, this did not have a significant impact, as exemplified by participant NF8, who forgot the test condition:

> NF8: Because yeah, had formed him and does the story stop there? Or is it a part of a novel?
>
> Interviewer: They're excerpts from a memoir.
>
> NF8: Ah right, yeah, yeah, yeah, you said that, yeah. Right.

In other words, participant NF8 was under the impression that she was reading a novel. Or, in the case of participant NF4, who did remember that the text she was reading was supposedly non-fictional:

> I think that if you hadn't told me it was an autobiography, it could've been a novel. But you say or said it is a memoir, yeah, I knew it. Yeah, but actually, when I was reading it, it felt like a novel to me.

The abovementioned examples aside, the majority of participants answered fiction when asked whether they believed they were reading fiction or non-fiction. Of the eight participants in the Control group, who had not been given any information regarding the (non-)fictional nature of the text, six thought that they were reading a fictional text, and only two believed it to be non-fictional. Two of the eight participants in the Fiction group believed they were reading a non-fictional text, while only one participant from the Non-Fiction group thought they were reading a non-fictional text. Participants were always asked as a follow-up why they thought the text was (non-)fictional. Some were unsure, while others mentioned the writing style. However, a recurring answer was that a) the text was based on actual events, b) the author was well-informed and had spoken to people who struggle with substance use, or c) that the text read autofictional.

Table 9. Emergent SPSs per recoded groups. The average number of triggered SPSs per SPS category per recoded group.

	Recoded Fiction	Recoded Non-Fiction
Desired SPSs	10	10
Undesired SPSs	16	14
Past Possible SPSs	2	2
Self-Schema SPSs	4	5
Primary SPSs	9	8
Secondary SPSs	22	21
SPS slipnets	2	2

Although the question was posed as a thought experiment to the test conditions, exploring whether their reactions affected the results is interesting. Therefore, two new groups were formed: a Recoded Fiction (RF) group and a Recoded Non-Fiction (RNF) group.[80] Unfortunately, the groups became quite skewed,

80 Section 4.1, 'Limitations', will delve into possible implications and offer suggestions for addressing them in further research.

with eighteen respondents in the RF group and six in the RNF group. It is possible to normalise the data, but due to this skewed nature, useful comparisons cannot be made. Table 9 presents the normalised number of SPSs triggered per newly formed group.

3.1.3 Multiple Correspondence Analysis

To establish the 'outliers' that will be used for the qualitative analysis and identify the SPSs that influence those outliers, a Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) was performed. Figure 6 shows the distribution of participants, here coloured with the recoded perception of the text's fictionality. The most relevant pattern in this map can be found on the x-axis. Dimension 1 has a distribution of 11,1%, and it is possible to see three clear outliers: participants F1, F3, and F5. These participants were all in the Fiction condition, although participant F1 felt he had read a non-fictional text. Even though participant F3 did not adhere to the criteria for an in-depth analysis, namely above 40 or below 20 triggered SPSs, it does seem an outlier in this analysis. Therefore, participant F3 will be examined in the qualitative analyses as well.

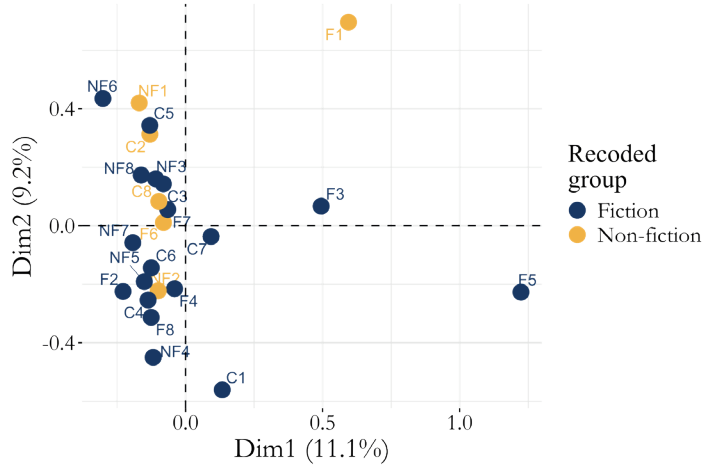

Figure 6. Multiple Correspondence Analysis. Multiple Correspondence Analysis of the participants coloured with the Recoded Fictionality group.

In addition to visualising the data's distribution, the MCA analysis provides an overview of the categories that have influenced the calculations the most (XLSTAT, n.d.). Figure 7 shows the top ten variables with the highest contribution to the distribution. Here, it can be seen that the majority of the SPSs with a contribution are either self-schema SPSs or past possible self SPSs. This could be because all three of these participants have struggled with substance use in the past to some degree, and could therefore explain their outlier status. As mentioned earlier, this analysis provides no statistical support for conclusions. However, the emergence of the SPSs with a high contribution will be considered in the qualitative exploration of the participants.

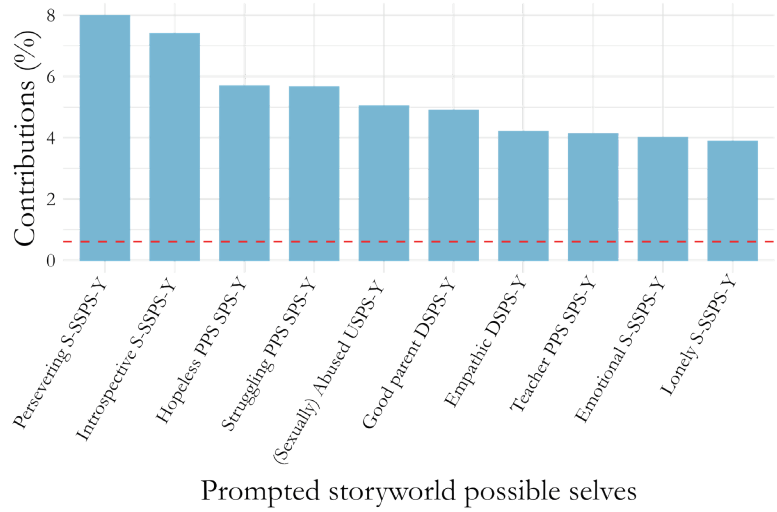

Figure 7. Storyworld possible selves contribution bar plot. This figure shows the top ten SPSs that contributed to the spreading of the sample in the MCA. The coded Y means that the participant triggered that particular SPS. The red line is the expected average contribution, assuming the contributions are uniform. To elaborate, if every SPS would contribute evenly to the MCA, all bars would be at the red line. The fact that they exceed the line means that contribute to the distribution of the data.

3.2 Qualitative Analyses

As mentioned before, this section will highlight some notable findings as a considerable amount of data has been collected.[81] Specifically, the qualitative analyses in this section will focus on participants F1, F3, F5, NF6, C1 and C2. While the primary focus of the analysis is on exploring reader reactions concerning fictionality, other notable reactions will also be examined through an analysis of their blending network types.[82] Although shared patterns or deviations will be discussed, there will be no one-on-one comparisons between the selected participants. Nor will comparisons be made with the rest of the group. That said, to provide a visual contextualisation of the participant reactions, Figure 8 presents an overview of the distribution of SPSs triggered by all participants, with the participants that will be analysed highlighted.

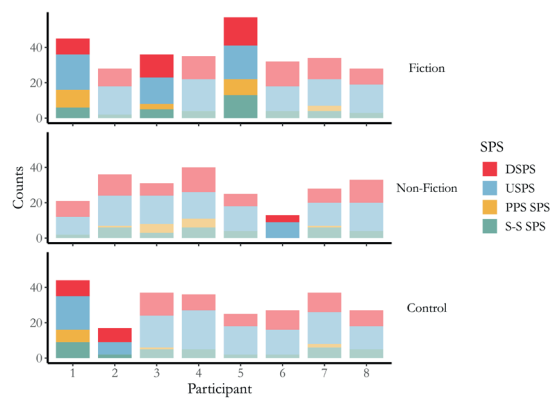

Figure 8. Storyworld possible selves frequency of occurrence. An overview of the frequency of occurrence of the different types of SPSs per participant per condition.

Although the choice for analysing these specific participants has been discussed earlier, additional support for the outlier status is brought to light during a preliminary analysis of the secondary variables. Namely, participants F1, F5, and C1 (who triggered more than forty SPSs) and participant F3 (who was shown to be an outlier in the MCA analysis) have a deep familiarity with substance use; either because they have struggled with it themselves in their past (F1, F3 and F5) or encounter/have encountered it in their immediate social circle (F5 and C1). On the other end of the spectrum, a deep familiarity with substance use did not emerge during the interviews with participants NF6 and C2. Moreover, in addition to the low number of SPSs triggered, NF6 and C2 seem to approach the text from a literary analysis perspective.[83] This could infer a certain distance that the participants kept while reading, thus not facilitating the process of running an SPS blend.

81 Please note that while this section will provide detailed insights into participant reactions, it will not present all the specific triggered SPSs. For individual participant details, participant index cards have been designed and are available in Appendix I. 'Participant Index Cards'.

82 This section includes quotations from the participants. While not all of them will directly correspond to identified SPSs, those that do will be highlighted accordingly.

83 Participant NF5 approaches the text from a literary analysis perspective as well but has triggered 25 SPSs. Additionally, he is not an outlier in the MCA analysis and, therefore, will not be considered in the case study analysis.

3.2.1 The Kindred Spirit (Participant F1)

Participant F1 is a 62-year-old man who proclaims to be an avid reader. During the interview, he mentioned that he was a severe substance user for eight years, from age twelve to twenty. He said that he recognised the story and that he spoke from experience: "It is three-quarters my story; the quarter that is added is more horrendous [than James' story]" (participant F1). This can also be seen in particular language use, such as when he refers to substances as 'spul'[84] and how he describes James as a 'junkie'. Unsurprisingly, then, he is the participant with the most triggered past possible self SPSs (10) – such as the 'abandoned' and the 'substance user' past possible self SPSs – of which half of them are SPS slipnets. In fact, all five past possible self SPS slipnets ('abandoned', 'forgiving', 'indifferent', 'self-destructive' and 'worthless') that were triggered were connected to his past with substance use. This might also explain why he was one of the two Fiction condition participants who thought that the fragments were non-fictional, "it is non-fiction, yeah, yeah. But I am always speaking from my experience, as a writer this time. Yes, I write short stories as well. I also always blur it [my experiences and my protagonist's], almost in this way" (participant F1). It is interesting to note here that, despite categorising the text as non-fiction, participant F1 still acknowledges some aspects of fictionality, thus recognising local fictional fictionality strategies.

3.2.1.1 F1's Blending Network Type: Mirror SPS Network

As discussed in section 1.1.2.2, 'Types of Storyworld Possible Selves and SPSs Blending Networks', SPSs can also be described in terms of organising frame networks. In the case of participant F1, it could be argued that the blending network is a mirror SPSs network. In other words, the input spaces of participant F1, the perspectivizer and the generic space "mirror each other in the sense that they have the same organizing frame" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 123). Because the organising frames are similar, the "shared frame automatically provides linked roles", facilitating running blends (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 126). Consequently, the emergent blend has the same frame but has been enriched by the blending process.

The mirror SPS network could have been established when participant F1 mentioned that he started using substances as a child. This is similar to James' experience, who started using substances when he was thirteen until the reader encounters him at 23. Participant F1 discloses, "**It did start from twelve, with injecting until my, until twenty. It shaped me**". Moreover, a near-complete alignment can be observed when he speaks about his experience in a psychiatric hospital, "Yes, I have been in psychiatry, so I'm speaking from my own experience. The words that I have said are the same thoughts that James could've had. Probably did have" (participant F1). At one point, quite early in the interview, participant F1 argues that it is difficult for him to describe the fragment in which James steps under a scalding shower, "as in, I'm going to talk about myself too much [...] it's about James, not me". However, when he continues, it is clear that it is difficult for him to 'step out' of the blend: "So if I tell you now that I think [what]

Substance user PPS/USPS

84 Translates to English as 'stuff' and is used as a colloquial way of referring to drugs in Dutch.

James thinks in the shower, in actuality, I will tell what I thought when I was in the shower, and I did the same" (participant F1). After he recalls his manner of self-injury (his words), his reflection on the text can be argued to be an enrichment of the blend. He says:

> **So it's the same, that feeling you have is: I'm alive, I exist. That's why I understand people who harm themselves** [...] Yes. Complete understanding, a lot of respect. I fully understand those people. Cigarettes, smokes, and like, I exist because I feel pain. (Participant F1)

Self-destructive PPS/USPS

The blend above is an example of a deictic shift from participant F1. In addition to *what* the participant says, the shift is also present in *how* he says it. At times, participant F1 starts talking about James in the third person but then finishes the sentence speaking in the second person, using a pseudo-deictic you. Such as here, when he discusses the parents' love for James: "Because his parents love him so much, love him so much. **And in general, when *you* have issues later in life, *you* blame it on *your* upbringing. *You* think, something has gone wrong with *my* upbringing, but he can't because his parents really love him**" (participant F1, my emphasis).

Loving parent DSPS

In general, participant F1 is exceedingly considerate of James' plight. After determining the blending network as a mirror SPS network, the high number of SPSs triggered by the text is unsurprising. As mentioned, the shared frame between the mental spaces immediately facilitates links, leading to blends. In addition to the high number of SPSs, the outlier status of participant F1 can also be explained with the MCA results. From the top ten SPSs that contributed to the distribution and therefore caused participant F1 to be clearly separated from the others, participant F1 triggered the top five.[85] To conclude, in the case of participant F1, it seems that the blending network, and thus his past, heavily influenced not only the construction of SPSs but also his perception of the text's fictionality.

3.2.2 The Fiction Enthusiast (Participant F3)

Participant F3 is a 57-year-old man who has struggled with alcohol use in the past. He is a big fan of fiction, which can be seen in how he seems to take a step back to analyse James as a character. He stays true to his test condition and perceives the text as fiction. He says that it is an "incredibly good fiction" (participant F3). However, when elaborating on the ascription of fictionality, he argues that the "best fiction is more realistic than good non-fiction" (participant F3). He states that fiction "can also magnify some things quite nicely. Which ultimately works better than cold, hard facts. It is made more on a human scale, I think. So, it transcends the mere intellectual level, which is quite meagre in a way" (participant F3). Despite assessing text as 'realistic', participant F3 still held on to the fiction label.

Additionally, as said above, participant F3 is a self-proclaimed fan of fiction. Moreover, he mentions that he likes reading books in this genre:

> At first I thought, oh no, where is our socially realistic trauma from North

85 These are the: 'persevering' self-schema SPS, 'introspective' self-schema SPS, 'hopeless' past possible self SPS, 'struggling' past possible self SPS, and the undesired 'abused' SPS.

> America? I'm not always in the mood for that, but actually, I often am a little in the mood for it. A piece of literature and film that I actually do love. (Participant F3)

This suggests a familiarity with the genre and could, therefore, explain the participant's perception of the text as realistic but fictional. Finally, as seen in section 1.2.6, 'Perceived Fictionality', one of the effects of perceived realism is an increase in narrative engagement. Therefore, it could be possible that participant F3's perception of the text as realistic led to the relatively high number of SPSs triggered (36).

3.2.2.1 F3's Blending Network Type: Combination Network

At first glance, it seems that participant F3 creates a double-scope SPS network, namely a network that has "inputs with different (and often clashing) organizing frames as well as an organizing frame for the blend that includes parts of each of these frames and has emergent structure of its own" (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 131). As discussed in section 1.1.1.2 'Blending Theory', a double-scope network often leads to highly creative blends and is typically found in, amongst others, literary endeavours. Participant F3 kept a distance from James for a large part of the interview. As mentioned earlier, he almost seemed to conduct a character analysis, always referring to James in the third person, whereas participant F1 often changed his perspective from the third person to the second person.

However, clashing organising frames do not prevent the emergence of SPSs. In fact, this is where the transformative abilities of blends play a role.[86] Participant F3 plainly states, "the text fosters understanding. I thought that was powerful. Which is not always easy when you meet such individuals in person". It could be argued that reading this text thus transformed participant F3's view on people who struggle with substance use. As previously stated, features in an emergent blend "may be projected back into the input spaces, altering their internal structure" (Martínez, 2014, p. 121).

Interestingly, later in the interview, a mirror SPS network seemed to emerge. This is entirely possible as "these network types exist as a continuum rather than as separate categories", a fact that makes them especially interesting for SPS blends (Martínez, 2018, p. 138). At first, participant F3 reflects on a general need for mental rest and bad habits and how they mainly appear in young adults. He says, "**Everyone has a bad habit in their own way, to say it like that. Or a desire for a bit of mental rest, whether with or without synthetic substances**" (participant F3). He continues his reflection, stating that it is not illogical to "yearn for a little bit of numbness now and then" (participant F3). He then turns the reflection to himself, commenting that he can take distance from substances more easily now he is 57. He says,

Struggling PPS/USPS

> I'm less and less inclined to abuse alcohol. I have never done drugs. Alcohol, of course, is widespread and daily fare for a lot of people. It is not a daily fare anymore. **But yes, I myself do have a, yes, a difficult relationship with alcohol, without it really being abuse. It is just… The**

Substance user PPS/USPS

86 See section 1.1.2 'The Creation of Storyworld Possible Selves'.

> **temptation is much easier to resist than ever. Yes. Yeah, that's a recent occurrence for me actually. A quite recent phenomenon that I so drastically, that I keep away from it. I am not a teetotaller, but I am close to it.** (Participant F3)

It seems that participant F3's past possible self SPSs ('lonely', 'struggling', and 'substance user') are strongly present, leading to a mirror SPS network when discussing his experiences. This is apparent when he once again refers to substance use in connection to being a young adult. He comments,

> The temptations are very big, although that is not necessarily wrong. There are also phases where young people really experiment with, like for days. **I mean, walking around high as a kite for a year and then you know, *you* don't really know and how do *I* deal with that?** (Participant F3, my emphasis)

Struggling PPS/USPS

When it comes to shared patterns, similar to participant F1, participant F3 suddenly switches to using the second person when discussing this 'experimenting' phase. This also happens when he talks about the emotions in James when James speaks to a therapist and shares his problems with others. Participant F3 mentions that he went to therapy and was surprised about the efficiency of it. When referring to James breaking down he says,

> Yes, so *you* do understand, that makes it interesting in the story that, the illusion that *you* are in control of *your* own life is really an illusion. *You're* only in control of a little bit. **So then *you* better try to be in control and if it doesn't work it's human.** (Participant F3, my emphasis)

Persevering DSPS

As mentioned above, although participant F3 did not trigger more than forty SPSs, he still triggered 36 SPSs, which is a relatively high number of constructed SPSs. It could, therefore, be argued that, similar to participant F1, the mirror SPS network led to the emergence of a higher number of SPSs.

Additionally, participant F3 was one of the outliers in the MCA results. When looking at the contributions, six of the top ten contributions have been triggered by participant F3, namely: the 'persevering' self-schema SPS, 'struggling' past possible self SPS, undesired 'abused' SPS, desired 'good parent' SPS, desired 'empathic' SPS and the 'emotional' self-schema SPS. As can be seen, half of the triggered SPSs contributions are either self-schema (2) or past possible self (1) SPSs. It is interesting to note that these important SPSs imply a shared frame that can lead to a mirror SPS network. It could be argued, then, that the presence of mirror SPS networks plays a significant role in the construction of SPSs, thus explaining participant F3 as an outlier in the MCA.

To conclude, participant F3 proves to be an interesting case study. Even though there is not enough evidence to argue that he found some hybridity in the text, he did mention that the text was highly realistic. Moreover, it could be possible that participant F3's love for fiction led to the emergence of both a mirror SPS network and a double-scope SPS network. Finally, participant F3 demonstrated how SPSs can capture the transformative 'power' of literature.

3.2.3 The Empathic Philosopher (Participant F5)

Participant F5 is a 64-year-old man who has experienced tragedies in his social circle due to substance use throughout his life. One of his brothers and a friend both died because of alcohol use, and another friend who used heroin took their own life. While he does not necessarily say that he has struggled with substance use himself, he does mention that he is familiar with the urge to drink and the urge to 'go hard'.

Regarding participant F5's perception of fictionality, he stayed true to his test condition and said that the excerpts were part of a novel. That said, he argued that the text reads realistically and that it could be non-fiction, "I have the feeling that the author knows what he's talking about. The description of the storm within, the Fury that wants to take over everything [...] or has a great empathic ability" (participant F5). He says that it does not matter to him if a story is 'true' or not for him to like a book. Instead, he, the reader, must want to believe it to be true. So, he says, "I want to believe this. I want to believe the happy ending" (participant F5). When asked for an elaboration, he states that he finds it voyeuristic when writers are asked whether the events truly happened, reiterating the fact that the text's fictionality does not matter to him. He concludes, after confirming that it could be non-fiction as well, "but I read it as fiction. I really read it as a part of a novel" (participant F5).

3.2.3.1: F5's Blending Network Type: An Intriguing Combination

Similar to participant F3, participant F5 seems to have triggered two SPS network types, namely a mirror SPS network and a double-scope SPS network. There are two main topics participant F5 seems to focus on, namely: familial relationships and youth and experimentation. Both seem to stem from his own past, implying a mirror SPS network. He recounts,

Offspring PPS

Abused PPS

Distancing PPS

Loving parent DSPS

> **I come from what today would be called a dysfunctional family. I recognise the estrangement too.** At one point he says something like: I have never hugged my mother. I recognise that. I sat, this is very personal, but that is allowed. But I was sitting at the deathbed of my father and I realised that we had never touched each other. So it is, what a strange, strange realisation. So I recognise that immensely, that estrangement from the parents while he says and **the parents say, we love you, we like you, we have done our best. We, what parents generally do, I think.** (Participant F5)

There are more instances of recognition of familial patterns, with him, participant F5, as the offspring. In his summary of the text, after describing the main storyline of James' substance use, he immediately refers to the relationship with parents and guilt. He mentions the guilt that children feel when hurting their parents, whether justified or not, or parents feeling guilty when their child loses control. Regarding the latter, he argues that people have a false sense of control. So, when they *do* lose control, feelings of guilt emerge. He philosophises on this and posits questions, "Why does someone start at thirteen and how is it possible? Because perhaps 'why' isn't the correct question? How is it possible that someone enters that world at thirteen

and stays there? What fascinates me there is the parent-child relationship" (participant F5). He concludes by saying that James's substance use and rehabilitation and the familial relationships summarise the narrative for him.

At the same time, it is possible to see a projection of the emerging space back to the participant's mental space. When referring to the reconciliation between James and his parents, he says, "**Maybe I liked that [...] because I haven't known that myself. So that's why I like that that rapprochement between the child and parents, that it exists**" (participant F5). *Offspring PPS* *Abused PPS*

A continuation of this topic is the way participant F5 often reflects on being young and how he believes that people must experiment and explore when trying to figure out life. He argues that young people are often not happy with themselves and that they struggle with that lack of happiness, even though people, in general, are capable of so much. He says that life nowadays is regimented, "**you are forced to fit in somewhere, but you haven't asked for [being born]. We all end up in a rat race [...] I find it awful**" (participant F5). Moreover, there is no room for experimentation and exploration anymore as young people are consistently monitored, both by their parents and social media. *Forgiving DSPS* *Struggling USPS*

When asked about James, he says that he is a "guy that I could've known in my life, I believe" (participant F5). He mentions the people whom he has lost and how, although people have a calm facade, everybody has a storm raging within them. As stated before, although participant F5 has not mentioned any substance use, he has expressed that he is familiar with the urge to use substances. For instance, when asked about the last fragment in which James resists the urge to drink, participant F5 elaborates after saying that he found the ending beautiful, "Because I recognise it too. Wanting to drink or go hard, and you stand there as an addict, you let someone pour you a large glass, you almost push your nose in it. You smell everything, you see the colours".

When discussing how to deal with the above-mentioned 'raging storm', he brings up that he and his siblings got off track, "**and yeah, then the temptation of reaching [for substances] will come automatically** [...] You automatically come into contact with all the things that challenge you at a young age. That you, even though you know you shouldn't, try once" (participant F5). Additionally, he says, "I truly believe that it's a part of it. You must push and break the rules and find your own way as a young person" (participant F5). However, even though it can go terribly wrong, he argues that, "**if you've lived like that. You have obviously lived on the edge, but you have lived**" (participant F5). *Struggling PPS* *Experimenting DSPS*

In addition to his past experiences, or perhaps because of these experiences, participant F5 expresses a deep understanding of why people might use substances. This does not necessarily point to a mirror SPS network, but might refer to a double-scope SPS network as well. It could be that participant F5 has a different organising framework, but is deeply empathic. When recalling his time as a teacher and school counsellor of at-risk children, he states that saying 'I understand you' would break all barriers. Participant F5 says that he believes in "understanding,

Empathic DSPS

trying to understand where it comes from and learning, or trying to learn to realise what is wrong". He confirms this empathic nature in his answers. When discussing guilt, for instance, he argues, "No, no, no, I think it's not that nice to be a junkie. I have never been one, but I don't think it's fun" (participant F5). He says that *he* cannot understand that *people* cannot understand or show compassion for people who are desperate or despaired.

Similar to participant F1, participant F5 triggered many SPS slipnets, 12 to be specific. Again, similar to participant F1, many of these (4) were past possible SPSs, such as the 'guilty' past possible SPS and the 'non-conforming' past possible SPS. Interestingly, participant F5 activated the most self-schema SPSs (13), of which four were idiosyncratic, such as the 'supported' self-schema SPS. The overall theme in his idiosyncratic responses (see Table 10 for an overview) seems to centre around an experimentation phase during youth, such as his 'experiencing life' self-schema SPS and 'non-conforming' past possible SPS.

Table 10. Participant F5's SPS slipnets.

Desired 'playful' SPS
Desired 'experimenting' SPS
Desired 'guiltless' SPS
Undesired 'American macho'
'Abused' past possible SPS
'Distancing' past possible SPS
'Guilty' past possible SPS
'Non-conforming' past possible SPS
'Old' self-schema SPS
Desired 'supported' SPS
'Supported' self-schema SPS
'Distancing' self-schema SPS
'Experiencing life' self-schema SPS

Similar to participants F1 and F3, the MCA results confirm participant F5's outlier status. Participant F5 triggered all ten SPSs that contributed to the distribution. To repeat, those are the: 'persevering' self-schema SPS, 'introspective' self-schema SPS, 'hopeless' past possible self SPS, undesired 'abused' SPS, desired 'good parent' SPS, desired 'empathic' SPS, 'teacher' past possible self SPS, 'emotional' self-schema SPS and the 'lonely' self-schema SPS.

To summarise, participant F5 triggered a mirror SPS network, as can be seen from his past experiences. Additionally, it can be argued that a double-scope SPS network emerged as well. This is slightly more difficult to establish as the clashes do not occur as strongly due to participant F5's highly empathic attitude. Regarding fictionality, even though participant F5 clearly states that he read the text as parts from a novel, he does indicate that it is written realistically and that the author either knows what he is talking about or is extremely empathic. Especially because of the "description of the storm that rages within, of the Fury that takes over everything" (participant F5).

3.2.4 The Disinterested Book Aficionado (Participant NF6)

Participant NF6 is a 63-year-old woman who is an avid reader like the previous two participants. She triggered the least number of SPSs (13), and her interview was the shortest (±15 minutes) and is, therefore, perhaps the most interesting case study. She was quite specific when asked whether she perceived the text as fiction or non-fiction. Throughout the interview, she used the word 'cliché' four times, including when she discussed the text's fictionality: "It's quite

a cliché story, I thought. And not told originally either. It reminded me of a young adult novel a little bit" (participant NF6). This is not to discount the many merits of the Young Adult genre nor the quality of the texts (Williams, 2023). However, it could be that maybe participant NF6 was reminded of the genre because Young Adult books often discuss serious themes but are fictional (Williams, 2023).

In addition to the comparison to Young Adult literature, participant NF6 argued that it is impossible that "someone who has experienced this themselves can't give richer, more meaningful details". On the other hand, she does mention that it clearly is not written by a writer but that it is written by an "ex-alcoholic" (participant NF6). But then she continues by saying she does not see any signs of a fantastic writer. Despite the conflicting answers, the repeated use of Young Adult as a genre and the fact that she refers to another fictional novel when discussing the use of capitalisation (Tokarczuk's *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*), I would argue that she perceived the text to be fictional.

3.2.4.1 NF6's Blending Network Type: Not Available

As mentioned in section 1.1.2.2 'Types of Storyworld Possible Selves and SPSs Blending Networks', when there are no matches between the reader's self-concept and the perspectivizing entity, readers can choose to opt out of the narrative engagement. As Martínez (2018) argues, the "non-projection of linking matches between relevant features in storyworld characters and the self-concept may make aschematic individuals find a narrative uninteresting and personally irrelevant, due to its lack of potential for self-improvement and self-transportation" (p. 120). Quite early in the interview, participant NF6 says, "Yeah, I think I find it very difficult to identify with the main character, yeah". This suggests that participant NF6 did not find any matches between her self-concept and that of the perspectivizer. Interestingly, she was not able to answer the question about her impression of James:

> NF6: Like I said, it is difficult for me to identify with him. It's kind of a cliché story, I think. And it's not told in an original way, either. It reminded me of a young adult novel a bit. Yeah.
>
> Interviewer: So, no impression of James?
>
> NF6: No, like I said, it seems so cliché – the story of a person with an addiction, and pfft, yeah. No, there is nothing. [...] I find it pretty uninteresting. [...] nothing in the description makes me think, ah yeah, he's describing it well, and it touches me. Like I said, it is so cliché.

That is not to say that she did not trigger any SPSs. As expected, she displayed, apart from the undesired 'distancing' SPS and the desired 'supported' SPS, most of the primary SPSs. Although it could be argued that she built a double-scope SPS network, it is more likely that if she had had the opportunity, she would have opted out of the reading experience. She ended the interview by apologising for the short answers. Mentioning that she reads often, she said, "There are books where I could ramble on about. But..." (participant NF6). Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* apparently was not one of them.

3.2.5 The Sympathetic Parent (Participant C1)

Participant C1 is a 62-year-old woman who has several people in her social circle who struggle with substance use and recounted harrowing stories of her high school students and friends. There is a certain distance there though, as the experiences are always second-hand. As she says, "all you can do is listen" (participant C1). That said, she knows enough about the topic to be able to recognise events in the text.

When asked about her perception of the text, she is uncertain. She starts by saying that the book can be both fictional and non-fictional, seeming to have found some hybridity in the text. She ends her answer by saying, "so it could have been true" (participant C1). She repeats that it could be both fiction or non-fiction twice more, but after the last request for elaboration, she concludes: "No, at the start I really had the feeling of, this is a story, but then, when he starts writing about the Fury and the accompanying, yeah, maybe it is then… True" (participant C1). As mentioned above, it seems as if she recognises some hybridity in the text. This could be due to instances of local fictional fictionality in *A Million Little Pieces*.

3.2.5.1. Blending Network Type: A Complicated Case

Similar to participants F3 and F5, participant C1 built both a mirror SPS network and a double-scope SPS network. Contrary to them, however, participant C1's mirror SPS network seems to have been built with the parents in the text, who are not the perspectivizer. This brings forth a complication as the current model of SPSs Theory does not support this finding.[87] Nevertheless, there are clear instances where participant C1 clearly built a mirror SPS network with the parents as the other input space.[88] When answering the question on which fragment stood out to her the most, she immediately referred to the parents and started speaking in the second person, "Gosh, actually the parents, I find that so sad. **The powerlessness that *you* have as a parent in wanting to help *your* child. Because even though he is 23, that is still a child, helping your child and not succeeding**" (participant C1, my emphasis). Additionally, in the conflict between James and his parents, she seems to be more sympathetic to the parents. She talks about how, as a parent, you will always look for reasons why something like this happens and that you always end up looking at yourself, asking yourself, 'What did I do wrong?' After describing the parent's perspective, she then speaks about James, "**They [the parents] want to do everything, but in actuality there's a dude there who just doesn't want to, right?**" (participant C1).

Powerless USPS

Parent S-S SPS

Indifferent USPS

87 See Chapter 4.1, 'Limitations', for further elaboration on potential avenues of research resulting from this finding.

88 Participant C6 is not the only participant who triggered the 'parent' self-schema SPS and, thus, not the only one who built a similar mirror SPS network. That said, triggering the 'parent' self-schema SPS does not automatically lead to a mirror SPS network. In this sample, there is a near 50/50 split between the participants who triggered the 'parent' self-schema SPS and built a mirror SPS network and those who did not. Participants who did build a mirror SPS network with the parents are: F7, NF3, NF4, NF5, NF8, C3, C4 and C7 (8 participants). The participants who triggered the 'parent' self-schema SPS but did not build a mirror SPS network are F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F8, NF2, NF7, C6, and C8 (11 participants).

This slightly judgmental tone can be found when building the double-scope SPS network as well. Although participant C1 is more sympathetic towards the parents, there is some sympathy for James, even though it comes with an edge, "**Oh gosh, on the one hand, I feel bad for him because he's a pathetic figure and on the other hand I would really like to shake him and say, fella, there is so much to live for**" (participant C1). And it is that lack of true 'understanding' that leads to the analysis of the creation of a double-scope SPS network when it comes to the perspectivizer James. Moreover, after requesting an elaboration, that urge to shake him seems to stem from some type of annoyance with his behaviour. When asked what about James exactly makes her want to shake him, she said:

Pitiful USPS

> That he, that not taking it seriously during therapy. And then yes, those conversations are also, well I can't say ridiculous. But right, he wants to kill himself, but he is too cowardly. But then he does think that to be an addict you have to be strong. **And then I think, yeah that's twisting your words, come on. But that doesn't help, right? So that doesn't help, right? Yes, actually quite a pathetic figure. Yeah, and also been addicted from ten already, but come on. Yeah, if you have your first cigarette at ten, your first glass, yeah, who knows what else** [...] **On the one hand, I do want to show understanding for someone who is an addict, that it's not easy to get off of it,** but on the other hand, yeah. **Why do you get addicted? Why? Why do you do it? And why aren't you strong enough at some point to say, it's done now.** And not wait until, like, it's almost over [...] So yeah, so yes, that uncaring, not taking it seriously. Yeah, also towards the psychologist. **Like, kind of the feeling of yeah, I want to be out of here as soon as possible because what you're asking is bullshit.** (Participant C1)

Pitiful USPS

Struggling USPS

Empathic S-S SPS

Weak USPS

Indifferent USPS

It is clear that, although C1 is sympathetic, her sympathy is primarily reserved for the parents. I would argue that her sympathy for James stems more from pity than empathic understanding. It is also interesting to note that participant C1 triggered three undesired SPS slipnets and the overall third-highest number of undesired SPSs. In other words, the double-scope SPS network is easily identified as there are many clashes between her self-concept and James' mental space.

3.2.6 The Literary Analyst (Participant C2)

Participant C2 is a 57-year-old man who used a literary analysis approach to the text. He was quite neutral in his answers and needed some additional questions to truly offer his opinions. When specifically asked whether he meant his answer negatively or positively, he said, "Yeah so I look, I'm more of, I'm mainly analysing" (participant C2). According to him, the text is meant to offer a first-hand description of the experience of someone who is "severely addicted" (participant C2). He argues, "it's really as if you're in the person [...] I suspect for some reason that the writer has experienced it himself from that point-of-view and that he tries to describe it from that point-of-view at the moment that it's happening" (participant C2). Similar to earlier participants, then, participant C2 recognises a hybridity in the text as well. When asked the question whether he thought the text to be fictional or non-fictional, he considers the possibility of it being written by a councillor or therapist who encounters these struggles in their pa-

tients. However, he concludes that it seems more likely to him that "it's someone who himself, or yeah, that it's actually very autobiographical" (participant C2). In short, similar to the other participants who believed the text to be non-fictional, participant C2 recognises local fictional fictionality strategies but seems to be convinced by its realism, leading to the perception of the text as non-fictional.

3.2.6.1. Blending Network Type: Double-Scope SPS Network

As mentioned above, participant C2 seemed to keep his distance from the text during his analysis. He refers to the style and how the way the text conveys the thoughts and feelings is interesting. Participant C2 specifically referred to the use of repetition and argued that it "gives you the feeling that someone, so to say, is stuck in a pattern and that that keeps getting more and more agitated. But the fact that you're looking for aggression, I find that an interesting idea on its own".

Despite that opinion, participant C2 only triggered seventeen SPSs. Although this is difficult to conclude, he seems to have built a double-scope SPS network due to the low number of triggered SPSs. However, although there is not enough support to argue for a self-transformative effect, the text appears to have created some understanding for people who struggle with substance use or other mental issues.[89] Referring to how James seeks out his Fury, participant C2 said, "**the way he looks for it and I'm like yeah, I find that, yeah, I can't really understand that. So I find it interesting that someone does that, really goes looking for it**". Despite attempting to maintain some distance, participant C2's remarks suggest a slight impact on his self-concept.

Indifferent USPS

89 This was seen in the exploration of participant F3 and is, for instance, very clear in participant NF7, who said: "Gosh. I associated some parts, I have someone in mind, but who that is, that's private. Someone that I know, a man. About my age, my generation that does struggle with alcoholism, for quite a while. And that moment, I saw or felt the description of James through his eyes and I understood him a little more. It seems like I needed James, or this character, to be a little bit more forgiving to this guy I am envisioning. Who has already screwed things up, if I may put it like that. But I can imagine that he has the same demons that I know nothing of, that are now described here, that dwell in him too. And if I were to say, if that would be him, I'd say blimey, I understand you better. So. yes. Yes, I can understand better, yes."

4. DISCUSSION[90]

This chapter will first present a research summary in section 4.1, discussing the process of investigating the research question. Reflecting on the research approach, in essence, three fundamental studies emerged as substantial assets to exploring the overarching research goals: 1) the design of a participant selection strategy for hyper-diverse cities; 2) the creation of the third SPS category, secondary storyworld possible selves; and 3) the final experiment that took the previous two studies into account to answer the research question.

Next, in section 4.2, 'Limitations', this chapter will explore the study's limitations and discuss any factors that may have affected the results. Additionally, the experiment yielded some unexpected findings that should be considered for further research into perceived fictionality. Finally, section 4.3 will provide the study's conclusion.

4.1 Research Summary

This study was interested in how readers' perception of narratives as fictional or non-fictional affects their reception and thus relates to the nature, construction and relevance of the projected storyworld possible selves. Additionally, a secondary aim of this research was to contribute to the notion of SPSs Theory, as no empirical research using SPSs Theory as a framework had been carried out at the start of this project. This section will discuss the abovementioned studies and examine how they each contributed to exploring the research goals.

4.1.1 A Sampling Strategy for Hyper-Diverse Cities (Study 1)

As detailed in section 2.1.1, 'Participant Selection Strategy', a participant sampling strategy for empirical reader response research was designed to explore whether considering culturally complex geographies would affect reader responses. This study argued that researchers must critically reflect on their participant selection strategy when designing an empirical case study of actual readers. To reiterate Reybold et al.'s (2013) argument, researchers do not "just collect and analyze neutral data; they decide who matters as data. Each choice repositions inquiry, closing down some opportunities while creating others" (p. 699). Hence, when a study aims to research reader responses in general, it should strive to ensure that its sample consists of actual readers. Moreover, if empirical researchers want to recruit in culturally complex cities, they should consider a sample that takes reader diversity into account as well. As cited earlier, Flick (2007) argues that "constructing a research design successfully means to define who or what shall be studied (and who or what shall not)" (p. 44).

Additionally, this study was necessary as it could contribute to testing hypotheses 2) *Partici-*

90 Parts of this section will appear as: (1) a peer-reviewed chapter, "The Power of Perception: The Influence of Fictionality on the Creation of Storyworld Possible Selves", in *Storyworld Possible Selves and Narrative Intersubjectivity*, a collection edited by María-Ángeles Martínez; and (2) as a peer-reviewed article in *Narrative Works* as, "Real Readers and James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*: The Mediating Role of Authenticity on Perceived Non-Fictionality".

pants who share characteristics with the perspectivizer will trigger more SPSs and 3) P*articipants who know a real-life person who shares characteristics with the perspectivizer will trigger more SPSs*.[91] By diversifying the sample, the odds of including participants who either share characteristics with the perspectivizer themselves or are acquainted with someone who shares those characteristics could potentially be higher. Thus, theoretically, the first study was a valuable step in ensuring the proper sample for the final experiment.

However, as discussed in section 2.1.2, 'Participants Experiment', it became apparent during the implementation of the recruitment strategy that the time frame would not allow for the recruitment of an adequate number of participants when following said strategy. Nonetheless, implementing the designed participant selection strategy is a valuable step in ensuring an inclusive sample representative of the study's demography. For the current study, the adjustment of the recruitment strategy, fortunately, did not mean that hypotheses 2 and 3 could not be tested, as the final sample did include a significant number of participants who shared characteristics with the perspectivizer or knew real-life persons who shared those characteristics.

4.1.2 The Secondary Storyworld Possible Selves Category (Study 2)

The second study emerged after the pilot study's results revealed that a significant number of SPSs defied the categories of primary SPSs and SPS slipnets. These results highlighted the role played by the hegemonic cultural models prevalent in the reading situation, necessitating a third category in the culture-based SPSs typology. Therefore, Study 2 introduced secondary storyworld possible selves, or secondary SPSs, to expand on the theory's categorisation of culturally predictable responses and better bridge the gap between almost universally predictable storyworld possible selves – such as the undesired 'injured' SPS in catastrophe narratives or the desired 'loved' SPS in romantic stories – and absolutely individual ones.

As mentioned earlier, this addition came about after the pilot study (Ghasseminejad, 2023) revealed that whether a given cultural model is hegemonic or not is a relative criterion, as certain responses can be hegemonic within a subculture despite *not* being hegemonic according to the dominant cultural model. To understand this phenomenon, it proved helpful to turn to the cognitive approach to human categorisation upheld by cognitivists such as Rosch (1978), whose basic concepts of graded category membership and category boundary fuzziness allowed for a finer-grained classification of SPSs in terms of cultural predictability along a continuum. Fundamentally, using the concept of graded category membership means that it is possible to categorise SPSs ranging from idiosyncratic to universal SPSs, with primary SPSs within a hegemonic cultural model closer to the 'maximum predictability' end of the scale occupied by universal SPSs, and SPSs emerging within non-hegemonic cultural models qualifying as secondary SPSs, located between the maximum predictability and the 'minimum predictability' end of the scale occupied by idiosyncratic, SPS slipnets.

The second study illustrated how narratives can yield alternative interpretations, resulting in

91 See section 1.3, 'Hypotheses', for an overview of hypotheses 1 to 4.

SPSs which, while not universally predictable in a hegemonic cultural context, appear with sufficient frequency to transcend idiosyncratic readings. Using the *Harry Potter* series as a case study demonstrated the benefit of the proposed addition to the SPS typology (Ghasseminejad & Martínez, 2024). This prevalence may arise from unexpected, small yet noteworthy communities that may not have been initially considered but have proven to share the emergence of similar SPSs. This allows the all-encompassing study of both majoritarian and minoritarian narrative responses along a continuum and not as separate, unrelated phenomena.

Additionally, to substantiate the differentiation between primary and secondary SPSs, Study 2 proposed using a cumulative distribution function calculation to provide for a tailor-made approach for each sample to calculate what constitutes a primary or a secondary SPS within that sample. This calculation was also applied to the current study, which signalled, for instance, the 'parent' self-schema SPS as a highly prevalent secondary SPS (see the next section, 4.1.3, 'The Experiment: Semi-Structured Interviews (Study 3)').

4.1.3 The Experiment: Semi-Structured Interviews (Study 3)

Finally, the third study was the experiment designed to address the research question. Building upon the earlier two studies – namely, the participant selection strategy and the creation of the secondary SPSs category – the experiment utilised SPSs Theory to explore the effects of (non-)fictionality on narrative engagement.[92] It is noteworthy that due to the addition of the secondary SPSs, it was possible to establish a subculture within the sample used for the experiment, going beyond merely categorising the primary SPSs, secondary SPSs, and SPS slipnets.

Specifically, the prevalence of the 'parent' self-schema SPS as a secondary SPS illuminated the cultural concerns of the age group in the experiment (55-64 years old) as triggered by *A Million Little Pieces*. The initial pilot study had already suggested the prevalence of this SPS, where it emerged as a primary SPS. This experiment thus confirmed that the 'parent' self-schema SPS is significantly present in this age group's responses to the narrative, leaving room for further research into the socio-cultural experience of this sample using the present study's data.

For instance, the desired 'supportive' SPS was found to be just as prevalent (83%) as the 'parent' self-schema SPS in this age group. This could be interpreted as a specific cultural concern of parents, as illustrated by participant C7:

> And because they didn't give up on their child, did they? Yes, I do find that remarkable. I think that a lot do give up, yes. Or at least, I hear that very often. That mothers keep fighting for their child, but everyone else around them drops out.

92 The next sections, 4.2, 'Limitations', and 4.3, 'Conclusion', will focus on that specific aspect of the research question.

Or the undesired 'guilty' SPS, which not always, but often, referred to parental guilt, as demonstrated by NF5:

> As a parent with my child, I hope I don't have to go through [taking your child to a rehabilitation clinic]. So, in some way, that was also the moment I was thinking, like, yes, you didn't want that, right? That your child... and just feeling guilty and thinking, where did you go wrong?

In short, in addition to exploring the question of non-fictionality posed in the research question, the experiment shows that the proposed concept of secondary SPSs can offer a pathway to delve deeper into empirical narrative response data. This enables a more comprehensive exploration, shedding light on minority groups – in this case, parents in their fifties and sixties – and their culturally predictable SPSs. Research into narrative experiences and their intrinsic embeddedness in socio-cultural experience can thus benefit from the inclusion of secondary SPSs into the SPS framework, as this can contribute to refining the analysis of empirical responses to narratives and facilitate a more nuanced understanding.

4.2 Limitations

While the previous section, 4.1, 'Research Summary', discussed how the research project has contributed to the concept of SPSs Theory, this section outlines the limitations encountered during the research process concerning the research question 'How do readers' perception of James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* as fictional or non-fictional affect its reception and thus relate to the nature, construction and relevance of the projected storyworld possible selves?' Despite the comprehensive approach and the preparatory work of Studies 1 and 2 (see section 4.1, 'Research Summary'), certain constraints and challenges may have influenced the results.

The first and most important observation I want to discuss is that a significant number of the participants forgot the test condition they were in despite continuous reminders during the interviews. Out of the sixteen test condition participants, only seven held on to their assigned condition. This raises the question of whether Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* was a suitable text for the experiment. As shown in section 2.2.1.2, 'The Marketing of *A Million Little Pieces*', Frey applies local fictional fictionality strategies in his text. It is, therefore, possible that the text overrode the oral assignment of the (non-)fictionality status.

However, I would argue that despite this result, Frey's book remains a theoretically suitable choice for an experiment into perceived fictionality. By using Frey's book, the text material did not need to be manipulated, thus not introducing an additional variable in the empirical research. I believed that the verbal information regarding the fictionality status provided at the start of the experiment, along with the reiteration of this status during the experiment, would effectively communicate the fictionality status to the participants and thus replicate the effect of paratext. Therefore, as mentioned several times throughout the dissertation, the text was stripped of all paratextual information. That said, to further emphasise the fictionality status, I propose to adjust the manner in which this is communicated to the participants. I suggest that for future research into perceived fictionality that would involve Frey's or similar work, manipulated paratextual information should be added instead of merely offering plain text to participants. Specifically, this would boil down to including a (new) front and back cover for the test conditions while still offering plain text to the control condition. The original blurbs, biography and summary can be used for the Non-Fiction condition. However, I recommend designing a more typical cover of a memoir (e.g., a picture taken when Frey was in his early twenties). For the Fiction condition, then, new blurbs, a biography, and a summary should be invented.

Additionally, to ensure evenly numbered groups, an alternative approach could be to treat all participants as the control condition instead of assigning them to conditions, and ask whether they thought they were reading a fictional or non-fictional text. Then, it would be necessary to continue selecting and interviewing until a sufficient number of participants for each group has been collected. However, given that most of the participants in this study believed the text to be fictional, this method would likely be costly and, therefore, not feasible.

Another surprising reaction might also explain the abovementioned forgetfulness. When asked about the fictionality status of the text in front of them, most participants who answered 'fiction' also referred to a hybrid nature in the text, as seen in four out of six analysed participants (F3, F5, C1, and C2). When analysing the entire group, it can be seen that out of the 24 participants, fourteen seemed to recognise the excerpts as part of some hybrid text. Table 11 presents their comments, ranging from remarks that it could be both fictional or non-fictional to assigning a genre such as autofiction. This suggests a familiarity with hybrid genres and raises the question of whether that familiarity can affect how narratives are perceived. That is to say, could earlier encounters with hybrid texts (past SPSs) influence their perception of the fictionality status? Looking at SPSs Theory, past SPSs offer an explanation for this reflection, but additional research could consider this for further examination.

Table 11. Overview perceived hybridity. An overview of the participants who recognised hybridity in the text.

Participant	Perceived Fictionality	Paraphrased argument for hybridity
F2	Fiction	But could be non-fiction, the author is well informed.
F3	Fiction	But is realistic: "The best fiction is more realistic than non-fiction".
F4	Fiction	Could be autobiographical, it is very realistic.
F5	Fiction	It is realistic.
F6	Non-Fiction	It is an autofiction.
NF2	Non-Fiction	But could have been fiction.
NF3	Fiction	But everything is fiction, even non-fiction.
NF5	Fiction	It is based on true events. The author either knows someone or works with people who struggle with substance use.
NF8	Fiction	It is written as a novel (lack of punctuation and such), but could be an autobiography.
C1	Non-Fiction	Initially believed it to be fiction, but later thought it to be based on true events.
C3	Fiction	Based on true events.
C4	Fiction	Based on true events, an autofiction.
C5	Fiction	Could be both fiction or non-fiction.
C6	Fiction	Based on true events.

Analysing the text itself might also provide some suggestions for this specific reaction. As already indicated in section 1.2.2, 'Signposts of Fictionality', Nielsen (2011) argues in his analysis of Frey that "[i]rrespective of whether we think of the pretext as underdetermined or deceptive, the narrative *techniques* used by Frey are often fictionalisation techniques" (pp. 87-88, emphasis in original). Additionally, a supporting feature for the text's classification as a hybrid text can be seen in the initial pre-controversy readers' reactions. Many found the text 'real' and honest, authentically depicting the experience of someone who struggles

with substance use, despite the presence of local fictional fictionality in the narrative.[93] The text's authenticity even caused it to be used as a self-help book (Korthals Altes, 2014, p. vii). Moreover, even though the text is not a "construction of ordinariness", it could be argued that the story appears authentic because it presents a "'real' (i.e., non-edited, genuine, believable) self-presentation" (Georgakopoulou, 2022, p. 268, emphasis in original). More empirical research, in the form of in-depth interviews, could indicate whether hybrid genre narratives have altered the extent to which fictionality matters and why the majority of my participants assigned a global fictional fictionality despite arguing that, for instance, it was probably based on true events. When James' (2022) argument is taken into account, the participants should have accepted global non-fictional fictionality despite the local fictional fictionality strategies.[94] Perhaps one of participant F5's responses can already shed some light on the fuzziness of hybrid texts:

> I'm not interested in whether the story is true or not true. I'm not interested if it can be true or if I believe it [...] That is the power of stories, it doesn't need to be true. I have to, the reader has to want to believe it, right. So I really want to believe this [happy ending].

The abovementioned hypothesis on familiarity with hybrid texts leads to the following consideration: it presumes that the participants are knowledgeable enough about different genres to recognise hybridity in the text. This would not be unlikely, given the apparent homogeneity of the participants despite the initial selection strategy. Although descriptives such as ethnicity and class were not asked, my observation was that all participants were white and, at least, middle class. The majority of the participants encountered the flier for the experiment in an independent bookshop.[95] Additionally, although they were not explicitly asked, most participants mentioned that they enjoyed reading. This is not surprising, as it would be unusual for someone to spend several hours on an experiment about reading unless they had a genuine interest in the topic. This was also evident from the fact that most participants stayed for a chat about the study and literature in general after the debriefing.[96] Moreover, all participants wanted to be kept updated on the research, and several responded to an update sent after a year. One participant even mentioned taking time off to participate in the study. To conclude, although I do not wish to imply that people outside of this demographic would not recognise hybridity in the text, it is probably not so surprising that *this* group did.

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93 Iatsenko (2012), who uses Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* as a case study for trauma in autofictional novels, argues that the 'realness' or authenticity in the text is not connected with the supposed truthfulness but with the experience described. She specifically mentions that Frey's text "presents to readers a model of courage and determination in a battle with addiction, and this very fact has great emotional appeal both for addicts and those who are close to them" (Iatsenko, 2012, p. 230).

94 See section 1.2.3, 'Theories of Factuality'.

95 Two of the participants saw the call for participants on Facebook, and several participants were 'recruited' by earlier participants who shared the call with members of their book clubs.

96 Most notable, one participant stayed for about an hour after their interview.

Finally, I want to briefly discuss a result regarding the emergence of SPSs that cannot, at this point, be supported by the current SPSs model. Namely, participants seemed to blend not only with the perspectivizer but with minor characters as well, specifically with the main character's parents.[97] This is unsurprising, as the age group used for this experiment meant that most of the participants were parents. However, it could be interesting to include an additional input space to the SPSs model that focuses on blends with other entities apart from the narrative perspectivizer. In other words, a combination of empirical research results and a thorough theoretical exploration could enrich SPSs Theory by including a mental space for other (intra)diegetic entities.

97 See section 4.1.3, 'The Experiment: Semi-Structured Interviews (Study 3)', for an analysis of the prevalence of the 'parent' self-schema SPS in this sample.

4.3 Conclusion

To repeat, this dissertation aimed to examine to what extent the reader's perception of James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* as fictional or non-fictional affects its reception and thus relates to the nature, construction, and relevance of the projected storyworld possible selves. The results indicate that the readers in the study who read the provided narrative as fiction not only displayed the emergence of a larger number of SPSs of all types, confirming hypothesis 4: *Participants in the fiction condition will trigger more SPSs than participants in the non-fiction condition*, but also were more likely to generate undesired SPSs. This is a surprising finding according to possible selves theory, as people tend to adjust their behaviour to get closer to their desired selves rather than to their undesired or feared selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). However, research into fictional literature and empathy can support the triggering of (more) undesired SPS (e.g., Mar et al., 2006; Bal & Veltkamp, 2013; Koopman, 2015), as fiction has been argued to improve individuals' ability to understand other's (negative) situations (Johnson, 2012). Additionally, Martínez's SPSs theory (2014, 2018) may itself provide another argument for the strong presence of undesired SPSs in this study; according to her, narratives can allow audiences to experience undesired situations safely, teaching narrative engagers what to do or not to do, and thus function as safe simulation environments (Mar et al., 2006) for the trying out of situations and behaviours which would otherwise seem scary or unsafe.

Research into the enjoyment of music can offer insights into these findings as well. Huron and Vuoskoski (2020), for instance, theorise that people who exhibit high trait empathic concern tend to find the listening experience of sad music enjoyable because they tend "to be dominated by feelings of sympathy or compassion" (12). It is interesting to note that 18 of the 24 participants activated an 'empathic' self-schema SPS, while the participants (C2 and NF6) who triggered the least undesired SPSs (7 and 9, respectively) did not trigger an 'empathic' self-schema SPS. Needless to say, this does not mean that these participants do not possess empathic traits, as this experiment did not measure empathy levels. However, as these results suggest a connection between empathy and the emergence of undesired SPSs, the exploration of this link could be an exciting opportunity for further research.

Finally, the results show a strong connection between individuals' self-concepts and their narrative engagement, confirming hypothesis 2: *Participants who share characteristics with the perspectivizer will trigger more SPSs*. Three of the four participants with the most triggered SPSs (F1, F3, and F5) all have past experiences with varying degrees of substance use. Incidentally, all of them were randomly assigned to the Fiction condition, which can possibly suggest that their self-concept played a more prominent role in their narrative engagement than their fictionality condition.

However, when considering hypothesis 3, which can also be accepted – *Participants who know a real-life person who shares characteristics with the perspectivizer will trigger more SPSs* – an equal distribution in the test conditions can be observed. Four participants in the Fiction condition,

four participants in the Non-Fiction condition, and three participants in the Control condition know or knew a real-life person who shares characteristics with the perspectivizer. Those participants triggered between 27 and 57 SPSs, all at the higher end of the SPSs frequency of occurrence.[98] This suggests that while a person's self-concept might play a significant role, the influence of the fictionality condition should not be disregarded.

In short, the results suggest that fictionality affects the construction of SPSs to some extent. Namely, every category of SPS had a higher frequency occurrence in the fiction condition. However, as this result was only statistically significant for the undesired storyworld possible selves, the results should be interpreted cautiously. Nevertheless, the results provide a strong argument for the enlightening potential of SPSs Theory for research into how fictionality can influence narrative engagement. Additionally, what these findings confirm is that while perceptions of (non-)fictionality may act as a contributing factor, the reader's self-concept also plays an essential role in creating SPSs and, therefore, in narrative engagement.

98 The number of triggered SPSs for the participants who know or knew people who share characteristics with the perspectivizer are as follows: participant F1 (28), F4 (35), F5 (57), F7 (34), NF2 (36), NF3 (31), NF7 (28), NF8 (33), C3 (37), C7 (37), and C8 (27).

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APPENDICES

The appendices in this section contain supplementary material that supports and extends the main body of this dissertation. The information presented here includes extended analyses, additional results, and materials used during the research, which are referenced throughout the chapters.

Appendix A. Recruitment Fliers

Appendices A.1 and A.2 present the fliers used during the recruitment stage of the experiment.

Appendix A.1 Recruitment Flier Library[99]

99 The translation of the text is as follows: In the blue box: **Are you between 55 and 64 years old and do you live in this neighbourhood?** In the body: **Would you like to participate in research on reader experiences?** Dear neighbour, thank you for taking the time to read/grab this flyer! My name is Melina Ghasseminejad, and I'm looking for participants for a study at the University of Antwerp. **During the study, you will read a couple of excerpts. Afterward, there will be an interview with me.** The questions are about your opinions and interpretations but also on the effect that the text has on you. The research takes a **maximum of 1.5 hours** and takes place **on the Rooseveltplaats**. Afterwards, you will receive an appreciation gift for your time and effort. In the yellow box: **Register via the QR-code or www.tinyurl.com/ualezen or send an email to melina.ghasseminejad@uantwerpen.be for more information.** In the footer: Thank you in advance, and I look forward to meeting you! *Prohibited to throw on the public road – publisher Melina Ghasseminejad, Antwerp.

Appendix A.2 Recruitment Flier Bookshop[100]

100 The translation of the text is as follows: In the blue box: **Are you between 55 and 64 years old and do you live in Antwerp?** In the body: **Would you like to participate in research on reader experiences?** Dear neighbour, thank you for taking the time to read/grab this flyer! My name is Melina Ghasseminejad, and I'm looking for participants for a study at the University of Antwerp. **During the study, you will read a couple of excerpts. Afterward, there will be an interview with me.** The questions are about your opinions and interpretations but also on the effect that the text has on you. The research takes a **maximum of 1.5 hours** and takes place **on the Rooseveltplaats**. Afterwards, you will receive an appreciation gift for your time and effort. In the yellow box: **Register via the QR-code or www.tinyurl.com/ualezen or send an email to melina.ghasseminejad@uantwerpen.be for more information.** In the footer: Thank you in advance, and I look forward to meeting you! *Prohibited to throw on the public road – publisher Melina Ghasseminejad, Antwerp.

Appendix B. Linguistic Analysis: Coded Lines in Chapter 1 of Frey's *In Duizend Stukjes*

This appendix contains an example of coded lines from the linguistic analysis of the Dutch translation of Frey's *In Duizend Stukjes*. Since including the entire book would take up too much space, only chapter one is provided. The legend for the codes can be found in Supplementary Table 1. Additionally, the English translation of the coded text is provided following the analysis below.

Supplementary Table 1. Code legend. Legend of the codes used in the linguistic analysis of Frey's *In Duizend Stukjes*.

Code	Colour	Linguistic Anchor	Mechanism
Accumulation	Green	Accumulation	Accumulation
Object_Pseudo You/One	Dark blue	Pseudo-deictic 'one'/'you'	Objectification
Object_Indefinite Pronoun	Dark blue	Indefinite pronouns	Objectification
Subj_Senserless	Light blue	SENSERLESS transitivity mental process	Subjectification
Subj_Senserless_NOM	Light blue	SENSERLESS transitivity mental process: Nominalisation	Subjectification
Subj_NP	Pink	Narrated Perception	Subjectification
Subj_Con_EmphaticR	Orange	Language of connectedness: Emphatic repetition	Subjectification
Subj_Con_Ellipsis	Orange	Language of connectedness: Ellipsis	Subjectification
Subj_Con_Pov	Orange	Language of connectedness: Poin-of-view operators	Subjectification
Subj_Con_CS	Orange	Language of connectedness: Code-switching	Subjectification
Subj_Con_Ingroup	Orange	Language of connectedness: In-group terminology	Subjectification
Subj_Con_Exaggeration	Orange	Language of connectedness: Exaggeration	Subjectification
Subj_Sep_Hedge	Yellow	Language of seperateness: Hedging	Subjectification
Subj_Sep_Understatement	Yellow	Language of seperateness: Understatement	Subjectification
Subj_Sep_Explanations	Yellow	Language of seperateness: Reasons and explanations	Subjectification
Subj_Sep_Explanations	Yellow	Language of seperateness: Exclamatory expressions	Subjectification

Subj_NP
Object_IndefinitePron
Sub_Sep_Understatem
Accummulation

1 Ik word wakker van een ronkende vliegtuigmotor en van iets warms dat over mijn kin druipt. Ik breng mijn hand naar mijn gezicht. Mijn voortanden zijn weg, er zit een gat in mijn wang, mijn neus is gebroken en mijn ogen zitten bijna helemaal dicht. Ik doe ze open en ik kijk om me heen en ik zit achter in een vliegtuig met niemand bij me in de buurt. Ik kijk naar mijn kleren en die zitten onder een kleurige cocktail van spuug, snot, urine, kots en bloed. Ik ga met mijn hand naar het knopje en ik vind het en ik druk erop en ik wacht af en een halve minuut later komt er een Stewardess aanlopen.

2 Wat kan ik voor u doen?

3 Waar gaan we heen?

4 Weet u dat niet?

5 Nee.

6 We zijn op weg naar Chicago.

7 Hoe kom ik hier?

8 Een Dokter en nog twee mannen hebben u aan boord gebracht.

9 Hebben ze nog wat gezegd?

10 De gezagvoerder heeft ze gesproken. We moesten u laten slapen.

11 Wanneer landen we?

12 Over een minuut of twintig, Meneer.

13 Dankje.

Subj_NP
Sub_Sep_Hedge

14 Ik kijk niet op, maar ik weet dat ze glimlacht en met me te doen heeft. Dat zou niet hoeven.

Accummulation
Sub_Sep_Hedge

15 Even later landen we. Ik kijk of ik iets bij me heb, maar nee. Geen ticket, geen tassen, geen kleren, geen portefeuille. Ik wacht af en ik probeer te bedenken wat er gebeurd is. Er komt niets boven.

Subj_Sep_Explanations

16 Pas als de andere Reizigers verdwenen zijn, loop ik richting de deur. Na een stap of vijf ga ik weer zitten. Lopen zit er niet in. Als ik mijn vriendin de Stewardess zie, steek ik mijn hand op.

17 Gaat het?

18 Nee.

19 Wat scheelt eraan?

20 Lopen lukt niet echt.

21 Als u nu naar de deur gaat, dan kom ik met een rolstoel.

22 Hoe ver is dat?

23 Een klein stukje.

24 Ik sta op. Ik zwabber. Ik ga weer zitten. Ik kijk strak naar de grond en adem diep in.

25 Het zal wel gaan.

Subj_NP

26 Ik kijk op en ze glimlacht.

27 Kijk.

28 Ze steekt haar hand uit en ik pak hem. Ik sta op en ik ga tegen haar aan staan en ze loodst me door het Middenpad. We bereiken de deur.

29 Ik ben zo terug.

30 Ik laat haar hand los en ik laat me zakken in de stalen Slurf tussen het Vliegtuig en de Aankomsthal.

31 Mij krijgen ze niet weg.

Subj_Con_EmphaticR
Subj_Con_Exaggeration

32 Ze lacht en ik kijk hoe ze wegloopt en ik doe mijn ogen dicht. Mijn hoofd doet zeer, mijn mond doet zeer, mijn ogen doen zeer, mijn handen doen zeer. Dingen zonder naam doen zeer.

Subj_NP
Sub_Sep_Hedge
Subj_Con_EmphaticR
Subj_Sep_Explanations

33 Ik wrijf over mijn buik. Ik voel het komen. Snel en heftig en scherp. Gewoon ogen dicht en laten gebeuren, er is toch geen houden aan. Het komt en ik schrik terug van de stank en de pijn. Er is niets tegen te doen.

34 Mijn god.

35 Ik doe mijn ogen open.

36 Het gaat wel.

37 Ik haal een Dokter.

38 Het gaat best. Ik moet hier gewoon weg.

39 Kunt u opstaan?

40 Best wel.

41 Ik sta op en ik klop me af en ik veeg mijn handen af aan de grond en ik ga in de rolstoel zitten die ze voor me heeft gehaald. Ze loopt om de rolstoel heen en ze begint te duwen.

42 Is er iemand om u op te halen?

43 Ik hoop van wel.

44 Dus u weet het niet.

45 Nee.

46 En als er niemand is?

47 Dat zou niet voor het eerst zijn, ik kom er wel.

48 Vanuit de Slurf komen we de Aankomsthal in. Nog voor ik om me heen kan kijken, staan mijn Vader en Moeder voor me.

49 Godallemachtig.

50 Toe, Ma.

51 Lieve God, wat is er gebeurd?

52 Nu niet, Ma.

53 Jezus, Jimmy. Wat is er in hemelsnaam gebeurd?

54 Ze buigt zich voorover en ze probeert me te omhelzen. Ik duw haar van me af.

55 Ik wil hier weg, Ma.

56 Mijn Vader loopt om de rolstoel heen. Ik kijk of ik de Stewardess zie, maar ze is verdwenen. De schat.

57 Gaat het wat, James?

58 Ik kijk strak voor me uit.

59 Nee, Pap. Het gaat niet.

60 Hij begint te duwen.

61 Heb je bagage?

62 Mijn Moeder huilt nog steeds.

63 Nee.

Subj_NP 64 Ze kijken naar ons.

65 Wil je nog wat?

66 Ik wil hier weg, Pap. Haal me hier verdomme weg.

Subj_NP 67 Ze rijden me naar de auto. Ik ga achterin zitten en ik doe mijn shirt uit en ik ga liggen. Mijn Vader rijdt weg, mijn Moeder huilt nog steeds, ik val in slaap.

Subj_NP 68 Zo'n vier uur later word ik wakker. Ik ben helder, maar mijn hele hoofd bonkt.

Subj_NP 69 Ik ga voorover zitten en ik kijk naar buiten. We staan bij een Tankstation ergens in Wisconsin. Hoewel er geen sneeuw ligt, voel ik dat het koud is. Mijn Vader doet zijn portier open en hij gaat zitten en hij doet het portier dicht.

70 Ik ril.

71 Je bent wakker.

72 Ja.

73 Hoe voel je je?

74 Beroerd.

75 Je moeder is binnen om zich even op te knappen en wat in te slaan. Moet jij nog iets?

76 Water en een paar flessen wijn en sigaretten.

77 Meen je dat?

78 Ja.

79 Dit klopt niet, James.

80 Het moet echt.

81 Je bent er hard aan toe.

82 Ja.

83 Je Moeder raakt overstuur.

84 Maakt me niet uit. Het moet echt.

Subj_NP

85 Hij doet het portier open en hij gaat het Tankstation in. Ik ga weer liggen en ik staar omhoog. Ik voel mijn hart sneller kloppen en ik breng mijn hand omhoog en ik probeer hem stil te houden. Ik hoop dat ze opschieten.

86 Twintig minuten later is de wijn op. Ik kom overeind en ik steek een sigaret op en ik klok wat water naar binnen.

87 Ma draait zich om.

88 Opgeknapt?

89 Als je het zo wilt stellen.

90 We gaan naar het Huisje.

91 Dacht ik wel.

92 Daar spreken we af hoe het verder moet.

93 Goed.

94 Wat denk jij?

95 Op het moment wil ik niet denken.

96 Het zal gauw genoeg moeten.

97 Dat zie ik dan wel weer.

98 We rijden noordwaarts. Onderweg naar het Huisje kom ik erachter dat mijn Ouders, die in Tokio wonen, al twee weken voor zaken in Amerika zijn. Om vier uur vanochtend zijn ze vanuit het Ziekenhuis gebeld door een vriend van me, die had ontdekt dat ze in Michigan in een hotel zaten. Van hem kregen ze te horen dat ik voorover van een Brandtrap was gedonderd en dat ze maar beter hulp voor me konden zoeken, wat ik had gebruikt wist hij niet, maar wel dat het veel was en dat het heftig spul was. 's Nachts nog waren ze naar Chicago gereden.

99 Wat was het nou?

100 Wat was wat?

101 Wat heb je gebruikt?

102 Weet ik niet precies.

103 Hoe kan je dat nou niet weten?

104 Ik weet het niet meer.

105 Wat weet je nog wel?

106 Flarden.

107 Zoals?

108 Weet ik niet meer.

i_Sep_Explanations
Subj_NP
Subj_NP

109 We rijden verder en na een paar minuten zwaar zwijgen komen we bij het Huisje aan. We stappen uit en we gaan naar binnen en ik neem een douche, want daar ben ik aan toe. Als ik eronder vandaan kom, liggen er schone kleren op mijn bed. Ik trek ze aan en ik ga naar de kamer van mijn Ouders. Ze zijn nog op. Bij een kop koffie zitten ze te praten, maar als ik binnenkom, houden ze daarmee op.

110 Hoi.

Subj_NP

111 Ma begint weer te huilen en ze kijkt weg. Pa kijkt me aan.

112 Voel je je beter?

113 Nee.

114 Je zou wat moeten slapen.

115 Ga ik ook doen.

116 Mooi.

117 Ik kijk mijn Moeder aan. Het lukt haar niet mij aan te kijken. Ik adem in.

118 Gewoon.

119 Ik kijk weg.

120 Gewoon, je weet wel.

121 Ik kijk weg. Het lukt me niet ze aan te kijken.

122 Ik wilde gewoon dankjewel zeggen. Voor het ophalen.

Subj_NP
Subj_Sep_Explanations

123 Pa glimlacht. Hij pakt de hand van mijn Moeder en ze staan op en ze komen naar me toe en ze omhelzen me. Ik hou er niet van dat ze me aanraken en dus trek ik me los.

124 Welterusten.

125 Welterusten, James. We houden van je.

Subj_NP
Subj_Con_EmphaticR

126 Ik draai me om en ik ga hun Kamer uit en ik doe hun deur dicht en ik loop naar de Keuken. Ik kijk in de kastjes en ik kom een ongeopende magnum whisky tegen. Bij de eerste slok komt mijn maaginhoud weer naar boven, maar daarna gaat het wel. Ik ga naar mijn Kamer en ik drink en ik rook een paar sigaretten en ik denk aan haar. Ik drink en ik rook en ik denk aan haar en op een gegeven moment wordt het zwart en laat mijn geheugen me in de steek.

English Translation

I wake to the drone of an airplane engine and the feeling of something warm dripping down my chin. I lift my hand to feel my face. My front four teeth are gone, I have a hole in my cheek, my nose is broken and my eyes are swollen nearly shut. I open them and I look around and I'm in the back of a plane and there's no one near me. I look at my clothes and my clothes are covered with a colorful mixture of spit, snot, urine, vomit and blood. I reach for the call button and I find it and I push it and I wait and thirty seconds later an Attendant arrives. How can I help you?

Where am I going?

You don't know?

No.

You're going to Chicago, Sir.

How did I get here?

A Doctor and two men brought you on.

They say anything?

They talked to the Captain, Sir. We were told to let you sleep.

How long till we land?

About twenty minutes.

Thank you.

Although I never look up, I know she smiles and feels sorry for me. She shouldn't.

A short while later we touch down. I look around for anything I might have with me, but there's nothing. No ticket, no bags, no clothes, no wallet. I sit and I wait and I try to figure out what happened. Nothing comes.

Once the rest of the Passengers are gone I stand and start to make my way to the door. After about five steps I sit back down. Walking is out of the question. I see my Attendant friend and I raise a hand.

Are you okay?

No.

What's wrong?

I can't really walk.

If you make it to the door I can get you a chair.

How far is the door?

Not far.

I stand. I wobble. I sit back down. I stare at the floor and take a deep breath.

You'll be all right.

I look up and she's smiling.

Here.

She holds out her hand and I take it. I stand and I lean against her and she helps me down the Aisle. We get to the door.

I'll be right back.

I let go of her hand and I sit down on the steel bridge of the Jetway that connects the Plane to the Gate.

I'm not going anywhere.

She laughs and I watch her walk away and I close my eyes. My head hurts, my mouth hurts, my eyes hurt, my hands hurt.

Things without names hurt.

I rub my stomach. I can feel it coming. Fast and strong and burning. No way to stop it, just close your eyes and let it ride. It comes and I recoil from the stench and the pain. There's nothing I can do.

Oh my God.

I open my eyes.

I'm all right.

Let me find a Doctor.

I'll be fine. Just get me out of here.

Can you stand?

Yeah, I can stand.

I stand and I brush myself off and I wipe my hands on the floor and I sit down in the wheelchair she has brought me. She goes around to the back of the chair and she starts pushing.

Is someone here for you?

I hope so.

You don't know.

No.

What if no one's there?

It's happened before, I'll find my way.

We come off the Jetway and into the Gate. Before I have a chance to look around, my Mother and Father are standing in front of me.

Oh Jesus.

Please, Mom.

Oh my God, what happened?

I don't want to talk about it, Mom.

Jesus Christ, Jimmy. What in Hell happened?

She leans over and she tries to hug me. I push her away.

Let's just get out of here, Mom.

My Dad goes around to the back of the chair. I look for the Attendant but she has disappeared. Bless her.

You okay, James?

I stare straight ahead.

No, Dad, I'm not okay.

He starts pushing the chair.

Do you have any bags?

My Mother continues crying.

No.

People are staring.

Do you need anything?

I need to get out of here, Dad. Just get me the fuck out of here.

They wheel me to their car. I climb in the backseat and I take off my shirt and I lie down. My Dad starts driving, my Mom keeps crying, I fall asleep.

About four hours later I wake up. My head is clear but everything throbs. I sit forward and I look out the window. We've pulled into a Filling Station somewhere in Wisconsin. There is no snow on the ground, but I can feel the cold. My Dad opens the Driver's door and he sits down and he closes the door. I shiver.

You're awake.

Yeah.

How are you feeling?

Shitty.

Your Mom's inside cleaning up and getting supplies. You need anything?

A bottle of water and a couple bottles of wine and a pack of cigarettes.

Seriously?

Yeah.

This is bad, James.

I need it.

You can't wait.

No.

This will upset your Mother.

I don't care. I need it.

He opens the door and he goes into the Filling Station. I lie back down and I stare at the ceiling. I can feel my heart quickening and I hold out my hand and I try to keep it straight. I hope they hurry.

Twenty minutes later the bottles are gone. I sit up and I light a smoke and I take a slug of water. Mom turns around.

Better?

If you want to put it that way.

We're going up to the Cabin.

I figured.

We're going to decide what to do when we get there.

All right.

What do you think?

I don't want to think right now.

You're gonna have to soon.

Then I'll wait till soon comes.

We head north to the Cabin. Along the way I learn that my Parents, who live in Tokyo, have been in the States for the last two weeks on business. At four A.M. they received a call from a friend of mine who was with me at a Hospital and had tracked them down in a hotel in Michigan. He told them that I had fallen face first down a Fire Escape and that he thought they should find me some help. He didn't know what I was on, but he knew there was a lot of it and he knew it was bad. They had driven to Chicago during the night.

So what was it?

What was what?

What were you taking?

I'm not sure.

How can you not be sure?

I don't remember.

What do you remember?

Bits and pieces.

Like what?

I don't remember.

We drive on and after a few hard silent minutes, we arrive. We get out of the car and we go into the House and I take a shower because I need it. When I get out there are some fresh clothes

sitting on my bed. I put them on and I go to my Parents' room.

They are up drinking coffee and talking but when I come in they stop.

Hi.

Mom starts crying again and she looks away. Dad looks at me.

Feeling better?

No.

You should get some sleep.

I'm gonna.

Good.

I look at my Mom. She can't look back. I breathe.

I just.

I look away.

I just, you know.

I look away. I can't look at them.

I just wanted to say thanks. For picking me up.

Dad smiles. He takes my Mother by the hand and they stand and they come over to me and they give me a hug. I don't like it when they touch me so I pull away.

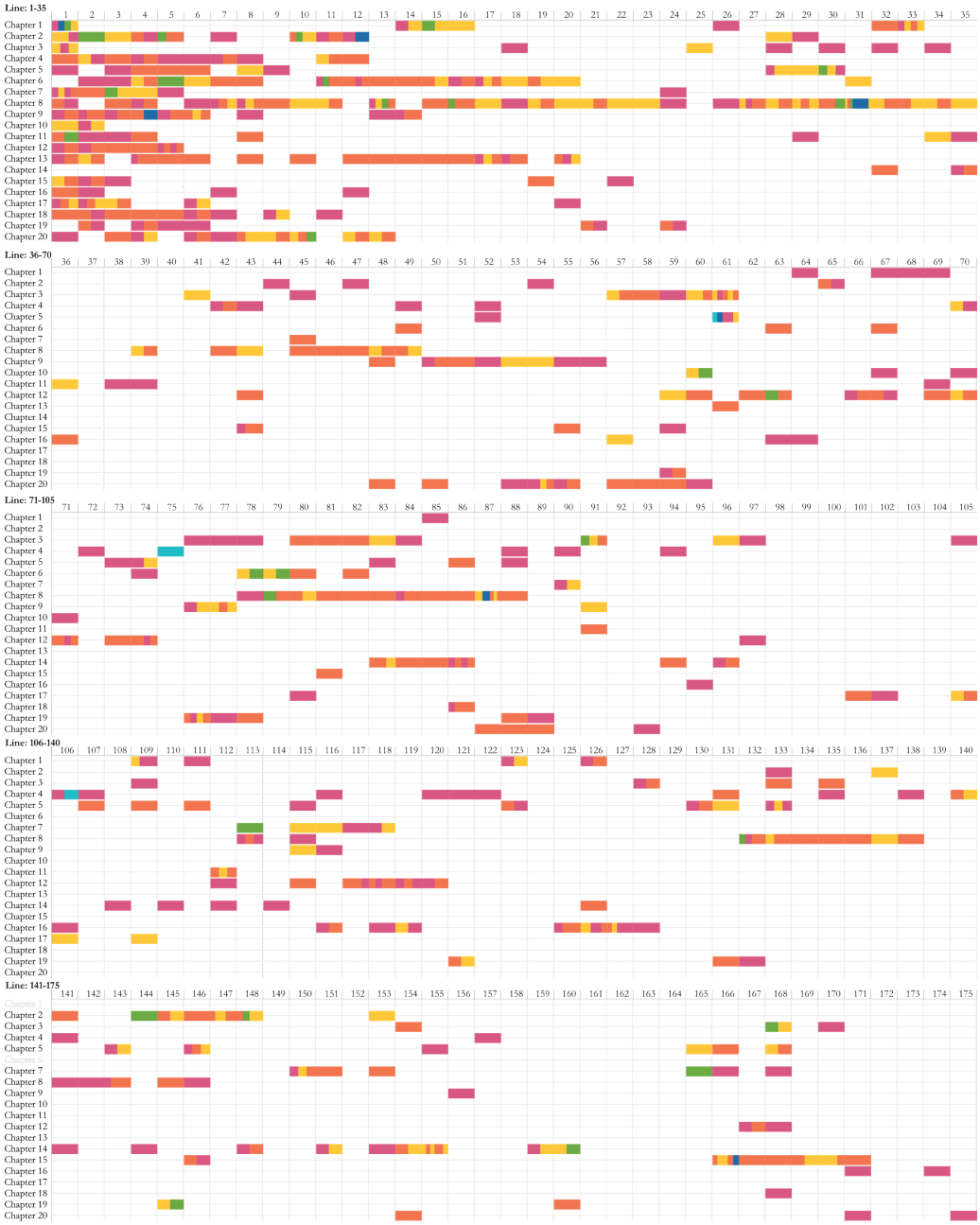
Good night.

Good night, James. We love you.

I turn and I leave their Room and I close their door and I go to the Kitchen. I look through the cabinets and I find an unopened half-gallon bottle of whiskey. The first sip brings my stomach back up, but after that it's all right. I go to my Room and I drink and I smoke some cigarettes and I think about her. I drink and I smoke and I think about her and at a certain point blackness comes and my memory fails me.

Appendix C. Document Comparison Chart: All Chapters

Appendix C presents the visualisation of the clustering from the complete linguistic anchor analysis (see Appendix B for a chapter example). The different colours highlight the various types of anchors as seen in Supplementary Table 1. 'Code legend. Legend of the codes used in the linguistic analysis of Frey's *In Duizend Stukjes*' in Appendix B. This analysis was used to locate the clustering of the linguistic anchors. When the chapter title turns grey, it indicates that the chapter has ended.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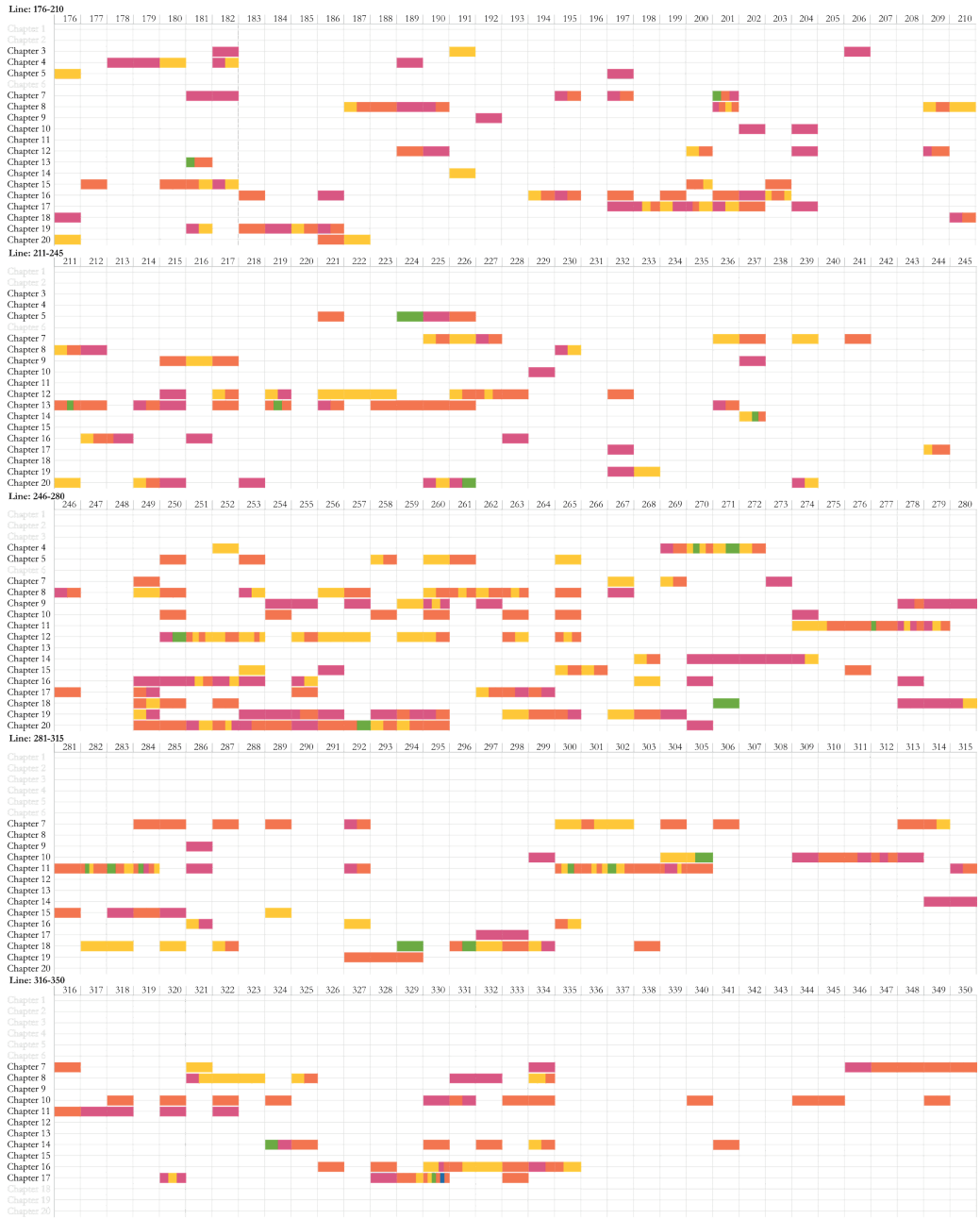
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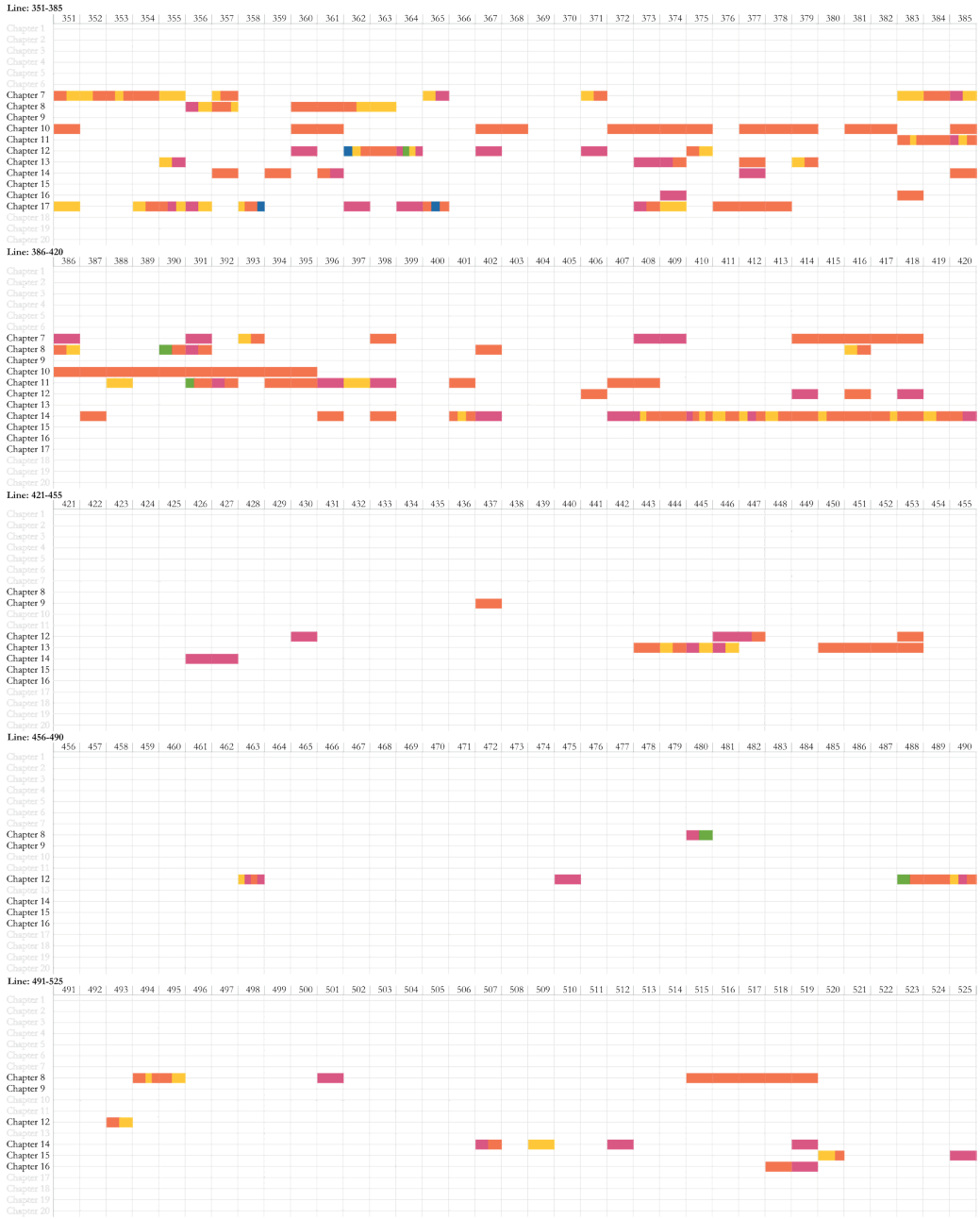
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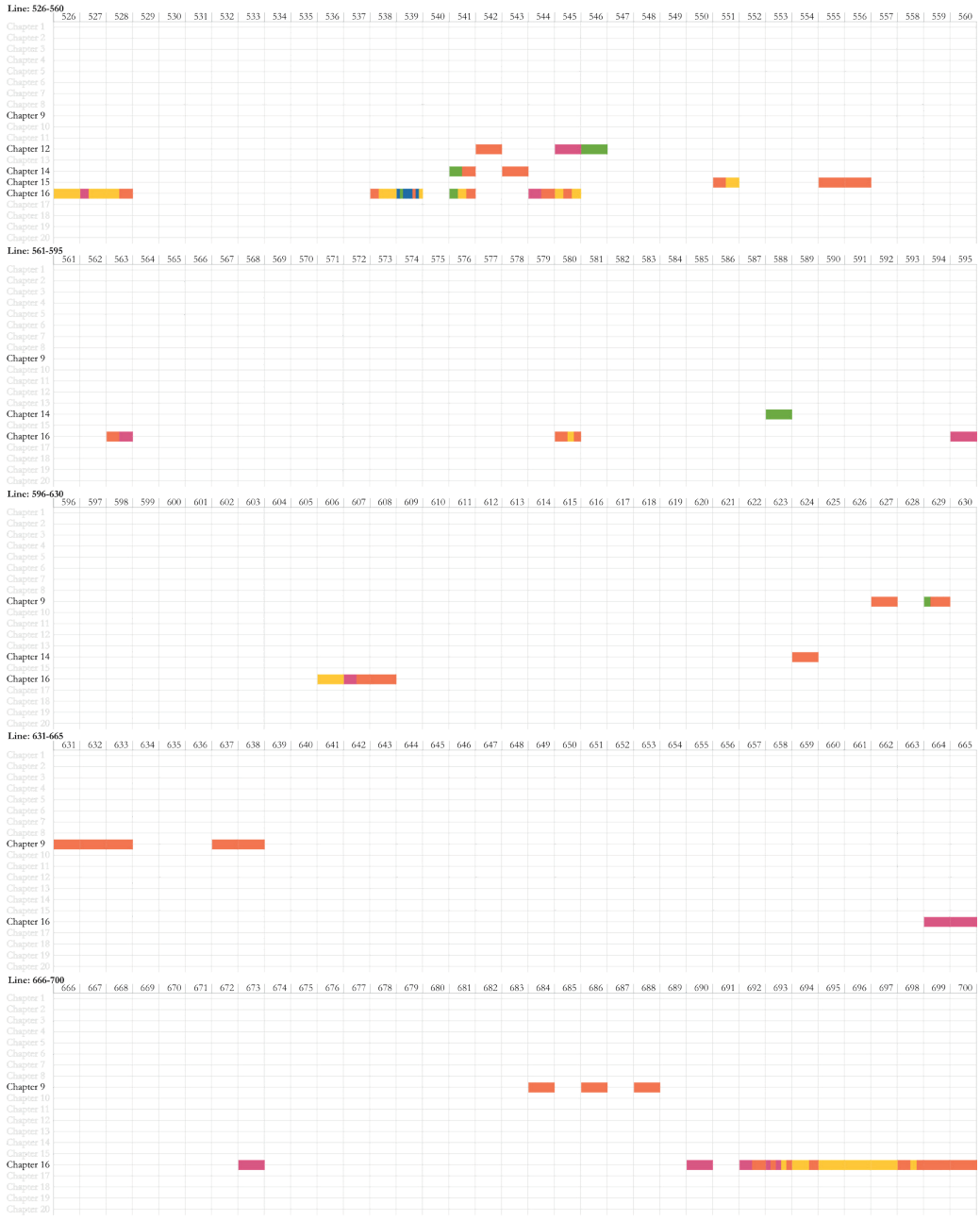
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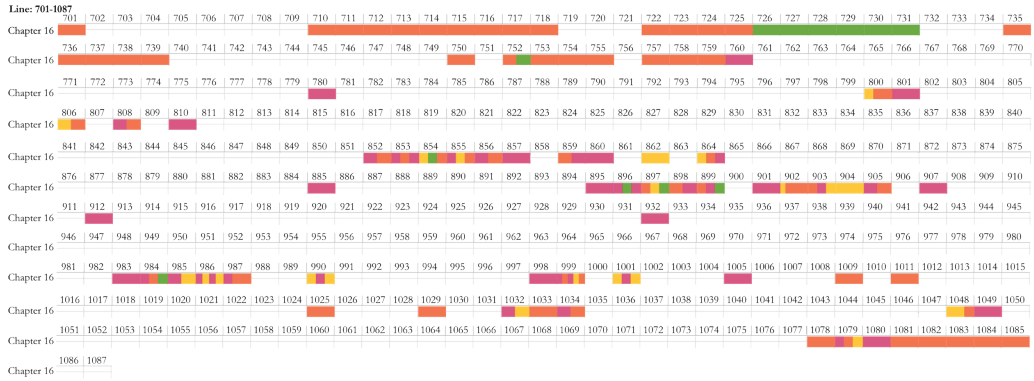
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Appendix D. Linguistic Analysis: Summary Linguistic Anchor Clusters

Supplementary Table 2. Summary Linguistic Anchor Clusters.

	Line	Summary	Category
Chapter 1	1	Opening book: James wakes up from a black-out and finds out that he is in a plane and is severely hurt. Graphic content: injury.	Injury
	14-16	James tries to remember what has happened but fails to.	Blackout
	32-33	Description of James' injuries and the effects of them.	Injury
Chapter 2	1-12	James is driven to the rehabilitation centre by his parents and brother. When he arrives, he describes his fear of entering the centre.	Mental state: fear
	144-148	James wakes up during his detoxification process and is hallucinating. The hallucination of bugs crawling over him is so intense that he is tranquilised. Graphic content: self-harm.	Effects detoxification
Chapter 3	57-61	James has been given sedatives that both relax his muscles and slows down his mind. In this powerless state, another resident confronts him.	Effects detoxification
	91	A description of the effects on James' wounds when he tries to eat.	Injury
Chapter 4	1-12	A graphic description of vomiting.	Effects substance use
	269-272	A description of James' agitation, both mentally and physically, due to the detoxification medication wearing off.	Mental state: agitation
Chapter 5	27-30	James has to throw up and describes his mental state that seems unstable at that moment.	Effects substance use Mental state: agitation
	61	James meets Hank.	Secondary character
Chapter 6	1-20	James has a substance use dream.	Rehabilitation process
	78-92	A description of the Fury and a craving for substances.	The Fury
Chapter 7	1-5	James wakes up from being tranquilised and contemplates his situation upon waking.	Mental state: sadness
	346-357 383-393	James undergoes surgical dental procedures without anaesthetics.	Graphic content: injury
Chapter 8	1-35	James wakes up and contemplates the 12-steps method. He then reflects on his loneliness and the connection of it to his substance use.	Mental state: sadness
	39-49	James reflects on a teenage friendship with a girl who died in an accident.	Secondary character
	78-88	James has a substance use dream. After he wakes up, he reflects on how he is sick of his situation.	Rehabilitation process

	Line	Summary	Category
Chapter 8	132-146	Description of the dining hall, getting food at the dining hall and the people present.	Description environment
	246-267 321-334 356-363 390-391	James has heard that his body has taken such a hit that he will die if he starts drinking or using again. He decides that he will take his own life	Contemplating self-harm Mental state: sadness
Chapter 9	1-14	James reminisces about his ex-girlfriend.	Secondary character
	144-148	James wakes up during his detoxification process and is hallucinating. The hallucination of bugs crawling over him is so intense that he is tranquilised. Graphic content: self-harm.	Effects detoxification
Chapter 11	274-305	The Fury takes over and James takes it out on a tree in the woods. Description of his urge for substances and his loneliness/mental state in general.	The Fury
	383-401	Mental state: sadness.	Injury
Chapter 12	66-74 115-120	Description of how James met his ex-girlfriend.	Secondary character
	250-265	James does a twelve-steps exercise.	Twelve steps
	360-367 488-493	Meeting with Lilly.	Secondary character
Chapter 13	61	Description of a substance use dream and the aftermath of it when waking up.	Rehabilitation process
	211-226 443-453	James' view on substance use and rehabilitation.	James' ideology
Chapter 14	148-160	A clear explanation of when and why the Fury gets triggered. In this case it is during a conversation with his parents.	The Fury
	401-420	A description of an unhealthy way of coping with the Fury.	The Fury Graphic content: self-harm
Chapter 15	166-182	James manages to 'defeat' the Fury in a healthy way for the first time. This happens during a conversation with his parents.	The Fury
	265-276	James' view on substance use and rehabilitation.	James' ideology
Chapter 16	116-128 194-203	Meeting with Lilly.	Secondary character
	326-335	A fight with another resident who disrespected Lilly.	Secondary character
	526-528	James manages to 'defeat' the Fury in a healthy way for the second time. This happens during a meeting with his parents.	The Fury

	Line	Summary	Category
Chapter 16	538-545	James' view on substance use and rehabilitation.	James' ideology
	690-760	The aftermath of James being caught with Lilly.	Secondary character
	852-864 895-907 983-1049	Lilly rescue mission.	Secondary character
Chapter 17	1-6	Description of a substance use dream that includes Lilly.	Rehabilitation process
	197-204	Secondary character.	Effects detoxification
	328-333 351-365	Description of another resident.	Minor character
Chapter 18	278-303	One of the twelve-steps, James writes down his confession of all his 'misdeeds'.	Twelve steps Graphic content: effects substance use (injury) and violence
Chapter 19	181-186	Meeting with Lilly.	Secondary character
Chapter 20	1-13	James describes his feelings regarding leaving the centre and his rehabilitation in general.	Mental state: fear
	48-60	Meeting with Lilly.	Secondary character
	249-260	James has his final 'test' of resisting alcohol and succeeds.	Rehabilitation process

Appendix E. Experiment Excerpts

This appendix contains the excerpts used for the experiment. The original text can be found in Appendix E.1, and the official Dutch translation can be found in Appendix E.2.

Appendix E.1 Experiment Excerpts: English

Excerpt 1

I need to get out of here, Dad. Just get me the fuck out of here.

They wheel me to their car. I climb in the backseat and I take off my shirt and I lie down. My Dad starts driving, my Mom keeps crying, I fall asleep.

About four hours later I wake up. My head is clear but everything throbs. I sit forward and I look out the window. We've pulled into a Filling Station somewhere in Wisconsin. There is no snow on the ground, but I can feel the cold. My Dad opens the Driver's door and he sits down and he closes the door.

I shiver.

You're awake.

Yeah.

How are you feeling?

Shitty.

Your Mom's inside cleaning up and getting supplies. You need anything?

A bottle of water and a couple bottles of wine and a pack of cigarettes.

Seriously?

Yeah.

This is bad, James.

I need it.

You can't wait.

No.

This will upset your Mother.

I don't care. I need it.

He opens the door and he goes into the Filling Station. I lie back down and I stare at the ceiling. I can feel my heart quickening and I hold out my hand and I try to keep it straight. I hope they hurry.

Twenty minutes later the bottles are gone. I sit up and I light a smoke and I take a slug of water.

Excerpt 2

Back in the car with a headache and bad breath. We're heading north and west to Minnesota. My Father made some calls and got me into a Clinic and I don't have any other options, so I agree to spend some time there and for now I'm fine with it. It's getting colder.

My face has gotten worse and it is hideously swollen. I have trouble speaking, eating, drinking, smoking. I have yet to look in a mirror.

We stop in Minneapolis to see my older Brother. He moved there after getting divorced and he knows how to get to the Clinic. He sits with me in the backseat and he holds my hand and it helps because I'm scared.

We pull into the Parking Lot and park the car and I finish a bottle and we get out and we start walking toward the Entrance of the Clinic. Me and my Brother and my Mother and my Father. My entire Family. Going to the Clinic. I stop and they stop with me. I stare at the Buildings. Low and long and connected. Functional. Simple. Menacing.

I want to run or die or get fucked up. I want to be blind and dumb and have no heart. I want to crawl in a hole and never come out. I want to wipe my existence straight off the map. Straight off the fucking map. I take a deep breath.

Let's go.

We enter a small Waiting Room. A woman sits behind a desk reading a fashion magazine. She looks up.

May I help you?

My Father steps forward and speaks with her as my Mother and Brother and I find chairs and sit in them.

I'm shaking. My hands and my feet and my lips and my chest. Shaking. For any number of reasons.

Excerpt 3

My drugs are wearing off and I need some more so I skip the Lecture and I walk back to the Medical Wing and I get in line. As the line moves forward I start to feel anxious and nervous and angry. With each step closer to the drugs, the feelings become stronger. I can feel my heart beat faster and I look at my hands and they're shaking and when I get to the counter I can hardly speak. I want something, I need something, I have to have something. Anything at all. Just fucking give it to me.

The Nurse recognizes me and she reaches for a chart and she looks at it and she turns around and she gets my pills from a cabinet. She hands them to me with a small plastic glass of water and I take them as quickly as I can and I step away from the counter and I wait. Almost immediately I feel better. My heart slows, my hands stop shaking, the nervousness, anxiety and anger disappear.

Excerpt 4

I turn away and I walk to the shower and I step into the shower and I am pummeled by the heat. It burns me and it turns my skin red and it hurts but I won't step away from it. I deserve this hurt for not being brave enough to look at myself. I deserve this hurt and I will stand and I will take it because I am not brave enough to look into my own eyes.

When I get numb, I add the cold and I sit down on the floor and I let the water run over my body and soothe the burns. The burning is tiring and the cold tires me more. I close my eyes and I let my body shut itself down and I let my mind wander. It wanders to a familiar place. A place I don't talk about or acknowledge exists. A place where there is only me. A place that I hate.

I am alone. Alone here and alone in the world. Alone in my heart and alone in my mind. Alone everywhere, all the time, for as long as I can remember. Alone with my Family, alone with my friends, alone in a Room full of People. Alone when I wake, alone through each awful day, alone when I finally meet the blackness. I am alone in my horror. Alone in my horror.

I don't want to be alone. I have never wanted to be alone. I fucking hate it. I hate that I have no one to talk to, I hate that I have no one to call, I hate that I have no one to hold my hand, hug me, tell me everything is going to be all right. I hate that I have no one to share my hopes and my dreams with, I hate that I no longer have any hopes or dreams, I hate that I have no one to tell me to hold on, that I can find them again. I hate that when I scream, and I scream bloody murder, that I am screaming into emptiness. I hate that there is no one to hear my scream and that there is no one to help me learn how to stop screaming. I hate that what I have turned to in my loneliness lives in a pipe or a bottle. I hate that what I have turned to in my loneliness is killing me, has already killed me, or will kill me soon. I hate that I will die alone. I will die alone in my horror.

More than anything, all I have ever wanted is to be close to someone. More than anything, all I have ever wanted is to feel as if I wasn't alone. I have tried many times, tried to kill my loneliness with a girl or a woman, and it was never right. We would be together and be close to each other, but no matter how close we were, I still felt alone. They felt that loneliness and it made them want to get closer. When they tried, I either ran or did something to destroy what we felt for each other. I can run fast when I want to run fast, and I've always been good at destroying things. Not one of them would be willing to speak to me today.

The last one was the only one who made me feel the way I always wanted to feel. She made me feel better than I have ever felt, better than I imagined I could feel, and it scared me, scared me to the point of paralysis. When she offered herself to me, I failed. That failure drove me to destruction. I destroyed her, destroyed me, destroyed the two of us together. I destroyed the hope of a future. She will not speak my name now, nor will she acknowledge my existence. I don't blame her.

Excerpt 5

You're depressed. You have very low self-esteem. You're confrontational and tend to be aggressive, you sometimes react to confrontation with violence. You engage in self-defeating behaviors, you have a low tolerance for frustration, you internalize stress and deal with it through a process of self-destruction. You're irresponsible, resentful, manipulative, hostile and have a psychological predisposition to addiction.

I laugh.

It's not funny, James.

Keep going.

This is not a joke.

It's easier to laugh. Now keep going.

She looks down at the file.

You are also very, very angry. Incredibly angry.

She looks at me.

You are also very intelligent.

I take a sip of my coffee.

Sounds about right.

Does it?

Except for the intelligence part.

Why do you say that?

If I was very intelligent, I probably wouldn't be so fucked up.

Addicts, as a group, generally score far above average on intelligence tests.

Why?

You tell me.

I guess maybe we're smart enough to have figured out how shitty things are and we decide addiction is the only way to deal with it.

You acknowledge that you're an Addict.

I laugh again.

Yeah.

I wasn't sure you would.

I do.

Good, that's the first step toward getting better.

If it's one of the Twelve, then it's the only one I'm taking.

You're getting angry. Yeah.

Why?

Right now I'm getting angry thinking about the impossibility of ever getting better.

Is that all you're angry about?

No.

What else?

Pretty much fucking everything.

She laughs.

Everything?

I smile.

Sounds stupid, but it's true. I'm angry about pretty much everything.

How long have you felt that way?

Forever.

As a Child?

My first memories are of anger and pain.

That's too bad.

It's the way things are.

Excerpt 6

The Unit is crowded and the men are waiting for John and Warren and for their Graduation Ceremony. I don't want to see it or participate in it and I have said my good-byes to them, so I start walking. Same as yesterday, I just want to forget.

There is no forgetting today. I know that as soon as I enter the Wood. The Fury takes over. It envelops every emotion every feeling every thought that I have. I can't deal with emotions feelings thoughts so I let the Fury deal with them. It consumes them. The sadness I feel turns to rage, the calm to a desperate need. I want to destroy everything I see. That which I can't destroy, I want to ingest. With each step that I take, it grows. Rage and need. Rage and need. Rage. Need.

I want a drink. I want fifty drinks. I want a bottle of the purest, strongest, most destructive, most poisonous alcohol on Earth. I want fifty bottles of it. I want crack, dirty and yellow and filled with formaldehyde. I want a pile of powder meth, five hundred hits of acid, a garbage bag filled with mushrooms, a tube of glue bigger than a truck, a pool of gas large enough to drown in. I want something anything whatever however as much as I can. Want need want need I want need enough to kill annihilate make me lose make me forget dull the mother-fucking pain give me the darkest darkness the blackest blackness the deepest deepest deepest most horrible fucking hole. Goddamn it to fucking Hell, give it to me. Put me in the fucking hole.

I leave the Trail, force my way through heavy, frozen wood. I am shaking and my heart is racing and I am clenching my fists and I am clenching my jaw. My feet are snapping twigs and crushing infant sapling trees, my arms are removing whatever stands in front of me. The sharp sounds of destruction, a snap crack snap crack, incense me, enrage me, make me want to break more, destroy more, ruin everything. I want to ruin everything everywhere. I want to fucking ruin. I break through a stand of thick Evergreen and into a small, tight, circular Clearing. I stop walking forging pushing fighting and I close my eyes and I take a deep breath and I hope that the breath will calm me but it doesn't so I take another and it doesn't another doesn't another doesn't another doesn't.

I want to be calm but there is no calm for me.

How I am here. How I have arrived in this place at this moment on this day with this feeling history future problems life this horrible fucked-up good-for-nothing waste of a life how. Fifteen minutes ago I was holding a lifelong Criminal and cocaine Addict who spent his childhood with his Father's dick in his mouth as he cried because he was scared to go back into the World. I ate my lunch with some kind of menacing middle-aged movie-star Look-alike and a three-strike Fugitive and a Steel Worker with torn-out hair plugs and a one-hundred-ten-pound Ghost who used to be the Champion of the World. I was given a coloring book and told it would help make me better. I watched some Judge's stupid fucking video and I was told it would help make me better. I got sick, just like I do every other fucking day, and I am not

getting better. I am twenty-three years old and I've been an Alcoholic for a decade and a drug Addict and Criminal for almost as long and I'm wanted in three states and I'm in a Hospital in the middle of Minnesota and I want to drink and I want to do some drugs and I can't control myself. I'm twenty-three.

I breathe and I shake and I can feel it coming and rage and need and confusion regret horror shame and hatred fuse into a perfect Fury a great and beautiful and terrible and perfect Fury the Fury and I can't stop the Fury or control the Fury I can only let the Fury come come come come come. Let it motherfucking come. The Fury has come.

I see a tree and I go after it. Screaming punching kicking clawing tearing ripping dragging pulling wrecking punching screaming punching screaming punching screaming. It is a small tree, a small Pine Tree, small enough that I can destroy it, and I rip the branches from its trunk and I tear them to pieces one by one I rip them and I tear them and I throw them to the ground and I stomp them stomp them stomp them and when there are no more branches I hear a voice and I attack the trunk and it's thin and I break it in half and I hear a voice and I ignore it and I throw the broken trunk on top of the branches and one half of it is still in the ground I hear a voice and I want it out of the fucking ground and I grab it and pull pull pull and it doesn't budge not an inch I hear a voice and I ignore and I pull scream pull and it doesn't budge this fucking tree I want to destroy it and I let go of it and there is a voice I ignore I start kicking kicking kicking and the voice says stop stop stop stop. Stop.

I turn around.

Long black hair and deep clean blue eyes and skin pale white and lips blood red she's small and thin and worn and damaged. She is standing there.

What are you doing here?

I was taking a walk and I saw you and I followed you.

What do you want.

I want you to stop.

I breathe hard, stare hard, tense and coiled. There is still more tree for me to destroy I want that fucking tree. She smiles and she steps toward me, toward toward toward me, and she opens her arms and I'm breathing hard staring hard tense and coiled she puts her arms around me with one hand on the back of my head and she pulls me into her arms and she me holds me and she speaks.

It's okay.

I breathe hard, close my eyes, let myself be held.

It's okay.

Her voice calms me and her arms warm me and her smell lightens me and I can feel her heart beat and my heart slows and I stop shaking and the Fury melts into her safety and she holds me and she says.

Okay.

Okay.

Okay.

Something else comes and it makes me feel weak and scared and fragile and I don't want to be hurt and this feeling is the feeling I have when I know I can be hurt and hurt deeper and more terribly than anything physical and I always fight it and control it and stop it but her voice calms me and her arms warm me and her smell lightens me and I can feel her heart beat and if she let me go right now I would fall and the need and confusion and fear and regret and horror and shame and weakness and fragility are exposed to the soft strength of her open arms and her simple word okay and I start to cry. I start to cry. I start to cry.

It comes in waves. The waves roll deep and from deep the deep within me and I hold her and she holds me tighter and I let her and I let it and I let this and I have not felt this way this vulnerability or allowed myself to feel this way this vulnerability since I was ten years old and I don't know why I haven't and I don't know why I am now and I only know that I am and that it is scary terrifying frightening worse and better than anything I've ever felt crying in her arms just crying in her arms just crying.

She guides me to the ground, but she doesn't let me go. The Gates are open and thirteen years of addiction, violence, Hell and their accompaniments are manifesting themselves in dense tears and heavy sobs and a shortness of breath and a profound sense of loss. The loss inhabits, fills and overwhelms me. It is the loss of a childhood of being a Teenager of normalcy of happiness of love of trust of reason of God of Family of friends of future of potential of dignity of humanity of sanity of myself of everything everything everything. I lost everything and I am lost reduced to a mass of mourning, sadness, grief, anguish and heartache. I am lost. I have lost. Everything. Everything.

It's wet and Lilly cradles me like a broken Child. My face and her shoulder and her shirt and her hair are wet with my tears. I slow down and I start to breathe slowly and deeply and her hair smells clean and I open my eyes because I want to see it and it is all that I can see. It is jet black almost blue and radiant with moisture. I want to touch it and I reach with one of my hands and I run my hand from the crown along her neck and her back to the base of her rib and it is a thin perfect sheer and I let it slowly drop from the tips of my fingers and when it is gone I miss it. I do it again and again and she lets me do it and she doesn't speak she just cradles me because I am broken. I am broken. Broken.

There is noise and voices and Lilly pulls me in tighter and tighter and I pull her in tighter and tighter and I can feel her heart beating and I know she can feel my heart beating and they are speaking our hearts are speaking a language wordless old unknowable and true and we're pulling and holding and the noise is closer and the voices louder and Lilly whispers.

You're okay.

You're okay.

You're okay

Excerpt 7

My Mother is sobbing and my Father is holding her. I don't wait for her this time, I just want this to end.

I don't blame you for this, and I don't think there's anything you could have done to stop it. I am what I am, which is an Alcoholic and a drug Addict and a Criminal, and I am what I am because I made myself so. You did the best you could with me, and you loved me the best you

could, and that's all I could have ever asked for from you. I have no excuses for what I've done or for who I am or for what I've put you through all these years.

My Mother starts sobbing. Louder than before and more wrenching. Her makeup is smeared all over her hands and her face and her clothes, and she is having trouble breathing. She clings to my Father, who holds her and stares at the floor. Tears are running from his cheeks and dripping onto his pants, I can see that his lips are quivering. He shakes his head and he starts to look up at me, but he can't do it.

I sit and watch them. The Fury is in me and has risen it is peaking. I don't understand why this happens, but every time I'm near them, it does happen. They try to love me, I hurt them. They try to be decent and reasonable, I won't be decent or reasonable. They try to help me, I resent them for it. I don't understand why. They are my Parents. They are doing the best they can do.

This is how it has always been with me. Give me something good, I'll destroy it. Love me, I'll destroy you. I have never felt deserving of anything in my life. I have never felt as if I were worth the diseased space I occupy. This feeling has inhabited everything I've ever done, seen or had anything do with, and it has infected every relationship I have ever had with everyone I've ever known. I don't understand it. I don't understand why it's here. I hate it as I hate myself, and for whatever the reason, my Parents' presence has always made it worse. They are only trying to love me, but they have always made it fucking worse.

Joanne stands and she walks over to me and she leans to my ear.

I think we should go.

I look at my Parents. They are still crying. There are tears dripping from my Father's face and my Mother is having trouble breathing. I would like to do something to make them feel better, but I'm incapable of it. I hate myself too much to do anything.

I stand and I walk out of the room. Joanne is holding the door open and she closes it behind me. As soon as it is shut and as soon as I can no longer see hear feel touch or hurt my Parents, I start to feel better.

We start walking. Joanne doesn't speak and neither do I. We just walk through the Halls. I think about my Parents sitting in that Room crying because of me and we head toward Joanne's Office. When we arrive, she opens the door. We walk inside and I sit down on the couch and she sits across from me.

How do feel?

Suicide.

What?

It's the only word that fits.

You feel like killing yourself?

I won't, but at this moment, it seems like a reasonable option.

Why?

They're my Parents. When I'm near them I get so angry that I can't control myself. That anger makes me hate myself more than I already do, and that makes suicide seem like a reasonable option.

Do you need supervision?

No, I'm too much of a pansy to actually do it.

You think suicide is an act of bravery?

No, I think it's cowardly, just like I think addiction is cowardly. But I do think that they both require a certain kind of pathetic strength.

Strength?

You have to be fairly strong to feel anything as powerful as hatred or self-hatred. Addiction and suicide are not for the weak.

I think that's ridiculous.

Ridiculous things can be true.

Why do your Parents make you so angry?

I don't know.

Did you experience abuse as a child?

Not that I remember.

Do you think it's possible?

No.

Why?

I grew up in a safe, sheltered environment. My Parents have always loved me and they've always tried to protect me and they've always tried to do their best by me. They fucking piss me off, but there is no way they ever abused me.

What about someone else?

No.

Are you sure?

Yes.

I pull a cigarette from my pocket, light it, take a drag. The nicotine slows my heart and calms me.

Excerpt 8

I want to give my Parents a hug and tell them I'm sorry, but I can't. I want to beg for their forgiveness, but it's not going to happen. I want to take their hands and tell them everything is going to be okay, but that's not a promise I know I can make. I sit and I watch and I wait. I don't know what to do. I want to touch them, but I can't.

My Mother continues to cry. She cannot will not is unable to stop. My Father holds her and he stares at the floor over her shoulder. Joanne stands and she walks to me and she leans to my ear.

I think you should go.

I stand.

You have a meeting with Daniel and your Parents tomorrow morning. It's in the same Room we were in earlier.

I walk to the door. Before I leave, I turn and I look at my Mother and my Father. My Mother is crying, my Father staring at the floor. Joanne is down on one knee and she is whispering kind words to them, words that I do not deserve to hear.

I open the door and I walk out. I make my way back to the Unit. Night has fallen and the Halls are dark. Overhead lights illuminate them. I hate the lights I want them gone. I wish the Halls were darker. I am craving the dark the darkest darkness the deep and horrible hole. I wish the Halls were fucking black. My mind is black my heart is black I wish the Halls were black. If I could, I would destroy the lights above me with a fucking bat. I would smash them to fucking pieces. I wish the Halls were black.

I open the door to my Room. I walk and I sit down on my bed. Miles is not here and I am alone. My mind is black and my heart is black and I am alone.

I take off my shoes and I take off my socks. I pull my foot my right foot onto the thigh of my left leg. I look down at my toes. They are dirty and gnarled and foul with sweat. I am alone and the Fury is within me. It is not raging, nor near its height, but it is there. It flows through my veins like a slow, lazy virus, urging me to do damage, but not enough damage to constitute destruction. I want it to go away. I want it to leave me. When it is at its full, I am often at its mercy, but not now. I know what to do to make it go away, I know how to make it disappear. Feed it pain and it will leave me. Feed it pain and it will go away.

With the thumb and forefinger of my right hand, I start pulling at the nail of the second toe of my left foot. I know it's sick, a sick fucking symptom of an infected mind, but I do it anyway. I pull. I pull at the nail.

It is always this toe, always this nail. As it has grown back from my last bout with it, it has grown in a way that makes it easy to do it again. It sticks up a little higher than the rest of my nails, its shape is more ragged. It has edges that I can get beneath, edges that provide leverage. I pull. I pull at the nail.

It starts to break away at its tip. It starts to hurt. The Fury inside of me howls with delight. Give me more. Give me more.

Excerpt 9

We're your Parents. It's our instinct to try and help you.

I don't think you can this time, Dad.

He shakes his head. My Mother speaks.

I'm sorry, James.

I look at her.

You've got nothing to be sorry for, Mom.

I am though. I just keep wondering what we did wrong.

You didn't do anything wrong, Mom.

We must have done something.

She starts to break down. My Father stands and he goes to her. He pulls out a chair next to her and he puts his arms around her. She buries her face in his shoulder.

She cries. I watch her cry. I can't take this anymore. I can't take her crying, I can't take the guilt I feel because of it. I can't let her take responsibility for what I am and for what I have done, I can't let her try to accept any of the blame. I created this situation and I made the decisions that led me to where I am today. I made every goddamn one of them. It's not her fault, nor anyone elses fault. I can't take this anymore. I can't take it.

I push my chair back. I stand. My Father is holding my Mother as my Mother cries. She is crying because of me. I step toward them. I step again. I am two steps away I step again. I am one step away. They are not paying attention to me. They are lost in their own sorrow. Sorrow they do not deserve. Sorrow I have dumped down upon them. I step again. I am there. I am next to them. I am there.

The Fury speaks it says no. The Fury speaks it says turn and run. The Fury speaks it says fuck them let them deal with it. The Fury speaks it says I will make you pay. I say fuck the Fury. My Mother is crying. Fuck the goddamn Fury.

I get down on one knee. I am close enough to smell her tears. I reach forward and I touch my Mother's shoulder. It is the first time in all of my memory that I have initiated contact with either my Mother or my Father. I firm my grip so she knows it is there. It is the first time in all of my memory that I have initiated contact with either my Mother or my Father. The first time in my life. She lifts her head and she turns toward me. I speak.

Mom.

She stares at me.

I'm sorry.

She has been broken.

Truly, truly sorry.

Broken by me.

I fucked up your life, all of our lives, and I'm truly truly sorry. She smiles a smile of happiness and a smile of sorrow, happiness for my gesture and sorrow for my life, and she takes one of her arms from around the width of my Father and she puts it around me. She pulls me in. She hugs me with one arm and I let her and I hug her back. I have never done this before. Hug my Mother. Never in my life.

Excerpt 10

My Father speaks.

This has been a great experience. I am very proud of you for being here and for trying as hard as you are. Obviously there are still some problems and some issues to be worked out, but I feel very good about everything. Please call us when you hear from the Lawyer and please call us if you need anything or we can help in any way and please call us just to say hi and let us know how you're doing.

I will.

I love you, James.

I love you too, Dad.

A tear appears in the corner of my Father's eye. He doesn't wipe it and it runs down his cheek. He steps forward and he hugs me and I hug him. There is discomfort and the Fury, but I ignore them.

We separate and my Mother steps toward me. Her eyes are tearing again I used to hate her crying I don't now. She feels and she cries. It is to be admired. She puts her arms around me I put mine around her. We hug each other she holds me like I am her Baby. I am not anymore, but I still am.

We hug each other and I fight the Fury. It cannot beat me or control me right now. My Mother hugs me in a way that lets me know I am forgiven and that she wants me to live and be happy. I hug her in a way that lets her know I am trying to be different and I am trying to be stronger than my rage. We are trying to forgive.

Excerpt 11

My Brother looks at me.

What are you going to do?

I need a couple of minutes alone.

His face is full with fear and disappointment. It is none of my concern. It is time for the reckoning. It is time for the Fury.

I turn and I walk to the bar. I pull out a stool about halfway down its length and I sit down. There are mirrors and bottles in front of me. The mirrors run from the ceiling down to a set of shelves. The shelves are lined with bottles. There are whiskey bottles, vodka bottles, bottles of gin. There are rum bottles, tequila bottles, bottles of strange liqueurs from foreign Countries. There are clear bottles and brown bottles, there are red bottles and blue bottles, there are multicolored bottles designed to please the eye. Some of the bottles are short, some are tall, some are wide, some are thin. They are all filled with alcohol. They are sitting in front of me. They are filled with fucking alcohol.

I look toward the Bartender. I speak.

Barkeep.

He looks up.

Yeah.

Give me a little help?

Sure.

He sets down his paper and he walks toward me. When he is standing in front of me, he speaks. How ya doing today?

I'm not here to talk.

You in a bad mood?

I'm not here to talk.

What can I get you?

I look at the bottles. The beautiful bottles filled with alcohol. I let my eyes wander until they settle, avoiding the mirrors, avoiding myself. I stare at a black bottle. A thick black bottle with a thin neck that is filled with Kentucky Bourbon. It is the bottle the Body most craves, the bottle with which it is most familiar. I point to it, stare at the Bartender, and I speak.

I want a glass of that. I want a big glass. Not one those bullshit cocktail glasses, but a big fucking pint glass. I want it filled to the top.

That's gonna be expensive.

I set the forty dollars my Brother gave me on the surface of the bar.

Just bring it.

The Bartender stares at me like I'm crazy, like he's debating whether he is going to give me what I want. I stare back, let him know that I'm not leaving until I have it. He turns around. With one hand he reaches for a tall, thin pint glass, and with the other he takes the black bottle from the shelf.

I watch him pour the drink. As if in slow motion, I see every drop. When the glass is full, he turns around and he sets it in front of me.

Thank you.

I'll be down there if you need anything else.

Thank you. He walks back to his newspaper. I stare at the glass. The Fury rises from its silent state it screams bloody fucking murder it is stronger than it has ever been before. It screams you are mine, Motherfucker. You are mine and you will always be mine. I own you, I control you and you will do what I tell you to do. You are mine and you will always be mine. You are mine, Motherfucker. I stare at the glass.

I put my hands on the bar. I put them on either side of the glass. They are not touching it, but they are close. Close enough so that when I decide, the glass will be within easy reach. I lean down. As my nose moves toward the strong brown alcohol, I can smell the fumes drifting from its shimmering surface. They enrage me. They make the Fury scream louder. They taunt me. They draw me closer.

I close my eyes. I stop moving when the tip of my nose hits the liquid. I close my mouth and I take a deep breath and it comes comes comes. With all of its strength. The beautiful aroma of oblivion. The foul stench of Hell. It makes me shudder, shakes me. Inside and out it destroys me and fortifies me. Though it has not met my lips or entered my body, I can taste it. Like sweet strong charcoal mixed with bitter gasoline. I can fucking taste it.

Time stops. I do not move. I sit with the tip of my nose in a glass filled with alcohol. I breathe. Deep thorough breaths. All the way in, all the way out. It ebbs when I inhale, ripples when I exhale. I can smell it and I can taste it and I can feel it. Inside and out.

The Fury screams pick it up pick it up pick it up. The Fury screams drink it drink it drink it. The Fury screams more more more more more. The Fury screams want need have to have can't live

without I own you, Motherfucker, pick it up drink it give to me or I will make you pay. More more more more more.

I open my eyes. I see the clear amber brown, the tip of my nose submerged, the rim of my glass. I start to slowly lift my head. I keep my eyes straight ahead, fixed and focused, they will not blink. The liquid disappears from view, the rim of the glass disappears. I see shelves and bottles, the edge of the mirror. I keep moving up I see the edge of my chin, my lips, my nose. I keep moving up. I see the edge of my eye, the lash, the white surrounding. I keep moving up. I see pale green. Straight ahead. Fixed and focused. They will not blink.

I look into myself. Into my own eyes. There is a glass of alcohol in front of me. Though I can no longer see it, I know it is there. I put my hands around it. My hands are on the glass. I look into myself. Into the pale green of my own eyes.

The Fury is screaming. Screaming like it has never screamed before. Its scream is stronger and more powerful, full of rage and need, of hostility and hunger. It is screaming for me to pick up the glass. Pick up the fucking glass.

I have a decision to make. It is a simple decision. It has nothing to do with God or Twelve of anything other than twelve beats of my heart. Yes or no. It is simple decision. Yes or no.

I look into myself. Into the pale green of my own eyes. I like what I see. I am comfortable with it. It is fixed and focused. It will not blink. For the first time in my life, as I look into my own eyes, I like what I see. I can live with it. I want to live with it. For a long time. I want to live with it. I want to live.

The Fury screams bloody fucking murder. The Pale Green softly speaks. It says you are mine, Motherfucker. You are mine and you will always be mine. From this day forward I own you, I control you and you will do what I tell you to do. From this day forward, I make the fucking decisions. You are mine and you will always be mine. You are mine, Motherfucker.

I let go of the glass. I look at the Bartender. He is sitting on his stool and he is reading his newspaper. I speak.

Barkeep.

He looks up.

Yeah.

Dump this shit out for me.

What?

I motion to the glass.

Dump this shit down the fucking drain. I don't want it.

He stares at me for a moment like I'm crazy. I stare back and let him know I'm not. He stands and he starts walking toward me. I stand and I walk away. I leave the glass on the bar and the two twenties next to it.

I walk into the Room with the pool tables. My Brother Bob and my friend Kevin are finishing a game. There is one solid ball on the table, one striped ball, and the eight ball in a corner. I sit down on a stool along the wall. There is table next to the stool and an ashtray on the table. I light a cigarette.

As my Brother lines up a shot, he sees me sitting in the corner of his eye. He looks up and he speaks. You all right?

Yeah.

What were you doing over there?

Nothing.

Did you drink?

No.

Why'd you order one?

It was something I needed to do.

But you didn't touch it?

I touched it and I smelled it and I felt it, but I didn't drink it. I'm done drinking. Won't ever do it again. He smiles.

Congratulations, Buddy.

I smile.

Thanks.

As my Brother lines up his shot, I ask if I can play the Winner. Kevin asks me how long it's been since I played and I tell him it's been a long time. He asks me if I'm ready and I smile and I tell him that it's been a long time. He asks me if I'm ready and I smile and I tell him that I am. He asks me again he wants to make sure. I tell him yes, I'm ready.

Yes, I'm ready.

Appendix E.2 Experiment Excerpts: Dutch

Fragment 1

Ik wil hier weg, Pap. Haal me hier verdomme weg.

Ze rijden me met de rolstoel naar de auto. Ik ga achterin zitten en ik doe mijn shirt uit en ik ga liggen. Mijn Vader rijdt weg, mijn Moeder huilt nog steeds, ik val in slaap.

Zo'n vier uur later word ik wakker. Ik ben helder, maar mijn hele hoofd bonkt. Ik ga voorover zitten en ik kijk naar buiten. We staan bij een Tankstation ergens in Wisconsin. Hoewel er geen sneeuw ligt, voel ik dat het koud is. Mijn Vader doet zijn portier open en hij gaat zitten en hij doet het portier dicht.

Ik ril.

Je bent wakker.

Ja.

Hoe voel je je?

Beroerd.

Je moeder is binnen om zich even op te knappen en wat in te slaan. Moet jij nog iets?

Water en een paar flessen wijn en sigaretten.

Meen je dat?

Ja.

Dit klopt niet, James.

Het moet echt.

Je bent er hard aan toe.

Ja.

Je Moeder raakt overstuur.

Maakt me niet uit. Het moet echt.

Hij doet het portier open en hij gaat het Tankstation in. Ik ga weer liggen en ik staar omhoog. Ik voel mijn hart sneller kloppen en ik breng mijn hand omhoog en ik probeer hem stil te houden. Ik hoop dat ze opschieten.

Twintig minuten later is de wijn op. Ik kom overeind en ik steek een sigaret op en ik klok wat water naar binnen.

Fragment 2

Weer in de auto met hoofdpijn en een stinkende adem. We rijden naar het noorden en naar het westen, naar Minnesota. Mijn Vader heeft wat rondgebeld om me in een Kliniek te krijgen en ergens anders kan ik niet heen, dus voorlopig wil ik er best een tijdje blijven. Het wordt kouder.

Mijn gezicht doet nog meer pijn en het is vreselijk gezwollen. Praten, eten, drinken en roken

gaan me slecht af. Ik heb nog niet in een spiegel gekeken.

In Minneapolis gaan we bij mijn grote Broer langs. Die is daar na zijn scheiding gaan wonen en hij weet waar de Kliniek is. Hij komt naast me op de achterbank zitten en hij houdt mijn hand vast en dat helpt, want ik ben bang.

We rijden de Parkeerplaats op en we parkeren en ik maak een fles leeg en we stappen uit en we gaan op weg naar de Ingang van de Kliniek. Mijn Vader en Mijn Moeder en mijn Broer en ik. Ons hele Gezin. Op naar de Kliniek. Ik blijf staan en zij ook. Ik kijk naar de Gebouwen. Laag en lang en met elkaar verbonden. Functioneel. Eenvoudig. Bedreigend.

Ik wil vluchten of doodgaan of total loss raken. Ik wil niets kunnen zien en niets kunnen zeggen en niets kunnen voelen. Ik wil in een gat kruipen om er nooit meer uit te komen. Ik wil mijn bestaan volledig uitwissen. Dat kutbestaan volledig uitwissen. Ik adem diep in.

Toe maar.

We komen een kleine Wachtkamer binnen. Achter een balie zit een vrouw een modetijdschrift te lezen. Ze kijkt op.

Kan ik u helpen?

Mijn Vader stapt op haar of en terwijl hij met haar praat, zoeken mijn Moeder en mijn Broer en ik een zitplaats op.

Ik tril. Mijn handen en mijn voeten en mijn lippen en mijn borst. Ze trillen. Om ik weet niet hoeveel redenen.

Fragment 3

Mijn medicijnen raken uitgewerkt en ik moet meer hebben, dus laat ik de Lezing zitten en loop ik terug naar de Verpleegafdeling en ga ik in de rij staan. De rij schuift op en ik raak bang en opgewonden en kwaad. Met elke stap dichter bij de medicijnen wordt het erger. Ik voel dat mijn hart sneller gaat kloppen en als ik naar mijn handen kijk, zie ik ze trillen en eenmaal voor het loket krijg ik nauwelijks een woord uit mijn keel. Ik wil iets, ik moet iets, ik moet en zal iets. Maakt niet uit wat. Kom op met die klerezooi.

De Verpleegster herkent me en ze pakt een kaart en ze kijkt erop en ze draait zich om en ze pakt mijn pillen uit een kast. Ze geeft ze met wat water in een plastic bekertje en ik neem ze zo snel mogelijk in en ik stap weg van het loket en ik wacht af. Bijna onmiddellijk voel ik me beter. Mijn hart komt tot bedaren, mijn handen trillen niet langer, de opwinding, de angst en de woede verdwijnen.

Fragment 4

Ik wend me af en ik loop naar de douche en ik ga eronder staan en de hitte beukt op me in. Ik verbrand en mijn huid kleurt rood en het doet pijn, maar ik verdom het om eronder vandaan te gaan. Ik verdien die pijn omdat ik niet de moed heb naar mezelf te kijken. Ik verdien die pijn en ik zal volhouden en ik zal hem accepteren omdat ik niet de moed heb mezelf in de ogen te kijken.

Als ik gevoelloos word, zet ik de koudwaterkraan open en ga ik op de grond zitten en laat ik het water over me heen lopen om de scherpe kantjes van de verbranding af te halen. Me branden is

vermoeiend en de kou is nog vermoeiender. Ik doe mijn ogen dicht en ik schakel mijn lichaam uit en ik laat mijn gedachten de vrije loop. Ze gaan naar een bekende plek. Een plek waar ik niet over praat en waarvan ik het bestaan ontken. Een plek waar alleen ik besta. Een plek waar ik een bloedhekel aan heb.

Ik ben alleen. Hier alleen en alleen op de wereld. In mijn hart alleen en in mijn hoofd alleen. Altijd en overal alleen, zo lang als ik me herinner. Bij ons thuis alleen, tussen mijn vrienden alleen, in een Kamer vol mensen alleen. Als ik wakker ben alleen, elke vreselijke dag alleen, als ik eindelijk het zwart betreed alleen. In al mijn ellende ben ik alleen. In al mijn ellende alleen.

Ik wil niet alleen zijn. Ik heb nooit alleen willen zijn. Ik heb er een godsgloeiende hekel aan. Ik vind het vreselijk dat ik met niemand kan praten, ik vind het vreselijk dat ik niemand op kan bellen, vreselijk dat niemand mijn hand vasthoudt, me omhelst, zegt dat alles goed komt. Ik vind het vreselijk dat ik aan niemand mijn dromen en verwachtingen kan vertellen, vreselijk dat ik geen dromen en verwachtingen meer heb, vreselijk dat ik niemand heb die me zegt dat ik me taai moet houden, dat ze wel weer terugkomen. Ik vind het vreselijk dat ik, wanneer ik schreeuw — en ik schreeuw me de longen uit het lijf —, in het niets schreeuw. Ik vind het vreselijk dat niemand mijn schreeuwen hoort en dat er niemand is om me te leren ophouden met schreeuwen. Ik vind het vreselijk dat datgene waar ik me in mijn eenzaamheid op verlaat, in een pijp of in een fles zit. Ik vind het afschuwelijk dat datgene waar ik me in mijn eenzaamheid op verlaat, me doodt, me al heeft gedood of spoedig zal doden. Ik vind het afschuwelijk dat ik alleen dood zal gaan. In al mijn ellende zal ik alleen doodgaan.

Wat ik altijd het liefste heb gewild is dicht bij iemand staan. Wat ik altijd het liefste heb willen voelen is dat ik niet alleen was. Ik heb het dikwijls geprobeerd, dikwijls geprobeerd om een eind aan mijn eenzaamheid te maken met een vrouw of een meisje en het klopte nooit. Dan waren we samen en waren we dicht bij elkaar, maar hoe dicht we ook bij elkaar waren, toch voelde ik me alleen. Zij voelden die eenzaamheid en dan wilden ze dat we nog dichter bij elkaar kwamen. Als ze dat probeerden, ging ik ervandoor of deed ik iets wat ons gevoel voor elkaar kapotmaakte. Ik kan er rap vandoor gaan als ik wil en ik was altijd goed in dingen kapotmaken. Geen van hen zou nu met me willen praten. Alleen de laatste maakte dat ik me voelde zoals ik me altijd wilde voelen. Door haar voelde ik me beter dan ooit, beter dan ik me kon voorstellen, en dat boezemde me angst, een bijna verlammende angst, in. Toen ze zich aan me overgaf, kon ik het niet. Dat fiasco leidde tot vernietigingsdrang. Ik maakte haar kapot, maakte mezelf kapot, maakte wat we hadden kapot. Het vooruitzicht op een leven samen maakte ik kapot. Nu krijgt ze mijn naam niet meer over haar lippen en wil ze me niet meer kennen. Ik verwijt het haar niet.

Fragment 5

Je bent depressief. Je hebt heel weinig zelfrespect. Je zoekt de confrontatie op, je neigt naar agressie en soms reageer je gewelddadig op zo'n confrontatie. Je gedrag is contraproductief, je kunt slecht tegen teleurstelling, je richt stress naar binnen en die stress veroorzaakt zelfdestructief handelen. Je neemt je verantwoordelijkheid niet, je zit vol wrok, je manipuleert, je bent vijandig en je hebt aanleg voor verslaving.

Ik moet lachen.

Het is niet grappig, James.

Ga verder.

Het is geen grap.

Je kunt er maar beter om lachen. Maar ga verder.

Ze kijkt naar het dossier.

En je bent heel, heel erg boos. Ongelooflijk boos.

Ze kijkt me aan.

En je bent heel intelligent.

Ik neem een slokje koffie.

Klopt wel zo ongeveer.

Ja?

Behalve dat van die intelligentie.

Waarom zeg je dat?

Als ik heel intelligent was, zat ik waarschijnlijk niet zo in de problemen.

Verslaafden, als groep, scoren in een IQ-test vaak ver boven het gemiddelde.

Waarom?

Dat mag jij zeggen.

Misschien zijn we slim genoeg om erachter te komen in wat voor ellende we leven en besluiten we dat verslaafd raken de enige manier is om daarmee om te gaan.

Je erkent dat je een Junk bent.

Ik moet weer lachen.

Ja, hoor.

Dat wist ik nog niet zo net.

Het is zo.

Mooi, dat is de eerste stap op weg naar afkicken.

Als het er een van de Twaalf is, loop ik niet verder.

Je wordt boos.

Ja.

Waarom?

Op dit moment word ik boos omdat ik niet denk dat het mogelijk is om nog of te kicken.

Alleen daarom?

Nee.

Waarom nog meer?

Zo'n beetje om die hele klerezooi.

Ze lacht.

Om alles?

Ik glimlach.

Ik geef toe dat het stom klinkt. Ik ben zo ongeveer overal kwaad om.

Hoe lang is dat al zo?

Mijn hele leven.

Ook toen je klein was?

Van vroeger herinner ik me alleen boosheid en pijn.

Dat is sneu.

Zo is het nu eenmaal.

Fragment 6

De Unit zit vol bewoners die op John en Warren en de Medaille-uitreiking wachten. Die wil ik niet zien en daar wil ik niet bij zijn en ik heb al afscheid van ze genomen, dus ga ik wandelen. Net als gisteren wil ik gewoon vergeten.

Vandaag is er van vergeten geen sprake. Dat weet ik zodra ik het Bos in loop. De Furie neemt de zaak over. Al mijn gevoelens al mijn gewaarwordingen al mijn gedachten gaan erin op. Gevoelens gewaarwordingen gedachten kan ik niet aan, dus laat ik die aan de Furie. Die verteert ze. Mijn verdriet slaat om in woede, de kalmte in waanzinnige drang. Alles wat ik zie wil ik vernielen. Wat ik niet kan vernielen wil ik in me opnemen. Met elke stap die ik zet wordt ze groter. Woede en drang. Woede en drang. Woede. Drang.

Ik wil drank. Ik wil verschrikkelijk veel drank. Ik wil een fles van de puurste, sterkste, meest destructieve en giftige alcohol die er bestaat. Ik wil dozen vol. Ik wil crack, gore gele crack barstensvol formaldehyde. Ik wil een berg speed en vijfhonderd acidtrips en een vuilniszak paddo's en een tube lijm zo groot als een vrachtwagen en een plas benzine waar je in verdrinkt. Ik wil iets alles maakt niet uit wat maakt met uit hoe zoveel mogelijk. Ik wil ik moet ik moet en zal ik heb er zo veel behoefte aan dat ik er een moord voor doe vernietig verlos me laat me vergeten demp die godvergeten pijn kom op met de duisterste duisternis het zwartste zwart het diepste hol het allerdiepste allerafschuwelijkste rothol. Kom godverdegodver op met dat spul. Stop me in dat teringhol.

Ik ga van het Pad af, ploeg door dicht, bevroren bos. Ik tril en mijn hart gaat tekeer en ik bal mijn vuisten en ik pers mijn kaken op elkaar. Mijn voeten laten takken knappen en pletten jonge boompjes, mijn armen maaien alles weg wat me hindert. Ik word razend, het scherpe geluid, het knak-krak-knak-krak waar het vernielen mee gepaard gaat maakt me witheet, ik wil verder vernielen, nog meer vernietigen, alles te gronde richten. Ik wil die hele klerezooi overal kapot. Door een dichte opstand van Wintergroen baan ik me een weg naar een kleine, benauwde ronde Open Plek. Ik loop niet verder jaag vecht worstel niet verder en ik sluit mijn ogen en ik adem diep in en ik hoop dat ademen me bedaart, maar dat gebeurt niet, dus adem ik weer diep in en het gebeurt weer niet nog een keer weer niet nog een keer weer niet nog een keer weer niet.

Ik wil bedaren, maar bedaren zit er niet in.

Dat ik hier zit. Dat ik op dit moment vandaag met dit gevoel met deze achtergrond deze toekomst deze problemen met dit leven dit godvergeten verknalde zinloze kutleven hier terechtgekomen ben. Een kwartier geleden hield ik een geboren Crimineel in mijn armen, een Cokeverslaafde die als kleine jongen de pik van zijn Vader in zijn mond had gehad en die huilde omdat hij de Grote Wereld met meer in durfde. Ik zat aan tafel met een al wat oudere en bloedlinke dubbelganger van een Filmster en met een Recidivist die levenslang heeft en met een Hoogovenarbeider bij wie ze het nephaar hadden uitgetrokken en een Schim van vijftig kilo die Wereldkampioen is geweest. Ze hebben me een kleurboek gegeven met de boodschap dat ik daarmee af kon kicken. Ik heb naar een stomme kutvideo zitten kijken over de een of andere Rechter en ze zeiden dat ik daarmee af kon kicken. Net als elke ochtend ben ik misselijk geworden, verdomme, en ik kick niet af. Ik ben drieëntwintig en al tien jaar lang ben ik een Alcoholist en al bijna net zo lang ben ik een Junk en een Crimineel en ik word in drie staten gezocht en ik zit in een Ziekenhuis ergens in Minnesota en ik wil drinken en ik wil scoren en ik heb me niet onder controle. Ik ben drieëntwintig.

Ik adem in en uit en ik tril en ik voel Haar naar boven komen en woede en drang en verwarring spijt afschuw schaamte en haat vloeien ineen tot de heerlijke Furie de grootse en prachtige en verschrikkelijke en heerlijke Furie en ik kan de Furie niet stoppen en ik heb de Furie niet onder controle ik kan de Furie slechts laten komen laten komen laten komen. Laat die godvergeten Furie maar komen. Daar is ze.

Ik zie een boom en ik storm erop af. Schreeuwend stompend schoppend klauwend trekkend scheurend sleurend beukend stompend schreeuwend stompend schreeuwend stompend schreeuwend. Het is een kleine boom, een kleine Den, klein genoeg om te vernielen, en ik ruk de takken van de stam en ik trek ze stuk voor stuk kapot en ik blijf trekken en rukken en ik smijt de stukken neer en ik stamp erop en blijf stampen en als er geen takken meer zijn hoor ik een stem en ik storm op de stam af en het is een dunne en ik breek hem doormidden en ik hoor een stem en ik luister er niet naar en het stuk wat ik heb afgebroken smijt ik op de takken en er staat nog een stuk ik hoor een stem en ik wil dat klotestuk eruit en ik pak het beet en trek en blijf trekken en het geeft geen centimeter mee ik hoor een stem ik luister er niet naar en ik trek schreeuw trek en het geeft met mee en ik wil die kutboom kapot en ik laat hem los en ik hoor een stem luister niet begin te schoppen en schop door en ik hoor stop stop stop stop. Stop.

Ik draai me om.

Lang zwart haar en diepe helderblauwe ogen en een bleekwitte huid en bloedrode lippen ze is klein, mager, afgemat en beschadigd. Daar staat ze.

Wat doe jij hier?

Ik was aan het lopen en ik zag jou en ik ben achter je aan gelopen.

Wat wil je?

Dat je ophoudt.

Ik adem zwaar, kijk strak, gespannen, broeierig. Er is nog boom over om te vernielen ik wil die kutboom. Ze glimlacht en ze stapt op me af, op me af, op me of en ze spreidt haar armen en ik adem zwaar en ik kijk strak, gespannen en broeierig en ze legt haar armen om me been en een hand in mijn nek en ze trekt me naar zich toe en ze houdt me vast en ze spreekt.

Rustig maar.

Ik adem zwaar, doe mijn ogen dicht, laat me vasthouden.

Rustig maar.

Haar stem brengt me tot bedaren en haar armen verwarmen me en haar geur beurt me op en ik voel haar hart kloppen en mijn hartslag vertraagt en ik tril niet meer en de Furie lost op in haar geruststellende aanwezigheid en ze houdt me vast en ze zegt.

Goed.

Goed.

Goed.

Er komt wat anders op en ik word er week van en bang en kwetsbaar en ik wil niet gekwetst worden en het is het gevoel dat ik heb wanneer ik weet dat ze me kunnen kwetsen en dieper en afschuwelijker kunnen kwetsen dan alleen lichamelijk en altijd verzet ik me ertegen en hou ik het in de hand en hou ik het tegen, maar haar stem brengt me tot bedaren en haar armen verwarmen me en haar geur beurt me op en ik voel haar hart kloppen en als ze me nu loslaat val ik en de drang en verwarring en angst en spijt en afschuw en schaamte en zwakheid en kwetsbaarheid staan bloot aan de zachte kracht van haar gespreide armen en het simpele goed dat ze zegt en ik begin te huilen. Ik begin te huilen. Ik begin te huilen.

Het komt in golven. Zware golven die vanuit de diepte de diepte in me komen en ik hou haar vast en ze drukt me steviger tegen zich aan en ik laat haar begaan en ik laat het gebeuren en ik laat dit gebeuren en zo, zo kwetsbaar heb ik me na mijn tiende niet meer gevoeld en niet durven voelen en ik weet niet waarom niet en ik weet niet waarom nu wel en ik weet alleen dat ik het doe en dat huilen in haar armen gewoon huilen in haar armen gewoon huilen eng is en angstaanjagend erger nog en dat ik nog nooit zo iets heerlijks heb gevoeld.

Ze laat me op de grond zakken, maar ze laat me niet los. De Sluizen zijn open en dertien jaar verslaving, geweld, Verschrikking en wat daarmee gepaard gaat komt naar buiten in dikke tranen en zwaar snikken en ademnood en een diep besef van verlies. Ik raak vervuld van, overweldigd door dat verlies. Het is het verlies van vroege jeugd van puberteit van gewoon zijn van geluk van liefde van vertrouwen van rede van God van Gezin van vrienden van toekomst van mogelijkheden van waardigheid van menselijkheid van gezond verstand van mezelf van alles ja van alles. Ik ben alles kwijt en ik ben verloren er is niets over dan rouw, verdriet, leed, smart en zielenpijn. Ik ben verloren. Ik heb verloren. Alles. Alles.

Het is nat en Lilly wiegt me als een geknakt Kind. Mijn gezicht en haar schouder en haar shirt en haar haren zijn nat van mijn tranen. Ik kom een beetje bij en ik begin langzamer en dieper te ademen en haar haren ruiken schoon en ik doe mijn ogen open omdat ik ze wil zien en iets anders zie ik niet. Ze zijn haast blauwzwart en vochtig glanzend. Ik wil ze aanraken en ik steek een hand uit en ik laat hem van haar kruin over haar nek en haar rug tot onder aan haar ribben gaan, een prachtige nauwelijks waarneembare welving die ik langzaam van mijn vingertoppen laat vallen en mis zodra ze weg is. Ik doe het nog een keer en nog een keer en ze laat me begaan en ze zegt niets ze wiegt me alleen omdat ik geknakt ben. Ik ben geknakt. Geknakt.

Er klinkt rumoer en er klinken stemmen en Lilly drukt me steeds steviger tegen zich aan en ik trek haar steeds steviger tegen mij aan en ik voel haar hart kloppen en ik weet dat ze mijn hart voelt kloppen ze spreken onze harten spreken een woordeloze oude onkenbare ware taal en we

omklemmen elkaar omklemmen elkaar vaster en het rumoer komt dichterbij en de stemmen klinken luider en Lilly fluistert.

Het komt goed.

Het komt goed.

Het komt goed.

Fragment 7

Mijn Moeder snikt en mijn Vader houdt haar vast. Deze keer wacht ik niet af, ik wil het gewoon achter de rug hebben.

Jullie verwijt ik het niet, en ik denk niet dat jullie het op enige manier hadden kunnen voorkomen. Ik ben wat ik ben, namelijk een Alcoholist en een Junk en een Crimineel, en dat is alleen maar zo omdat ik dat van mezelf heb gemaakt. Jullie hebben voor me gedaan wat in jullie vermogen lag, en jullie hebben van me gehouden voor zover dat in jullie vermogen lag en meer mag ik niet van jullie verlangen. Ik heb geen excuus voor wat ik heb gedaan en voor wie ik ben en voor wat ik jullie al die jaren heb laten doormaken.

Mijn Moeder begint te snikken. Luider nu, en hartverscheurender. De make-up zit op haar handen en op haar gezicht en op haar kleren en ze kan nauwelijks ademhalen. Ze drukt zich tegen mijn Vader aan, die haar vasthoudt en omlaag kijkt. De tranen vallen van zijn wangen op zijn broek, ik zie zijn lippen trillen. Hij schudt zijn hoofd en zijn blik gaat langzaam omhoog, maar het lukt hem niet me aan te kijken.

Ik kijk toe. De Furie in me is naar boven gekomen en bereikt haar hoogtepunt. Elke keer dat ik ze zie, gebeurt dat en ik snap niet waarom. Zij proberen van me te houden, ik doe ze pijn. Zij proberen behoorlijk redelijk te zijn, ik weiger behoorlijk redelijk te zijn. Zij proberen me te helpen, ik neem het ze kwalijk. Ik snap niet waarom. Het zijn mijn Ouders. Ze doen hun uiterste best.

Zo is het altijd geweest. Geef me iets moois, ik maak het kapot. Geef om me, ik maak jou kapot. Ik heb nooit het gevoel gehad dat ik wat waard ben. Ik heb nooit het gevoel gehad dat ik recht heb op de verkankerde ruimte die ik inneem. Alles wat ik deed of meemaakte of waar ik mee te maken had is van dat idee doordrongen geweest en al mijn relaties met mensen zijn erdoor aangetast. Ik snap het niet. Ik weet niet waarom het zo is. Ik heb er net zo de pest aan als ik de pest aan mezelf heb en waar het ook door kwam, met mijn Ouders in de buurt werd het altijd erger. Ze proberen gewoon van me te houden, maar ze maken het verdomme altijd alleen maar erger.

Joanne, de psycholoog, staat op en ze komt naar me toe en ze brengt haar mond naar mijn oor.

Ik denk dat we moeten gaan.

Ik kijk naar mijn Ouders. Ze huilen nog. Er vallen tranen van mijn Vaders gezicht en mijn Moeder kan nauwelijks ademhalen. Ik zou graag iets doen waardoor ze zich beter gingen voelen, maar ik ben er niet toe in staat. Ik heb een te grote hekel aan mezelf om wat dan ook te doen.

Ik sta op en ik loop naar buiten. Joanne houdt de deur open en ze doet hem achter me dicht. Ik begin me beter te voelen zodra hij dicht is en ik mijn Ouders niet meer kan zien horen voelen aanraken of kwetsen.

We beginnen te lopen. Joanne zegt niets en ik ook niet. We lopen gewoon de Gangen door. We lopen naar Joannes Werkkamer en ik denk aan mijn Ouders die daar in die Ruimte om me huilen. Ze doet de deur open. We gaan naar binnen en ik neem de bank en zij gaat tegenover me zitten.

Hoe voel je je?

Ik ga me van kant maken.

Wat?

Ik kan het niet op een andere manier zeggen.

Wil je zelfmoord plegen?

Ik doe het niet, maar op het moment lijkt het me een redelijke optie.

Hoezo?

Ik ben hun Kind. Als ze in de buurt zijn, word ik zo kwaad dat ik mezelf niet onder controle heb. En als ik zo kwaad ben, krijg ik een nog grotere hekel aan mezelf dan ik al heb en dan lijkt zelfmoord een redelijke optie.

Heb je toezicht nodig?

Nee, ik ben toch te schijterig om het te doen.

Vind je zelfmoord een moedige daad?

Nee, ik vind het laf, maar verslaafd zijn vind ik ook laf. Toch denk ik dat voor allebei een treurig soort kracht nodig is.

Kracht?

Je moet behoorlijk sterk zijn om zoiets heftigs als haat of zelfhaat te voelen. Een slappeling raakt niet verslaafd en maakt zich niet van kant.

Dat slaat nergens op volgens mij.

Iets wat nergens op slaat kan toch waar zijn.

Waarom maken je Ouders je zo boos?

Weet ik niet.

Ben je als kind misbruikt?

Niet dat ik weet.

Houd je het voor mogelijk?

Nee.

Waarom niet?

Ik ben in een veilige, beschermde omgeving opgegroeid. Mijn Ouders hebben altijd van me gehouden en geprobeerd me te beschermen en voor mij doen ze hun uiterste best. Ik ben ze goed zat, maar ze hebben me in geen geval misbruikt.

Iemand anders misschien?

Nee.

Weet je het zeker?

Ja.

Ik haal een sigaret tevoorschijn, steek hem aan, neem een trek. De nicotine vertraagt mijn hartslag en brengt me tot bedaren.

Fragment 8

Ik wil mijn ouders omhelzen en zeggen dat het me spijt, maar dat kan ik niet. Ik wil ze om vergeving vragen, maar daar zal het niet van komen. Ik wil hun hand pakken en zeggen dat het allemaal goed komt, maar ik weet dat ik dat niet kan beloven. Ik kijk ernaar en ik wacht af. Ik weet niet wat ik moet. Ik wit ze aanraken, maar dat kan ik niet.

Mijn Moeder blijft huilen. Zij kan zal kan echt niet stoppen. Mijn Vader houdt haar vast en hij kijkt over haar schouder naar de grond. Joanne staat op en ze komt op me of en ze brengt haar mond naar mijn oor.

Je moest maar gaan.

Ik sta op.

Voor morgen staat er een gesprek met Daniel en je Ouders. Weer in dezelfde Kamer.

Ik loop naar de deur. Voordat ik wegga, draai ik me om en kijk ik naar mijn Vader en mijn Moeder. Mijn Moeder huilt, mijn Vader kijkt naar de grond. Joanne zit geknield en fluistert ze lief toe, iets wat ik niet verdien te horen.

Ik doe de deur open en ik loop naar buiten. Ik ga terug naar de Unit. De nacht is gevallen en in de Gangen is het donker. Er is wat licht van lampen aan het plafond. Ik haat die lampen ik wil ze weg. Ik wou dat het donkerder was in de Gangen. Ik verlang ontzettend naar het donker het duisterste donker het diepe, afgrijselijke gat. Ik wou verdomme dat het zwart was in de Gangen. In mijn hoofd is het zwart in mijn hart is het zwart ik wou dat het zwart was in de Gangen. Wat had ik graag een knuppel gehad om die klotelampen kapot te timmeren. Ik zou ze finaal aan gruzelementen slaan. Ik wou dat de Gangen zwart waren.

Ik doe de deur van mijn Kamer open. Ik loop naar mijn bed en ga erop zitten. Miles is er niet en ik ben alleen. Het is zwart in mijn hoofd en ik ben alleen.

Ik trek mijn schoenen uit en ik trek mijn sokken uit. Ik trek mijn rechtervoet op mijn linkerdij. Ik bekijk mijn tenen. Ze zijn smerig en knokig en vies en ze zweten. Ik ben alleen en ik heb de Furie in me. Ze raast niet en is niet op haar hoogtepunt, maar ze is er. Ze stroomt door mijn aderen als een traag, lui virus dat me aanzet schade aan te richten, maar met zo veel schade dat het op vernieling neerkomt. Ik wil haar weg. Ik wil dat ze vertrekt. Vaak, als ze helemaal aanwezig is, ben ik aan haar overgeleverd, maar nu niet. Ik weet wat ik moet doen om haar te laten verdwijnen, ik weet hoe ik haar weg moet krijgen. Met pijn gaat ze weg.

Met de duim en wijsvinger van mijn rechterhand begin ik aan de nagel van de tweede teen van mijn linkervoet te trekken. Ik weet dat het ziek is, een inziek teken van een aangetaste geest, maar ik doe het toch. Ik trek. Ik trek aan de nagel.

Het is altijd die teen, die nagel. Omdat het een nieuwe is, aangegroeid na de laatste keer dat ik

erop tekeer ben gegaan, gaat het nu makkelijker. Hij steekt een beetje boven de andere nagels uit en hij is wat ruwer van vorm. Er zitten hoekjes aan waar ik achter kan komen, hoekjes waaraan ik kan wrikken. Ik trek. Ik trek aan de nagel.

Bovenaan komt hij los. Het begint zeer te doen. De Furie in me brult van vreugde. Meer. Kom op. Kom op ermee.

Fragment 9

We zijn je Ouders. Willen helpen zit ingebakken.

Deze keer kan dat volgens mij niet, Pa.

Hij schudt zijn hoofd. Mijn Moeder spreekt.

Het spijt me, James.

Ik kijk haar aan.

Dat is nergens voor nodig, Ma.

Toch spijt het me. Ik vraag me steeds maar af wat we fout hebben gedaan.

Jullie hebben niets fout gedaan, Ma.

Er moet toch iets zijn.

Ze staat op instorten. Mijn Vader staat op en gaat naar haar toe. Hij trekt een stoel bij en hij slaat zijn arm om haar heen. Ze begraaft haar gezicht in zijn schouder.

Ze huilt. Ik sla haar gade. Ik trek het allemaal niet meer. Ik trek haar huilen niet meer. Ik trek mijn schuldgevoel erover niet meer. Ik kan haar niet verantwoordelijk stellen voor wat er van me geworden is en voor wat ik heb gedaan. Ik kan haar de schuld niet op zich laten nemen. Ik heb het ernaar gemaakt en ik heb de beslissingen genomen die hebben geleid tot wie ik nu ben. Die kutbeslissingen heb ik allemaal genomen. Het is niet haar schuld en niet de schuld van iemand anders. Ik trek het niet meer. Ik trek het niet.

Ik schuif mijn stoel naar achteren. Ik sta op. Mijn Vader houdt mijn huilende Moeder vast. Ze huilt om mij. Ik doe een stap naar ze toe. Nog een stap. Ik ben twee stappen van ze vandaan ik doe nog een stap. Ik ben één stap bij ze vandaan. Ze hebben geen oog voor mij. Ze zijn in hun eigen verdriet verzonken. Verdriet dat ze niet verdienen. Verdriet waar ik ze in heb gestort. Ik doe nog een stap. Ik ben er. Ik sta vlak bij ze. Ik ben er.

De Furie spreekt nee zegt ze. De Furie spreekt wegwezen zegt ze. De Furie spreekt laat ze barsten, laat ze het zelf maar uitzoeken zegt ze. De Furie spreekt jullie zullen ervoor boeten zegt ze. Mijn Moeder huilt. De Furie kan mijn rug op.

Ik kniel neer. Ik ben zo dichtbij dat ik haar tranen ruik. Ik steek mijn hand uit en ik raak mijn Moeders schouder aan. Voorzover ik weet heb ik nooit het initiatief tot contact met mijn Vader of met mijn Moeder genomen. Ik knijp een beetje om haar te laten merken dat mijn hand daar ligt. Voorzover ik weet heb ik nooit het initiatief tot contact met mijn Vader of met mijn Moeder genomen. Nog nooit. Ze tilt haar hoofd op en ze draait zich naar me toe. Ik spreek.

Ma.

Ze kijkt me indringend aan.

Het spijt me.

Ze is kapot.

Het spijt me echt verschrikkelijk.

Kapot door mij.

Ik heb je leven verknald, het leven van ons allemaal, en het spijt me echt verschrikkelijk.

Ze lacht een glimlach van blijdschap en een glimlach van verdriet, van blijdschap om mijn gebaar en van verdriet om mijn leven, en ze trekt een arm van mijn Vader weg en die slaat ze om mij heen. Ze trekt me naar zich toe. Met één arm omarmt ze me, en ik laat haar begaan en ik omarm haar ook. Dit heb ik nog nooit gedaan. Mijn Moeder omarmen. Nooit van mijn leven.

Fragment 10

Mijn vader spreekt.

Dit was een geweldige ervaring. Ik ben er heel trots op dat je hierheen bent gegaan en zo je best hebt gedaan. We zijn uiteraard niet uit de problemen en er moet nog wel het een en ander worden opgelost, maar ik hou er een goed gevoel aan over. Ik zou het fijn vinden als je belt wanneer je wat van de Advocaat hoort en wanneer je wat nodig hebt of wanneer we je op de een of andere manier kunnen helpen of gewoon zomaar wanneer je ons wilt laten weten hoe het met je gaat.

Doe ik.

Ik hou van je.

Ik ook van jou, Pa.

In mijn Vaders ooghoek welt een traan op. Hij veegt hem niet weg en de traan rolt over zijn wang. Hij doet een stap naar voren en hij omhelst me en ik omhels hem. Een ongemakkelijk gevoel en de Furie, maar ik negeer ze.

We laten elkaar los en mijn Moeder komt naar me toe. Haar ogen staan weer vol tranen ik vond het altijd vreselijk als ze huilde nu niet. Ze heeft gevoelens en ze huilt. Dat moet je haar nageven. Ze legt haar armen om me heen en ik leg de mijne om haar heen. We omhelzen elkaar ze houdt me vast of ik haar kleine Jongen ben. Dat ben ik niet meer, maar toch nog wel.

We omhelzen elkaar en ik vecht tegen de Furie. Nu verslaat ze me niet, heeft ze geen macht over me. Mijn Moeder omhelst me op zo'n manier dat ik weet dat ze me heeft vergeven en dat ze me een gelukkig leven wenst. Ik omhels haar op zo'n manier dat ze weet dat ik probeer te veranderen en probeer mijn woede de baas te zijn. We proberen vergiffenis te schenken.

Fragment 11

Mijn Broer kijkt me aan.

Wat ga jij dan doen?

Ik heb een paar minuten voor mezelf nodig.

Angst en teleurstelling staan levensgroot op zijn gezicht te lezen. Dat is mijn zaak niet. Het is tijd om af te rekenen. Het is tijd voor de Furie.

Ik draai me om en ik loop naar de bar. Ongeveer halverwege de bar trek ik een kruk naar me toe en ga ik zitten. Spiegels en flessen voor me. De spiegels reiken van een reeks planken tot aan het plafond. De planken staan vol flessen. Flessen whisky, flessen wodka, flessen gin. Flessen rum, flessen tequila, en flessen exotische drankjes uit het Buitenland. Doorzichtige flessen en bruine flessen, rode flessen en blauwe flessen, veelkleurige flessen ontworpen om het oog te plezieren. De ene fles is kort, de andere lang, de ene is bol, de andere smal. Overal zit alcohol in. Ze staan voor mijn neus. Er zit van die kutalcohol in.

Ik kijk naar de Barkeeper. Ik spreek.

Hallo.

Hij kijkt op.

Ja?

Wil je wat voor me doen?

Ja, hoor.

Hij legt zijn krant neer en hij komt naar me toe. Als hij voor me staat, spreekt hij.

Alles goed?

Ik kom niet voor een praatje.

Verkeerde been?

Ik kom niet voor een praatje.

Waarmee kan ik je van dienst zijn?

Ik kijk naar de flessen. Naar die prachtige flessen vol drank. Zonder in de spiegels, zonder naar mezelf te kijken, laat ik mijn ogen eroverheen glijden totdat ze ergens op blijven rusten. Op een zwarte fles. Een zwarte fles met een dikke buik en een dunne hals waar Kentucky Bourbon in zit. Het is de fles waar de Furie het meest naar verlangt, de fles die haar het meest vertrouwd is. Ik wijs hem aan, kijk de Barkeeper strak aan, en ik spreek.

Daar wil ik een glas van. Een groot glas. Zo'n godvergeten groot pintglas en niet zo'n lullig whiskyglas. En vol tot de rand.

Dat gaat wat kosten.

Ik leg de veertig dollar die ik van mijn Broer heb gekregen op de bar.

Niet zeuren.

De Barkeeper kijkt me aan of ik gek ben, of hij bij zichzelf te rade gaat of hij me mijn zin zal geven. Ik kijk terug, geef aan dat ik me geen nee laat verkopen. Hij draait zich om. Zijn ene hand reikt naar een hoog, smal pintglas, met de andere pakt hij de zwarte fles van de plank.

Ik kijk hoe het glas wordt volgeschonken. Als in slowmotion zie ik elke druppel. Als het glas vol is, draait hij zich om en zet hij het voor me neer.

Dank je.

Als je nog wat wilt, ik zit daar.

Mooi.

Hij loopt terug naar zijn krant. Ik staar naar het glas. De Furie verheft zich ze verbreekt de stilte ze schreeuwt moord en brand ze is sterker dan ooit tevoren. Je bent van mij Klootzak schreeuwt ze. Je bent van mij en je zult altijd van mij zijn. Je behoort mij toe, ik ben de baas hier en je doet verdomme wat ik zeg. Je bent van mij en je zal altijd van mij zijn. Je behoort mij toe, Klootzak. Ik staar naar het glas.

Ik leg mijn handen op de bar. Ik leg ze aan weerskanten van het glas. Ze raken het niet, maar ze liggen er dicht bij. Zo dichtbij dat ze, wanneer ik aan mijn besluit toe ben, het glas zo zouden kunnen pakken. Ik buig voorover. Mijn neus gaat naar de bruine alcohol en de geur die van het zacht glanzende oppervlak opstijgt dringt binnen. Ik word razend. De Furie gaat er harder van schreeuwen. Ze lokt me. Ze trekt me naar zich toe.

Ik doe mijn ogen dicht. Wanneer mijn neus de vloeistof raakt, hou ik mijn hoofd stil. Ik doe mijn mond dicht en ik snuif diep en hij komt hij komt hij komt. Op volle sterkte. De heerlijke geur van vergetelheid. De smerige stank van de Hel. Hij laat me rillen, laat me beven. Hij is mijn ondergang en mijn krachtbron, vanbinnen en vanbuiten. Ik proef de drank, ook al heeft hij mijn lippen niet geraakt en heb ik hem niet binnengekregen. Zoet en sterk als verkoold hout, bitter als benzine. Ik proef dat klerespul.

De tijd staat stil. Ik verroer me niet. Ik zit met de punt van mijn neus in een glas vol alcohol. Ik adem in. Heel krachtig. Adem diep in, diep uit. Als ik inadem trekt ze zich terug, als ik uitadem golft ze op me af. Ik kan haar ruiken en proeven en voelen. Vanbinnen en vanbuiten.

Pak op pak verdomme op gilt de Furie. Drink drink verdomme gilt de Furie. Kom op ermee kom op verdomme gilt de Furie. Ik wil moet kan niet zonder Klootzak je bent van mij pak op drink op hier ermee of ik zal je krijgen gilt de Furie. Kom op ermee kom op verdomme.

Ik doe mijn ogen open. Ik zie de heldere amberkleur, het puntje van mijn neus erin, de rand van het glas. Langzaam breng ik mijn hoofd omhoog. Ik blijf recht vooruitkijken, scherp kijken, zonder te knipperen. De vloeistof raakt uit het zicht, de rand van het glas verdwijnt. Ik zie planken en flessen, de rand van een spiegel. Mijn blik gaat verder omhoog ik zie mijn kin, mijn lippen, mijn neus. Mijn blik gaat verder omhoog. Ik zie de rand van mijn oog, de wimper, oogwit. Ik kijk verder omhoog. Ik zie bleekgroen. Strak vooruit. Scherp kijkend. Ik zal niet knipperen.

Ik kijk in mezelf. In mijn ogen. Voor me staat een glas met drank. Ik zie het niet langer, maar ik weet dat het er staat. Ik leg mijn handen eromheen. Mijn handen liggen om het glas. Ik kijk in mezelf. In het bleekgroen van mijn ogen.

De Furie gilt. Gilt als nooit tevoren. Haar gegil is intenser en krachtiger, vol woede en nood, vol vijandigheid en verlangen. Ze gilt dat ik het glas moet oppakken. Pak dat glas op verdomme.

Ik moet een besluit nemen. Het is een simpel besluit. Het heeft niets te maken met God of met het getal Twaalf enkel met twaalf hartslagen. Ja of nee. Het is een simpel besluit. Ja of nee.

Ik kijk in mezelf. In mijn eigen bleekgroene ogen. Het bevalt me wat ik zie. Ik voel me er goed bij. Scherp. Ze zullen niet knipperen. Voor het eerst van mijn Leven bevalt het me wat ik zie als ik in mijn eigen ogen kijk. Ik kan ermee leven. Ik wil ermee leven. Lange tijd. Ik wil ermee leven. Ik wil leven.

De Furie gilt zich de longen uit het lijf. Het Bleekgroen spreekt zacht. Je bent van mij, Klootzak, zegt het. Je bent van mij en je zult altijd van mij zijn. Vanaf vandaag behoor je mij toe. Ik heb

het voor het zeggen en je zult doen wat ik zeg. Vanaf vandaag beslis ik, verdomme. Je bent van mij en je zult altijd van mij zijn. Je behoort mij toe, Klootzak.

Ik laat het glas los. Ik kijk naar de Barkeeper. Hij zit op zijn kruk en hij leest de krant. Ik spreek.

Hallo.

Hij kijkt op.

Ja.

Gooi die rotzooi maar weg.

Hè?

Ik gebaar naar het glas.

Spoel die rottroep maar weg. Ik hoef niet.

Even kijkt hij me aan of ik gek ben. Ik kijk terug om aan te geven dat dat niet zo is. Hij staat op en hij komt op me af. Ik sta op en ik loop weg. Ik laat het glas op de bar staan met de twee briefjes van twintig ernaast.

Ik loop de Ruimte met de pooltafels in. Mijn Broer Bob en mijn vriend Kevin zijn net aan het eind van een potje. Op de tafel liggen een hele bal en een halve bal en in de hoek ligt de 8-bal. Ik ga op een kruk tegen de muur zitten. Naast de kruk staat een tafeltje met een asbak. Ik steek een sigaret op.

Mijn Broer ziet me vanuit zijn ooghoek, als hij aanlegt. Hij kijkt op en hij spreekt.

Gaat-ie?

Best wel.

Wat heb je gedaan?

Niks.

Heb je gedronken?

Nee.

Waarom heb je dan wat besteld?

Dat was iets wat ik moest doen.

En je hebt het niet aangeraakt?

Ik heb het aangeraakt en ik heb eraan geroken en ik heb eraan gevoeld, maar ik heb er niet van gedronken. Ik drink niet meer. Nooit meer.

Hij glimlacht.

Gefeliciteerd, Makker.

Ik glimlach.

Dank je.

Als mijn Broer aanlegt, vraag ik of ik de laatste bal mag potten. Kevin vraagt hoe lang ik al niet heb gespeeld en ik zeg dat het heel lang geleden is. Hij vraagt of ik er klaar voor ben en ik

glimlach en ik zeg van wel. Hij vraagt het nog een keer hij wil het zeker weten. Ja, ik ben er klaar voor zeg ik.

Ja, ik ben er klaar voor.

Appendix F. Codebook

Included here is the codebook that was created and used during this study.

Supplementary Table 3. Codebook. USPS = Undesired SPS, DSPS = Desired SPS, S-SSPS = Self-Schema SPS, PPS SPS = Past Possible Self SPS.

SPS	Description	Example code
Abandoned USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feelings of abandonment.	Hij wordt dan toch wel in de steek gelaten hè? Zo voelt dat. Is niet wat zijn ouders doen, doen het uit goede bedoelingen uiteraard. Maar toch zal hij zich verschrikkelijk eenzaam voelen ja. (F1, Pos. 77) <He is abandoned, no? That's what it feels like. It's not what his parents do, they do it out of good intentions of course. But still, he will feel terribly lonely yes.>
(Sexually) Abused USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feelings of (sexual) abuse.	Wat mij ook bijzonder geraakt heeft in dat verhaal is het schrijnende verhaal met een [van] de andere residenten, die als kind misbruikt wordt en die dan kort heel even beschrijft dat ie dat dat zijn vader hem oraal verkracht heeft. (NF7, Pos. 74) <What also particularly touched me in that story is the harrowing story with one of the other residents, who is abused as a child and who then briefly describes that he, that, that his father raped him orally.>
Afraid USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feelings of fear.	Ik zit hier in den auto maar ik ben ook wel bang hè. Ik ben wel bang maar ik wacht wat af, ze. Het is wat buiten mezelf, maar ik ben wel bang. Ik weet het allemaal niet zo. Ik ben bang. (C6, Pos. 36) <I'm sitting here in the car, but I'm also scared, right. I'm scared, but I'm waiting it out. It's a bit beyond my control, but I am scared. I don't really know. I'm scared.>
Aggressive USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards aggressive or destructive behaviour. Does not refer to self-destructiveness.	Ja je je leest vooral zijn innerlijke dialoog hij voelt vooral veel agressie en hij die agressie geeft ie een naam de Furie, heeft er geen controle. Hij heeft er geen controle over. (NF6, Pos. 2) <Yes, you mostly read his inner dialogue. He mostly feels a lot of aggression, and he gives that aggression a name, the Fury. He has no control over it. He has no control over it.>
American macho USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards American macho behaviour.	Het enige wat mij daar wat aan stoort is het Amerikaanse van [onverstaanbaar] wat macho-achtige. (F5, Pos. 48) <The only thing that bothers me there is the American [unintelligble] a bit macho.>
Angry USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards anger.	Waar dat die eigenlijk met de Furie. Op een bepaald moment in zijn in t verhaal, die boosheid of die die stem binnen in hem die, die hem ertoe aanzet om dingen kapot te maken, of het nu relaties zijn of praktische dingen, allee ja tastbare dingen. (F2, Pos. 12) <Where he actually with the Fury. At a certain point in the story, that anger or that voice inside him pushes him to break things, whether it's relationships or practical, or, yeah, tangible things.>

SPS	Description	Example code
Annoying USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards behaviour that they deem annoying.	In het begin is hem behoorlijk vervelend. Echt een klier van een vent. (C5, Pos. 6) <In the beginning he is quite annoying. A real jerk.>
Ashamed USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards moments of feeling ashamed.	Dat is nen constante cirkel van schuld en schaamtegevoel en, en dan zelfhaat en allee loopt toch maar allemaal mee rond eigenlijk. (NF2, Pos. 24) <It's a constant cycle of guilt and shame, and, and then self-hatred and, I mean, you just carry all of that around with you.>
Afraid USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feelings of fear.	Ik zit hier in den auto maar ik ben ook wel bang hè. Ik ben wel bang maar ik wacht wat af, ze. Het is wat buiten mezelf, maar ik ben wel bang. Ik weet het allemaal niet zo. Ik ben bang. (C6, Pos. 36) <I'm sitting here in the car, but I'm also scared, right. I'm scared, but I'm waiting it out. It's a bit beyond my control, but I am scared. I don't really know. I'm scared.>
Boring USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards people or situations they deem boring.	De familie van mijn vriendin zijn van die heel voorzichtige mensen, dat is zo saai. Maar dat is echt zo saai. (F5, Pos. 52) <My girlfriend's family are one of those really careful people, it's so boring. But it's really so boring.>
Cowardly USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards cowardice.	Ja, misschien wel laf van z'n eig-en, dat hem dat heeft. Dat m zo is en dat m zich niet kan overzetten. (NF3, Pos. 18) <Yeah, maybe it's cowardly of him, that he is like that. That he is like that and that he can't get over it.>
Defeated USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feeling defeated.	Ik zou wel gebroken zijn. Terwijl ik zelf, dat is het moeilijke. Dat is echt zo. (F5, Pos. 130) <I would be broken. While I, that is the difficult part. It's really like that.>
Disappointed USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feeling disappointed.	En de vader, diejen is, ik denk dat hem ook een beetje een afkeer heeft van zijn zoon. Nouja dat, hij kan er niet naar kijken, hij kan hem niet in de ogen zien. Hij kan. Ik denk dat hem bang is dat hem zal laten zien dat dat hem. (NF3, Pos. 36) <And the father, I think he also has a bit of a disdain towards his son. Well, he can't look at him, he can't look him in the eyes. He can. I think he's afraid that it will show him that he...>
Distancing USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards distancing oneself from other people. This includes not accepting love.	Dus duw ik ze van hen weg, want dan word ik het niet meer hè duw ik ze van mij weg, want dan word ik er niet mee geconfronteerd en hè want op een bepaald moment schrijft ie. Ik wil ze eigenlijk ik wil er eigenlijk vanaf. (C1, Pos. 91) *Continued on next page*

SPS	Description	Example code
		<So I push them away, because then I won't, right, I push them away. Because then I won't be confronted with it and, right, because at one point he writes; I actually want them, I actually just want to be done with it.>
Distant Parent USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards emotional distance between parents and their children. This includes if the participant refers to parents who are 'bad' at parenting, usually when it comes to communicating or not being aware of their children's substance abuse.	Anderzijds doen zij het ook niet hè. Zij komen ook niet dichterbij hè. Terwijl ik denk dat je als ouder ook de neiging altijd hebt om wel naar je kind te gaan. (NF8, Pos. 60) <On the other hand, they don't do it either, no. They also don't come closer, no. Whereas I think that as a parent, you always have the tendency to go to your child.>
Distrustful USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feeling distrustful.	Maar dat da heel erg gepaard gaat met heel veel verlies. Ja op allerlei vlakken en veel bedrog en vertrouwen dat er nooit, er nooit blijft (C7, Pos. 34). <But that it is very much associated with a lot of loss. Yes, on various levels, and a lot of deception and trust that never, that never lasts.>
Fragile USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feeling fragile.	Maar het zou nog iets volwassener kunnen. Dus ik denk dat je dan heel kwetsbaar bent. En je leven moet eigenlijk nog op de rails komen. Zou ondertussen bijna op de rails moeten staan. (F3, Pos. 54) <But it could be a little bit more mature. So I think you're very vulnerable then. And your life really should be getting on track. It should almost be on track now.>
Guiltless USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feeling guiltless. This includes references to 'victim mentality'.	Ja natuurlijk de meeste en het zijn heel veel toxische [mannen] of of hoe dan ook. Andere mensen die in verschillende aberraties maatschappelijk, enfin die, die verschillende problemen maatschappelijke problemen heb-ben. Neigen nogal eens naar een slachtofferrol. Verslaafde hebben dat ook, gedetineerde hebben dat ook, met of zonder reden maakt niet uit, maar het is ook je kan natuurlijk een slachtoffer zijn, maar het is het best om er niet in te blijven zitten, maar daar heb je meestal een professionele hulp voor nodig natuurlijk. (F3, Pos. 18) <Yes, of course, most of them and they are a lot of toxic [men] or, or however you want to put it. Other people with various societal aber-rations, well, they have different societal problems. They tend to lean towards a victim role. Addicts have this too, as do prisoners, with or without reason, it doesn't matter. But you can, of course, be a victim, but it's best not to stay in that role, though you usually need professional help for that, of course.>

Guilty USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feelings of guilt.	Dan gaat, dat schuldbesef wordt gigantisch. Hij ziet ze daar staan wenen. Voor mij is dat nen heel moeilijk beeld. (C4, Pos. 100) <Then, that sense of guilt be-comes immense. He sees them standing there, crying. To me, that's a very difficult image.>
Hesitant USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards moments of hesitancy or tentative behaviour.	Ja, ik zou niet weten hoe dat ge u moet voelen als je iemand. Ik zou denk ik, voor de ouders zal het zijn. Dat ze denken allee, we zitten hem hier af. En gaat dees lukken? Want als dees niet lukt, dan weten we het helemaal niet meer. (NF3, Pos. 52) <Yeah, I wouldn't know how you would feel if you... someone. I would, I think, for the parents it would be. Then they think, I mean, we are leaving him here. And is this gonna work? Because if this doesn't work, then we don't know anymore.>
Hopeless USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards moments of hopelessness.	Die weten niet, die weten het niet, die snappen het niet en die willen dat anders is maar die kunnen die kunnen alleen maar geven wat ze kunnen geven. En, die zijn vooral in die gebroken omdat ze niet kunnen, niet de hulp kunnen bieden die dat ze hopen allee. (NF3, Pos. 32) <They don't know, they don't know, they don't get it and they want it to be different but they can, they can only give what they have to give. And, they are mainly broken because they can't, they can't offer the help which the hope, I mean.>
Hurt USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feeling hurt.	Zoveel van elkaar houden, dat die zoon zich daar vragen bij stelt. Dat kan en dat kan misschien deel zijn van zijn zielenpijn om zo te zeggen. (F1, Pos. 57) <Love each other so much, that the son questions it. It is possible, and maybe it's possible that that's a part of his mental anguish.>
Hurtful USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards someone being hurtful.	Ik kan niet toegeven dat er, de fout bij mij ligt en dat ik dat ik allee, echt een, een moeilijke verhouding met zijn ouders en kan dan zijn, niet toegeven ik zie jullie graag en ik kan niet toegeven dat het me spijt dat ik jullie kwets. (C5, Pos. 2) <I can't admit that, that I'm at fault and that I, that I, I mean, a really disrupted relationship with his parents and can't, can't admit that I love you and I can't admit that I'm sorry and that I hurt you.>
Indifferent USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards being indifferent. Additionally, moments of passiveness.	Pff ja geen verantwoordelijkheid kan opnemen eigenlijk wegvluchten van alles manipuleert en zeer vijandig is ten opzichte van zijn omgeving en ze heeft daar diverse gesprekken met hem op waar dat hij zo zowat lacherig doet over. Wat zij vindt en en de vragen die zij stelt waren zo, wat ja vind ik zo wat minachtend en lacherig op antwoordt hè. (C1, Pos. 2) <Yes, he cannot take responsibil-ity, essentially fleeing from every-thing, manipulating, and being very hostile towards his environ-ment. She [the therapist] has vari-ous conversations with him where he reacts in a somewhat mocking manner towards what she thinks and the questions she asks. He responds in a way that seems somewhat dismissive and mocking.>

Insecure USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feeling insecure.	Dat hij het niet begrijpt en dat ook wil maar niet kan, omdat hij het niet begrijpt. Ja dus dat is, onzekerheid, ja, dat is wel een antwoord op je vraag in feite.(F1, Pos. 58) <That he doesn't understand and they wants to, but can't, because he doesn't understand. Yeah, so that's a, insecurity, yeah that's an answer to your question.>
Irresponsible USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards not taking responsibility for your actions.	Goh, er zijn toch zo van die mensen die geen kinderen zouden mogen hebben. Ja. Geen verantwoordelijkheid nemen. (C1, Pos. 67) <I mean, there are those type of people who actually shouldn't be allowed to have children. Yeah, not taking any responsibility.>
Lonely USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feeling lonely.	Waarom ja misschien inderdaad omdat k in contact kom en ook eigenlijk ook altijd ook dat stuk van de eenzaamheid zie. Ja, niet alleen zijn he, het, eenzaamheid, u diep eenzaam voelen. Wat elke mens wel eens in zich heeft, denk ik hè. (C7, Pos. 28) <Why, yes, perhaps indeed because I come into contact with it and also always see that aspect of loneliness. Yes, not just being alone, right, but feeling deeply lonely. It's something every person might experience, I think.>
Pitiful USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards presenting as pitiful.	Ja, eigenlijk een beetje een zielige figuur. En ook vanaf uw tien jaar verslaafd. Maar jongens toch. Ja, als je tien jaar al die eerste sigaret, u eerste glaasje, ja, wie weet wat nog. Ja ja, een beetje zielige figuur vind ik da. (C1, Pos. 17) Yeah, actually kind of a pitiful person. And addicted since you're ten. But come on. Yeah, if you already since ten your first ciga-rette, your first glass, yeah who knows what else. Yeah, I find him a little bit of a pitiful figure.>
Powerless USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feelings of powerlessness or helplessness. There is no distinction between these terms because participants tend to use them interchangeably.	Goh, eigenlijk doen die ouders dat vind ik zo erg hè? De machteloosheid dat je hebt als ouder in het willen helpen van uw kind. Want ook al is die 23, dat blijft een kind, het helpen van uw kind en daar niet in slagen. (C1, Pos. 10) <I mean, in actually those parents do that, I find that so hard, right. The powerlessness you feel as a parent when trying to help your child. Because even though they're 23, they're still a child. Helping your child and not succeeding in it.>
Regretful USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feeling of regret.	Onmacht, kwaadheid, agressie, dus ik denk ja eigenlijk frustratie, spijt. (C4, Pos. 6) <Powerless, fury, aggression, so I think, yeah essentially frustration, regret.>
Sad USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feelings of sadness.	Ja, hoe kan je die daar beschrijven? Zoveel gebeurt er niet met, rond hen hè? Ze zijn. Heel verdrietig. Ja, heel verdrietig eigenlijk. Dat is het vooral hè. Heel verdrietig ja. (NF1, Pos. 46) <Yeah, how can you describe them? Not much happens with or around them, right? They are very sad. Yes, very sad, actually. That's mostly it, isn't it? Very sad, yes.>

Self-destructive USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards being self-destructive. This includes self-harm.	Ja, die pijn hè. Eerst hè, veel te warm en dan veel te koud. Ja, omdat ja, ik heb ook leerlingen gehad die zich verminkten. Ja, verschrikkelijk hè, dat ge uzelf moet pijn doen om aan de rest niet niet te moeten denken. (C1, Pos. 35) <Yes, that pain, right? First, it's much too warm, and then much too cold. Yeah, because, you know, I've also had students who self-harmed. Yes, it's awful, you know, that you have to hurt yourself to avoid thinking about everything else.>
Self-hating USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feelings of self-hatred.	Hè, dat allee, dat windt hem enorm op, ze staan er volledig in en hij zit daar met zo een verslaving. Ja, dan wordt ge zo kwaad op jezelf. (C4, Pos. 80) <Yeah, that, you know, really gets him worked up. They're complete-ly absorbed in it, and he's stuck with an addiction. Yeah, then you get so angry with yourself.>
Selfish USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards being selfish or manipulative.	Ja dus ja egoïstisch in dit stukje dan hè. Maar ja, en manipulatief? Ja ja (F8, Pos. 20). <Yeah, so yeah, selfish in this bit, right. But yeah, and manipulative? Yeah, yeah.>
Social circle user USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards having a person who strug-gles with substance use in your social circle.	Het is een verhaal van vallen en opstaan. Zowel voor broer, vader en moeder, ja. (C7, Pos. 4) <It's a story of getting knocked down and getting back up. For the brother, father and mother, yeah.>
Struggling USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards a sense of being in a state of struggle but does not activate the Struggling self-schema. Struggling here is defined as having difficulty handling or coping with situations and/or striving to achieve some-thing in the face of difficulty. This includes feeling different emotions simultaneously and not being quite sure about the situa-tion. In addition, when participants specifically refer to the struggle with addiction.	Ge ge kunt eigenlijk die strijd meevoelen, zelfs al heb ik per-soonlijk niks met verslaving, maar je krijgt er toch wel begrip voor. Je kunt u voorstellen dat dat echt niet zo simpel is. (C4, Pos. 6) <You can actually feel that strug-gle, even though I personally have nothing to do with addiction, but you still gain understanding. You can imagine that it really isn't that simple.>

Substance user USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards substance use, this includes negative (physical or emotional) consequences while in recovery.	Nee, nee, nee ik denk ik denk ook niet dat zo plezant is om junkie te zijn. Ik denk dat die, ik ben het nooit geweest, maar ik denk niet dat het is zo'n lolleke is. Of verslaafd. Voortdurend drank om, denk ik niet. (F5, Pos. 14) <No, no, no, I also don't think it's very pleasant to be a junkie. I think that, I've never been one, but I don't think it's much fun. Or being addicted. Constantly craving, I don't think so>
Unsettled USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feeling restless and on edge.	Dus ik zou eigenlijk zeggen dat wat dat ge daar eigenlijk voelt is, rusteloos. Die rus... Die rusteloosheid denk ik. En ook een beetje afhankelijk, afhankelijk, maar in dit geval van de verpleegster he, dus afhankelijk van de medicatie uiteraard. Dat is het rusteloos en afhankelijk. Dat zijn woorden eigenlijk die hier vooral belangrijk zijn. (NF2, Pos. 28) <So I would actually say that what you feel there is restlessness. That restlessness, I think. And also a bit of dependence, depend-ence, but in this case on the nurse, right. So dependent on the medication, of course. So restlessness and dependence. Those are the words that are actually most important here.>
Unsocial USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards having difficulty interacting with people, building relationships and mainting social relationships is shown. Showing uncommunicative behaviour or having difficulty communicating.	Dat da waarschijnlijk mensen zijn die ook moeilijk hebben met contact en verbinding. Dat dat net hetzelfde is. Ja. Meestal, wat je geleerd hebt thuis hè, dat gebruikte voor opvoeding. (C7, Pos. 64) <That these are probably people who also struggle with contact and connection. That it's exactly the same. Yes. Usually, it's what you learned at home right, what was used for your upbringing.>
Victim USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards being a victim.	Dat dat dat we, dat dat dat, die mensen ook slachtoffers zijn op die manier dat dat helemaal niet vanzelfsprekend is om om om deruit te geraken. (F6, Pos. 4) <That those people are also victims in a way, and that it's not at all obvious or easy to get out of it.>
Weak USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards being weak.	Waarom geraak je verslaafd? Waarom? Waarom doe je dat? En waarom ben je dan niet sterk genoeg om op een bepaald moment te zeggen t is hier nu gedaan. En niet wachten totdat hier eigenlijk, ja bijna volledig om zeep is hè. (C1, Pos. 19) <Why do you become addicted? Why? Why do you do it? And why aren't you strong enough at some point to say it's over now? Instead of waiting until everything is almost completely ruined?>
Weak parent USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards parent(s) showing 'weak' behaviour. This includes showing 'too much' emotion.	Goh in t begin had ik van van de moeder vooral een een ja hoe zeg je, een zwakke indruk. In de zin van zelfs al in de auto, zich wel afsluiten en zich volledig hullen in haar eigen verdriet precies. Natu-urlijk, je kunt dat niet inschatten hè. Dertien jaar lang. Enzovoort. Maar die indruk geeft het. (C6, Pos. 53) *Continued on next page*

		<Well, in the beginning, I had the impression that the mother was, let's say, weak. In the sense that even in the car, she would close off and wrap herself completely in her own sadness. Of course, you can't really gauge that after thir-teen years, and so on. But that's the impression it gives.>
Worrying USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feelings of worry or doubt.	Je herkent da hè die die bezorgdheid die zorgelijkheid, zo van gaat alles wel goed en en die tegelijkertijd zo van ja je wordt er ambetant van eh, van die bezorgdheid zo en in dat dat herken je hier ook wel van. (C5, Pos. 44) <You recognise it, right? That concern, that worry, like, is everything okay? And at the same time, it becomes annoying, you know, because of that kind of concern. You can also recognise that here.>
Worthless USPS	Used if participant expresses a negative or feared sentiment towards feelings of worthlessness.	Ja, ik heb de indruk dat zij het, dat hij het zelf, dat em zichzelf niet gunde om gelukkig te zijn omwille van het gevoel dat em heeft tegenover zichzelf. (C8, Pos. 48) <Yes, I have the impression that he himself didn't allow himself to be happy because of the feelings he has about himself.>
Apologetic DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards feeling or acting apologetic.	Dan blijkbaar hij dan tot het punt komt waarop hij, ja, erkent dat ie alcoholist is en daar ook ja, spijt voor voor betoont en erin slaagt om weer wat contact te maken met zijn ouders van zijn kant. (NF6, Pos. 2) <Then apparently he reaches the point where he, yeah, acknowledges that he is an alcoholic and also, yeah, shows regret for it, and manages to reestablish some contact with his parents from his side.>
Brave DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards acting brave.	Dat denk ik ook, dus ik denk dat dat super moedig is om die deur binnen te stappen. (NF2, Pos. 52) <I think so too; I believe it's in-credibly brave to step through that door.>
Calm DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards feeling or acting calm.	Maar vooral ook de rust die er altijd gebleven is. Wat maakt dat hij uiteindelijk toch er toch of toegekomen is. Op een punt gekomen is dat hij die toenadering zelf terug heeft opgezocht. (NF8, Pos. 82) <But also the calm that has always remained. This is what ultimately led him to reach a point where he sought out that approach himself.>
Considerate DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards being considerate.	En er worden eigenlijk nergens verwijten uitgesproken. En ik denk dat dat eigenlijk heel goed is. (F6, Pos. 42) <And actually, no accusations are made. I think that is actually very good.>
Emotional DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards feeling a great deal of emotions.	Hij is in heel heel dit stuk toch één brok passie. Hij is dan ook, allee. Ik geloof ook niet dat ge als als als ge dat niet hebt, dat ge dan echt leeft. En dan denk ik, da is alles wat er is. (F5, Pos. 62) *Continued on next page*

		<He is, throughout this whole piece, a bundle of passion. I also don't believe that if you don't have that, you are really living. And then I think, that's all there is.>
Empathic DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards being empathic.	Zijn empathie voor de medemens is niet helemaal van de kaart geveegd door z'n misbruik. (F3, Pos. 34) <His empathy for others hasn't been entirely erased by his use.>
Experimenting DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards acting experimental.	Ja, ik geloof ik, ik denk echt dat dat erbij hoor. Je moet als jongere duwen en regels overtreden en uw plek zoeken. (F5, Pos. 40) <Yeah, I believe, I really think that's part of it. As a young person, you need to push boundaries, break rules, and find your place.>
Forgiving DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards being forgiving.	En het kan zijn dat we schuldig zijn, maar ik denk dat veel mensen de behoefte hebben om andere mensen te onschuldigen. Zich los maken van schuld. (F2, Pos. 70) <And it may be that we are guilty, but I think many people have the need to absolve others. To detach themselves from guilt.>
Glad DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards feeling happy.	Blij natuurlijk, hè? Die mama die die voor de eerste keer in lange tijd terug contact mag m, met de zoon. En de vader die spreekt, die die terug-spreekt tegen zijn zoon. (NF3, Pos. 42) <Of course, happy, right? The mother who, for the first time in a long time, gets to reconnect with her son. And the father who speaks to his son again.>
Good parent DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards acting like a good parent.	Ok denk dat er geen één moment is waarop de ouders in t verhaal aan bod komen waarop ze boos zijn of verwijtend. Ja, da's ook straf hè? Op het, omdat ik denk voor iets wat al zo lang duurt en en ja, dat de emoties alle kanten soms op gaan. Niet alleen het ver-driet, maar ook ja de boosheid en en de frustratie en en en en nu die zullen er denk ik wel zijn, maar misschien dat ze bewust proberen van die te onderdrukken of dat niet naar boven te laten komen. (NF8, Pos. 80) <Okay, I don't think there is a single moment in the story where the parents appear to be angry or accusatory. Yeah, that's quite re-markable, isn't it? Given that this has been going on for such a long time, and that emotions can go in all directions. Not just sadness, but also anger and frustration. I believe those emotions are there. But perhaps they are consciously trying to suppress them or not let them surface.>
Guiltless DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards not feeling guilty for things that are out of your control.	En als ge geluk hebt komen de goeie dingen en dan denk ik dat dat dus dan mijn punt mijn schuld. In hoeverre heb je er schuld aan en in hoeverre is het iemands verantwoordelijkheid altijd. (F5, Pos. 14) <And if you're lucky, the good things come. And then I think that's my point; my guilt. To what extent are you to blame, and to what extent is it always someone else's responsibility?>

Guilty DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards feeling guilty.	Ah, dus da kan een drijfveer zijn om tot iets te komen. Niet louter, maar dat kan misschien ook wel een beetje meespelen. (F6, Pos. 36) <Ah, so that [feeling guilty] could be a driving force to achieve some-thing. Not solely, but it might also play a part.>
Hopeful DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards feeling hopeful.	Hoe hoop, je krijgt hoop dat je er ook uit kunt geraken. Dus is wel belangrijk dat ge mee, dat ge beseft dat je mee steun kunt geven aan mensen met een verslaving op één of andere manier hè. (C4, Pos. 146) <How hope, you gain hope that you can get out of it. So it's im-portant to realize that you can offer support to people with an addic-tion in one way or another.>
Intelligent DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards being or acting intelligent.	Intelligent. Waarom is dat voor mij? Ik zie dat zo omdat hij zoekt. (F1, Pos. 17) < Intelligent. Why do I think that? I see it that way because he is searching.>
Forgiving DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired senti-ment towards being forgiving.	En het kan zijn dat we schuldig zijn, maar ik denk dat veel mensen de behoefte hebben om andere mensen te onschuldigen. Zich los maken van schuld. (F2, Pos. 70) <And it may be that we are guilty, but I think many people have the need to absolve others. To detach themselves from guilt.>
Loving DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired senti-ment towards being loving.	Dat die wel probeert liefde te geven, maar dat het em, of contact te zoeken, maar aanvankelijk hele-maal niet bij machte is om dat op een goeie manier te doen. Maar naar het einde toe heeft dan toch ergens een opening gevonden dus. (F6, Pos. 10) <That he does try to give love, or to seek contact, but initially he is completely unable to do so in a good way. But towards the end, he does manage to find an opening.>
Loving parent DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards parents showing loving behaviour.	Ze hebben niets misdaan, ze hebben hem niet mishandeld of misbruikt en gewoon eenvoudige ouders die het beste met hun kind voorhebben en veel meer weten we toch ook niet. (C5, Pos. 34) <They did nothing wrong, they did not mistreat or abuse him, just simple parents who want the best for their child, and we don't really know much more than that.>
Open DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards being open to other people. Specifically, accept-ing other people into their lives/ accepting their love and includes under-standing someone else's emotions and behaviour.	Fragment negen dat het heel lang-zaam heel moei-lijke, heel langza-me, maar dat wel naartoe gaan van de zoon uit ja dat ik ook wel heel aangrijpend. [...] Zo zo dat heel langzame dat bijna tegen-houden en toch toch doen. (C6, Pos. 5/Pos. 7) <Excerpt nine, where the son's progress is very slow and difficult, very slow, but he is still moving forward, yeah, I also find very touching. [...] It's that very slow, almost halting progress, yet he still continues.>

Persevering DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards being persevering. This includes 'overcoming' or 'surviving' addiction to substances.	Dus die heeft wel volgehouden dus die heeft toch op een bepaald moment een een klik kunnen maken. Ik denk eerst vanuit onverschilligheid, zo van oké dan, ik ga wel. Zo komt die over. Ja. En dan is ie toch der mee voortgegaan. (C6, Pos. 19) <So he did persevere and, at a certain point, managed to make a breakthrough. I think it initially came from a sense of indifference, like, okay then, I'll go. That's how he comes across. And then he continued with it after all.>
Playful DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards playfulness.	Er is ook niks mis met kinderen die willen spelen. Is toch niks mis mee? (F5, Pos. 24) <There's nothing wrong with children wanting to play. There's really nothing wrong with that, right?>
Proactive DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards being proactive.	Ja, die dus, die ook het initiatief neemt, bijvoorbeeld om hem naar de kliniek te brengen. (NF5, Pos. 71) <Yes, they also take the initiative, for example, to take him to the clinic.>
Protective DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards acting protective.	Maar ik denk dat m vooral moeder wilt wil beschermen. Ja hij heeft ze volgens mij heel den tijd vast en en probeert haar te troosten en misschien toch wel moed te geven, misschien tegen beter weten in maar maar. (F7, Pos. 58) <But I think that he mainly wants to protect mother. Yeah, he seems to hold onto her all the time and tries to comfort her and perhaps give her courage, maybe against better judgment, but still.>
Proud DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards being able to feel proud of someone else.	Maar als ge dat voelt. Yeah, vroeger ook de trots later en even intens de fierheid van kijk ik, ik kijk naar mij, ben tevreden met wat ik zie. (F5, Pos. 64) <But when you feel that, yeah, earlier it was pride, and later, just as intense, the pride of seeing myself, I'm looking at myself, and being satisfied with what I see.>
Relieved DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards being relieved or grateful because something worked out.	Dus een stukje eenzaamheid maar ook een stukje opluchting van ok krijgt nog eens een poging, krijgt nog een kans. (F3, Pos. 98) <So, a bit of loneliness but also a bit of relief, like, okay, getting another chance, getting another opportunity.>
Responsible DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards acting responsible.	Dus in die zin kanaliseert hij da wel goed ja. (C6, Pos. 49) <So in that sense, he channels it well.>
Self-accepting DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards accepting oneself.	Ja ja, niet te vooroordelend naar zichzelf toe ja. (C3, Pos. 20) <Yeah, yeah, not too judgmental towards himself, yeah>
Self-aware DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards being self-aware.	Zijn besef is enorm vind ik zijn zelfbesef. Woow op dat vlak staat hij weeral verder dat hij begrijpt van ja oké, ik heb geen reden. (C4, Pos. 24)

		<His awareness is immense, I think, his self-awareness. Wow, in that regard, he's ahead because he understands, like, okay, I have no reason.>
Strong DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards showing mentally strong behaviour.	Ik vind het al heel krachtig om overeind te blijven met zo'n verslaving. Dus ja, wat dat betreft is het is is het één en al titanengevecht en t feit dat die die stap, dat vind ik al ja nou ja of je dat krachtig moet noemen maar in ieder geval dat is een hele stevige stap. (C2, Pos. 36) <I think it's already very powerful to stay standing with such an addiction. So yeah, in that regard, it's a full-on battle of titans, and the fact that he took that step, well, I don't know if you should call it powerful, but it's certainly a very strong step.>
Supported DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards the feeling of being supported, either mentally or physically.	Maar ze zijn daar wel allemaal, dus t is wel van. We doen het samen voor u en het is niet droppen, t is brengen. T is t is ondersteunend brengen, denk ik wel. Ja, ja. (C6, Pos. 82) <But they are all there, so it's really about doing it together for you, and it's not just dropping off you off, it's bringing. It's bringing you with support, I think. Yeah, yeah.>
Supportive DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards showing support	Je loopt daar liever ver vandaan hè? Ja in dit geval dan denk ik voor mezelf als ik zoiets lees, ja laat dat de les zijn.Ga d'r niet omheen, ga daar toch naartoe. (C4, Pos. 66) <You'd rather stay far away from that, right? Yeah, in this case, I think, when I read something like that, let that be the lesson. Don't avoid it, go towards it.>
Wise DSPS	Used if participant expresses a positive or desired sentiment towards acting wise. A combination of being responsible and intelligent.	Voor mij is hij heel wijs. Intelligent. Waarom is dat voor mij? Ik zie dat zo omdat hij zoekt. Hij staat niet stil. Hij accepteert niet wie hij nu is. Hij wil veranderen. Hij wil leven. (F1, Pos. 16) <For me, he is very wise. Intelligent. Why do I see it that way? Because he is searching. He doesn't stand still. He doesn't accept who he is now. He wants to change. He wants to live.>
Compassionate S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to being compassionate.	Je kunt u voorstellen dat dat echt niet zo simpel is. Dus ja, toch mededogen met het hoofdpersonage. (C4, Pos. 4) <You can imagine that it's really not that simple. So yes, you still feel compassion for the main character.>
Distancing S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to being someone who tends to distance themselves from other people.	Vanaf dat ik met iemand ben en het wordt warm en het voelt bijna zoals het zou moeten voelen, maak ik het kapot. Dat ken ik ook een beetje, dus ja. (F5, Pos. 6) <As soon as I'm with someone and it gets warm and it almost feels like it should, I destroy it. I know that feeling a bit too, so yeah.>
Emotional S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to being emotional.	Dan werd ik echt overmand door emotie terwijl ik, superraar. (F3, Pos. 100) <Then I was really overwhelmed by emotion, which is super strange.>

Empathic S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to being empathic or an understanding person. Or when they mention that they have gained more understanding by reading the excerpts.	Ja, ik kan mij dat voorstellen dat die zijn. Ik kan mij voorstellen dat die gewoon niet meer weten hoe dat nog moet en dat er alleen maar verdriet over is. (C7, Pos. 82) <Yeah, I can imagine that. I can imagine that he just doesn't know how to handle it anymore and that all that's left is sadness>
Experiencing life S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to having no control over what happens in their lives, but just experiences as it comes and accepts that fact.	Wij denken allen, ik zeg het wij zijn dieren en wij denken dat we alles onder controle hebben. Maar dat is gewoon zo niet, wij accepteren dat niet. (F5, Pos. 12) <We all think – I'm telling you – we're animals, and we think we have everything under control. But that's just not the case; we don't accept that.>
Grateful S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to feelings of being grateful, usually when referring to not having a history of substance abuse.	Maar, ja, en ik heb ik heb daar ook altijd op aangedrongen, van kleins af aan van van, maar toch vind ik het niet evident dat k zo kinderen heb. Ik blijf daar nederig en ik vind allee ik beschouw niet for granted dat die zo zijn. (C4, Pos. 84) <But, yes, and I've always insisted on that, from a young age, but still, I don't find it obvious that I have such children. I remain humble and I don't take for granted that they are like this.>
Hesitant S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to being hesitant.	Heb je het ook, ik heb dat ook. Je twijfelt en bent onzeker over je vriend, ik over mijn vriendin, allee over iets. Allee, mag ik je vastpakken, mag ik nu een koekje pakken ja of nee, ik ben. Ik twijfel. (F1, Pos. 61) <You have this too, I have it as well. You doubt and feel insecure about your boyfriend, I about my girlfriend, or something else. Like, can I grab you, can I take a cookie now or not, I am... I doubt.>
Introspective S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to being introspective/searching for meaning/themselves.	Ja ben heel erg mee bezig, hoe dat het komt dat ik ben wie ik nu ben. (F1, Pos. 21) <Yes, I am very much focused on why I am who I am now.>
Lonely S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to being lonely.	Ja, dat gebeurt iedereen wel es he. Da ge, zelfs als ge in een zaal staat. Ja. Of op een feest zijt u toch alleen voelt. Ja, dat kan gebeuren, dat gebeurt iedereen wel es. Dat er momenten zijn in uw leven waarop dat ge zegt van, dat had ik niet verwacht of daar weet ik niet hoe dat ik daarmee moet omgaan. En ge kunt er ook niet met andere mensen over praten, want ge, da's een gevoel van [onverstaanbaar] hè. Ja, dat gebeurt. (NF3, Pos. 16) <Yeah, that happens to everyone sometimes, right. Even if you're in a room or at a party, you might still feel alone. It can happen; it happens to everyone. There are moments in your life when you say, I didn't expect that or I don't know how to deal with this. And you can't always talk to others about it because it's a feeling of [unintelligible]. Yeah, it happens.>

Middle class S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to being middle-class.	Moet zeggen mijn ogen flapperden, want ik kom uit een heel ander milieu, dus ik heb ontzettend veel geleerd. (C1, Pos. 63) <I have to say, my eyes were opened because I come from a very different background, so I have learned an incredible amount.>
Non-angry S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to not being an angry person.	En die kwaadheid, dat is niet iets wat ik zelf voel ofzo. Ik ben niet kwaad, maar ik begrijp dat wel dat je daar verschrikkelijk pissed van kunt worden eigenlijk en dat je dat heel onrechtvaardig kunt vinden ofzo. (NF2, Pos. 6) <And that anger, it's not something I personally feel. I'm not angry, but I do understand how you can get really pissed off about it and find it very unjust or something like that.>
Non-self-destructive S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to not being a self-destructive person.	Da's een beetje moeilijk hè. Snap ik dat ik het zo pfoee. Uit m'n persoonlijke ervaringen nie. (F7, Pos. 12) <That's a bit difficult, isn't it? I understand that it's [self-harm] like, phew. From my personal experiences, not really.>
Non-substance user S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to 'only' being a moderate drinker or specifically mentions not being addicted.	Goh, ik denk ja, ik ben gelukkig niet verslaafd. (C1, Pos. 31) <Well, I think, yeah, I'm fortunately not addicted.>
Offspring S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to being a child.	En als zoon zijnde, zou ik het niet verdragen. (F5, Pos. 130) <And as a son, I wouldn't be able to cope with it.>
Old S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to being 'old'.	Maar als oude man heb ik al vaak opgemerkt. (F5, Pos. 22) <But as an old man, I have noticed it often.>
Optimist S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to being an optimist.	Ja, want ook op de manier waarop dat hij naar zijn ouders kijkt hè. De manier waarop hij tegen Furie vecht. Ja, ik, ik, ik ik geloof en ik het is ook ja ik ik ben ook wel iemand die graag gelooft in het goeie van mens zijn en probeert het goeie in mensen te zien. (F4, Pos. 22) <Yeah, because of the way he looks at his parents, the way he fights against his Fury. Yeah, I, I believe, and it's also true, yeah, that I'm someone who likes to believe in the good in people and tries to see the good in them.>
Parent S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to being a parent.	Ja, ja, nou ja, ik ben mama hè? Dus ja. Dus ja, moest dat één van mijn kinderen. (C1, Pos. 13) <Yeah, yeah, well, I'm a mom, you know? So, yeah. So, if it were one of my children.>
Persevering S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to having recovered from substance use.	Het [middelengebruik] is het heeft mee gevormd, tot een twijfelend mens, maar dat respect is nog altijd daar. (F1, Pos. 20) <It [struggling with substance use] has shaped me into a person who doubts, but that respect is still there.>

Proactive S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to being proactive.	Ergens denk ik ja, denk ik, dat ik mij meer in die vader herken een stukske. Want ik denk dat ik ook veel praktischer zou zijn. We gaan da nu oplossen. Ge doe dat en dat en dat. En dat zijn de gevolgen als ge t niet doe. (NF4, Pos. 56) <Somewhere I think, yeah, I think I recognise myself a bit more in the father. Because I think I would also be much more practical. We're going to solve this now. You do this and that, and these are the consequences if you don't.>
Self-destructive S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to acting self-destructive.	Soms doet het gewoon iets, al is t maar iets ergens tegen schoppen ofzo, dikwijls, ja, zelf zere tenen of of wat dan ook maar. Maar zelfs dat is soms wel. Ja positief ja. Dat ge dat ge dat ge u tegen iets afzet, dat ge moet reageren en dat ge dan ja iets voelt, al is het pijn of of wat dan ook. (F7, Pos. 14) <Sometimes it just does some-thing, even if it's just kicking something or whatever, often, yeah, even if it causes sore toes or something. But even that can be positive sometimes. That you push against something, that you need to react, and then you feel something, even if it's pain or whatever.>
Social circle user S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to having a person in their life who uses substances.	Goh. Ik associeerde sommige stukken, ik heb iemand voor ogen, maar wie dat is, dat is privé. Iemand die ik ken, een man van mijn leeftijd ongeveer, mijn generatie die wel met een drankprobleem worstelt, al heel lang. (NF7, Pos. 74) <Well, I associate some parts with someone I have in mind, but who that is, is private. Someone I know, a man of my age, roughly my generation, who has been struggling with a drinking problem for a long time.>
Social worker S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to being a social worker.	Doet me nog denken. Ik associeer mij, net op mijn werk. We hebben net iemand die het toilet wou bezoeken d'ruit moeten halen, die daar ook had gespoten hè. (C7, Pos. 14) <It reminds me of something. I associate it with my work. We just had to remove someone who wanted to use the restroom, who had also been using it as a place to shoot up.>
Steadfast S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to sticking to their decisions and beliefs.	Ik was er over gestapt, ik had die laten liggen. En ja, en dat heeft te maken met wat ik persoonlijk heb meegemaakt. Dus ik liet die, ik laat die gewoon liggen. (NF4, Pos. 46) <I would have stepped over him; I would have left him there. And yeah, that has to do with what I've personally experienced. So I would have just left him lying there.>
Struggling S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to experiencing mental struggles.	Maar ik ben ervan overtuigd dat bij iedereen van binnen heel vaak stormt. Echt. En de manier is hoe ga je daarmee, hoe? (F5, Pos. 50) <But I am convinced that inside everyone, there's often a storm. Really. And the question is, how do you deal with it? How?>

Supported S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to being supported.	Ja, ik denk dat het, als je, als je spreekt over het leven, dan denk ik dat dat is wat we allemaal nodig hebben. Iemand in uw leven die af en toe zegt, kom hier, t is oké. (F5, Pos. 34) <Yeah, I think that, when you talk about life, that's what we all need. Someone in your life who occa-sionally says, come here, it's okay.>
Teacher S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to being a teacher.	Uit mijn eigen omgeving, omdat ik heb lesgeven. (C1, Pos. 61) <From my own environment, because I used to teach.>
Therapy-going person S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to going to therapy.	Ja, ik heb het zelf ook wel een tijdje gedaan met een therapeut gegaan en daar was ik stomverbaasd over de efficiency. Net omdat het een net die het natuurlijk professioneel heel goed aanpakt, maar ook omdat het een een onbekende was. Wel verschillend. Da's verbazend. (F3, Pos. 100) <Yeah, I also went to a therapist for a while, and I was astonished by the efficiency. Because they handled it so professionally, but also because they were a stranger. It's quite different. It's amazing.>
Uncomprehending S-SSPS	Used if participant expresses an inability to understand other people's behaviour.	Ik vind dat zelf moeilijk, omdat ik da niet ben, allee ik ben dat niet of... (C3, Pos. 4) <I find that difficult myself because I'm not like that, well, I'm not like that or...>
Abandoned PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having been abandoned in the past.	T is hem daar echt eenzaam, verlaten, hopeloos. Dan moet ie zich echt een nul, die indruk heb ik (F1, Pos. 30) [...] Ja, ik heb ook in de psychiatrie gezeten, dus ik spreek uit mijn ervaring. De woorden die ik nu gezegd heb zijn dezelfde gedachten die James, zou kunnen gehad hebben. Waarschijnlijk wel had. (F1, Pos. 34) <He feels really lonely, abandoned, hopeless there. He must really feel like a zero, that's the impression I have (F1, Pos. 30) [...] Yes, I've also been in psychiatry, so I speak from my own experience. The words I've just said are the same thoughts that James might have had. Probably did have.>
Abused PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having been abused in the past, whether emotionally or physically.	Kom zelf uit wat vandaag een disfunctioneel gezin zou heten. (F5, Pos. 4) <I come from what today would be called a dysfunctional family.>
Aggressive PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having exhibited aggressive behaviour in the past.	Toen ik achttien jaar was, dan kon ik ook nogal serieus, maar als te veel drinkt dan ben, ik ben een agressieve zatte. Dus, sinds mijn achttien jaar drink ik dus geen alcohol niet meer omdat ge weet dat dat is. (NF3, Pos. 46) <When I was eighteen, I could also get quite serious, but if I drank too much, I became an aggressive drunk. So, since I was eighteen, I haven't drunk alcohol anymore because I know what I can be like.>

Angry PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having been angry in the past.	En ik weet dat ik als naaste familie ook heel kwaad was. (NF4, Pos. 14) <And I know that I as a relative was very angry as well.>
Distancing PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having taken distance from others in the past.	Ik herken die vervreemding ook wel, op een bepaald moment zegt hij: ik heb mijn moeder nog nooit omarmd of zoiets. (F5, Pos. 4) <I also recognise that sense of estrangement; at a certain point, he says: I have never hugged my mother or anything like that.>
Forgiving PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having been forgiving in the past.	Die hadden dat ook, heb die moeten vergeven en een beetje vice versa. (F1, Pos. 45) <They also had that, I had to forgive them and a bit vice versa.>
Guilty PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having felt guilty in the past.	Ja, dat is wa. Ik had een moeder die, die daar heel goed in was. Die kon ons geweldig, we waren met veel kinderen. Zes. En die kon ons een geweldig schuldgevoel opzadelen, met een geweldig schuldgevoel. (F5, Pos. 12) <Yeah, that's something. I had a mother who was very good at that. She could really lay a tremendous guilt trip on us; we were with many children, six of us. And she could make us feel an immense amount of guilt.>
Hopeless PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having felt hopeless in the past.	T is hem daar echt eenzaam, ver-laten, hopeloos. Dan moet ie zich echt een nul, die indruk heb ik (F1, Pos. 30) [...] Ja, ik heb ook in de psychiatrie gezeten, dus ik uh spreek uit mijn ervaring. De woorden die ik nu gezegd heb zijn dezelfde gedachten die James, zou kunnen gehad hebben. Waarschijnlijk wel had. (F1, Pos. 35) <He really feels lonely, aban-doned, hopeless. He must feel like a total zero, that's the impression I get (F1, Pos. 30) [...] Yes, I've also been in psychiatry, so I speak from my own experience. The words I've just said are the same thoughts that James might have had. Probably did have.>
Hurt PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having felt hurt in the past.	En dat vind ik eigenlijk erg her-kenbaar van mezelf. T Is gelukkig nooit zover geraakt in de directe omgeving, maar dat gevoel van ze maakt mij ook kapot, dat vind ik toch wel een stukje bij mezelf herkenbaar. (NF4, Pos. 28) <And I actually find that very recognisable for myself. Fortunate-ly, it never reached that point in my immediate surroundings, but the feeling of she is also destroy-ing me is something I do recog-nise a bit in myself.>
Indifferent PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having acted indifferent in the past.	Ja, en James volgt gewoon gelijk een hondje. Die ga gewoon binnen, gaat gewoon binnen. Waar is mijn kamer waar is mijn bed, volgende dag wordt ie wakker dan dan begint ie pas te merken. Oh wacht hier, waar zit ik hier? Ik spreek uit mijn eigen ervaringen uiteraard. (F1, Pos. 77) *Continued on next page*

		<Yeah, and James just follows like a little dog. He just goes inside, goes inside. Where's my room, where's my bed? The next day, when he wakes up, he starts to realise, oh wait, where am I? I'm speaking from my own experiences, of course.>
Lonely PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having felt lonely in the past.	Ja, ik heb dat niet vaak nog nie in mijn leven gehad dat ik mij zo diep eenzaam voel. Maar t is wel al gebeurd, dus ik kan het wel. (C7, Pos. 48) <Yeah, I haven't felt that deeply lonely very often in my life. But it has happened, so I can relate to it.>
Non-conforming PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having acted non-conforming in the past.	Zo oh man, [conformeren is] gruwelijk. Dus wij maakten er een statement van he, met een paar man, van als wij gaan solliciteren geen kostuum, geen, misschien het geluk hebben van een job te vinden dat ge dat kunt. Maar ook dat doete toch zelf een beetje toch? (F5, Pos. 54) <Like, oh man, [conforming is] awful. So we made a statement, you know, with a few people, that if we're going to apply for jobs, no suits, no, maybe have the luck to find a job that you can get. But you're also doing that a little bit yourself, right?>
Offspring PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having been a child.	De verslavingsproblematiek is er zowel in mijn kind situatie geweest. (NF4, Pos. 68) <The issue of addiction has been present in my childhood situation as well.>
Persevering PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having persevered in the past.	Maar een keuze die je neemt. Als ge, als ge het geluk hebt dat ge d'r op diejen moment sterk genoeg staat voor te zeggen van, dan zal dit tot niets leiden. (NF3, Pos. 46) <But a choice you make. If you are, if you are lucky enough to be strong enough at that moment to say, this will lead to nothing.>
Powerless PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having felt powerless in the past.	Hulpeloos en machteloos.(C1, Pos. 81) <Helpless and powerless.>
Self-destructive PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having been self-destructive in the past.	Maar het was niet echt hetzelfde mijn afkick dinges was meer zo, midden in de winter was het, er lag sneeuw buiten. Hete douche pakken en dan naakt in de sneeuw gaan rollen, terug hete douche pakken, laagje sneeuw gaan rollen. Dat deed ik dagenlang. Dus t is toch hetzelfde maar. Dat gevoel dat je dan hebt is ik leef ik besta. Daarom ook ik begrip heb voor mensen die zich kwetsen, hoe zeg je het? (F1, Pos. 36) <But it wasn't exactly the same. My withdrawal thing was more like this: in the middle of winter, with snow outside, I would take a hot shower and then roll naked in the snow, take another hot shower, and roll in the snow again. I did this for days. So it's somewhat similar, but that feeling you get is, I am alive, I exist. That's why I have understanding for people who hurt themselves, you know?

Social circle user PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having been in the social circle of a substance user in the past.	Want ik heb een vriend die eigenlijk gestorven is op vijftig jaar aan alcohol. Dus die heeft zich eigenlijk doodgedronken en d'rvoor hebt, voor dat dat gebeurde vroeg ik hem ook zo, van allee jong. Hoe zit dat of zo, of hoe komt da. (C3, Pos. 62) <Because I have a friend who actually died at fifty from alcohol. So he basically drank himself to death, and before that happened, I used to ask him things like, come on, what's going on with that? or how did this come about?>
Struggling PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having struggled in the past.	Iedereen heeft wel op zijn manier een slechte gewoonte om het zo maar te zeggen of een hang naar even mentale rust, al dan niet met synthetische middelen, maar zonder dat daar ooit ontaard naar aard voor verslaving is bij veel mensen aanwezig in k weet niet bij bij die mensen. (F3, Pos. 52) <Everyone has their own bad habit, so to speak, or a tendency for some mental peace, whether or not with synthetic substances. However, without necessarily developing into a full-blown addiction, this tendency is present in many people, I don't know, with those people.>
Substance user PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having been a substance user in the past.	Ik heb acht jaar ook zwaar in drugs gezeten dus ik kon ook niet zonder. (F1, Pos. 17) <I was also heavily involved in drugs for eight years, so I couldn't do without.>
Supported PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having felt supported in the past.	Denk dat we dat allemaal wel zoeken kunnen. Iemand, iemand die ons ons begrijpt en en verder helpt. Dus begrijp ik hem. Ja, ik denk het wel. Ja. (F7, Pos. 40) <I think we all search for that. Someone, someone who understands us and helps us move forward. So I understand him. Yeah, I think so. Yeah.>
Teacher PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having been a teacher in the past.	Uit mijn eigen omgeving, omdat ik heb lesgeven. (C1, Pos. 61) <From my own environment, because I used to teach.>
Unempathic PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having not been understanding or empathic in the past.	Maar als oude man heb ik al vaak opgemerkt. (F5, Pos. 22) <But as an old man, I have noticed it often.>
Persevering S-SSPS	Used if participant refers to having recovered from substance use.	Want daar heb ik nooit bij stil, waarom ben je dan [onverstaanbaar]. Omdat dat dat persoonlijk ook wel is, was ik vooral kwaad op degene die het moest doormaken. Maar ik heb nooit het begrip gehad, want ah die heeft ook een woede. (NF4, Pos. 14) <Because I never considered why you are [unintelligible]. It was personal for me too. I was mostly angry at the person going through it. But I never had the understanding, because, oh, they also have anger.>

Worthless PPS SPS	Used if participant refers to having felt worthless in the past.	Dan moet ie zich echt een nul, die indruk heb ik (F1, Pos. 30) [...] Ja, ik heb ook in de psychiatrie gezeten, dus ik spreek uit mijn ervaring. De woorden die ik nu gezegd heb zijn dezelfde gedachten die James, zou kunnen gehad hebben. Waarschijnlijk wel had (F1, Pos. 35). <He must really feel like a zero, that's the impression I get (F1, Pos. 30). [...] Yes, I have also been in psychiatry, so I'm speaking from my own experience. The words I've just said are the same thoughts that James might have had. Probably did have.>

Appendix G. Illustration Coded Interview (C5)

This appendix provides an example of a full interview and the coded segments that led to the assignment of the specific SPSs. Since the interviews were conducted in Dutch, the following text is a translation. To reiterate, assigning SPSs to utterances involves a combination of linguistic markers and the coder's inferences. The text presented in italics represents the interviewer's questions and follow-ups, while the regular text represents participant C5's answers.

I would like to ask you to summarise the story in your own words.

Yes, I'll summarise it briefly. A man, a man whose age we don't know at the beginning, turns out to be a relatively young man who is picked up by his parents. It quickly becomes apparent that he has an alcohol addiction, and later on, well, I'm not really sure. Crack, I think. He is picked up because he needs to be admitted somewhere. So, they are looking for temporary care that week. Then he ends up under supervision, going through different stages, and he experiences a lot of resistance, but eventually, there are conversations with his family, with his parents, father, mother, brother, which initially go very badly. But after the treatment, there are a few excerpts with counsellors where he breaks through, let's say. **Through, how do you call it, a wall of distrust, of distance,** he breaks through a bit, gives in a little, and finally, in contact with his parents, there are several instances of this. He overcomes his Fury, as he calls it, and admits that this also happens during the process; I am not a victim of my upbringing or my environment. So, it's something that comes from within himself. He doesn't blame his parents for it, but I also... but I can't excuse myself, or I can't admit that the fault lies with myself and that I... **that I, well, a really difficult dynamic with his parents, and I can't admit that I love you and can't admit that I'm sorry that I'm hurting you.** Then, after several treatments, this eventually happens. He can control his Fury and admits that I do love you and try to help, I appreciate that. And that's a key moment showing that the therapy seems to work. Finally, we see him again going to a café with his brother, ordering a glass of whiskey. He controls the Fury that makes him want to drink, and he decides, but I have, I have put the whiskey away, and I stop drinking. It's final. This is the final decision. The therapy worked.

Distancing USPS
Open DSPS
Persevering DSPS
Responsible DSPS
Unsocial USPS
Hurtful USPS
Supported DSPS

You've already mentioned a few excerpts in your summary. Yes, which excerpt stood out the most to you, and in what way? Was there a specific excerpt?

Yes, at the beginning... may I know who wrote it, or?

I'll tell you that later.

At the beginning, he's quite annoying. Really a jerk of a guy. There's really... well, you recognize a man who's struggling with himself, has an addiction, and that comes through. For pages and pages. It's really annoying. Bye. He's really a jerk who maybe doesn't have too much self-pity, but he does describe why he's such a jerk. It's really boring, it's really terrible to read. And then the key moment where he breaks down, right, the contact with his family,

Annoying USPS
Self-hating USPS
Substance user USPS

where he admits, overcomes his Fury, and admits to himself that he can do things differently. *Open DSPS*
And I admit, and I melt a bit [incomprehensible]. That's a scene or an excerpt that touches you. That's also the moment where it becomes enjoyable. Where it becomes interesting; before that, it's really just a litany of complaints. It's really annoying. At that moment, there's a turning point, and then it becomes interesting, and it becomes more pleasant, enjoyable, and so also a turning point. Before that, it's really a litany of whining.

So it's really about that moment of admitting, that's what it is for you?

Yes.

Accepting, admitting?

Accepting. **I think he realized before that point that this is who I am. It's maybe an easier way to put it? But anyway, I'm the victim of the Fury here, who has me in their clutch and overpowers me.** *Victim USPS* **And in that excerpt, he says okay, I won't let the Fury overpower me anymore, I'm taking control and and and, I will turn it around.** *Persevering DSPS*

Is it about taking responsibility then? Or is it more about turning it around? I take control.

So it's about taking responsibility, right? Indeed. But I felt the shift was a bit too quick. It came too suddenly. There's no explanation for why that shift happens. It's a nice scene, a nice excerpt, but you're left wanting more. Where does that come from? He makes the shift, yes, and he describes it well, no. He describes the Fury that consumes him, but how he makes the switch to turn it around, that's not there. So I'm left feeling unsatisfied with that part. *Responsible DSPS*

You've called him a jerk a few times now. But one of my questions is – and there might be some repetition here because summaries often cover a lot already – but what is your impression of James?

My impression? Well, you don't really learn much about him. He only talks about himself, saying, I have an addiction. I have a very difficult relationship with my parents. There's no real reason for it. They haven't treated me badly. They love me; they've tried to raise me well. And yet, it's there. I feel like, why? That's a bit lacking. It leaves you with a bit of an empty feeling. It makes him, at this moment, seem like a bit of an empty man in the sense of, tell me why or try to explain why you are the way you are. And I find that a bit lacking. I find him a bit disgruntled, but I'd also like to know why he's disgruntled, and that doesn't come through. **So yeah, that is a, but yeah, a type of man, right, who is disgruntled. I know more of those types of men. So disgruntled, unsatisfied, unkind to everyone in society and especially to his parents.** *Angry USPS* But where does that come from? Is that an answer to the question?

That definitely answers the question. And does that impression change after the key moment you mentioned? Or do you still have the same feeling that he's a bit empty?

No, no. The key moment is a key moment because he shifts from what I'd call a nihilist. So little, having little purpose, little ambition, and being against everyone. In that key moment, he makes a turnaround and says, I still think the same way, I'm still like this, but I can have a

different mindset. I can see that my parents did their best, they do care for me, and while I can't change myself, I can change my attitude. That's what it comes down to.

We're going to look at some specific fragments. Could you describe James in a few words in excerpt two? You can refer to the text if you'd like. That's the part where he's in the car, and they are driving north.

Yes. Sorry, what was the question again?

Describe James in a few words.

Selfish USPS

Yes. Yes, kind of arrogant, nihilistic, laissez-faire. **Yeah, well, he is being felt, doesn't really feel himself, he just lets things happen, and he wants to be served. Yeah, I can't quite remember the first word. A bit, a bit selfish, actually. Arrogant, wants to be served, doesn't want to be helped, but still, it's like, just do everything for me.**

And in excerpt three?

Yes, that's where he really describes his addiction, how he's addicted and is in the clinic. There are pills that likely counteract the withdrawal symptoms, and has that realisation that, I urgently need those pills. He's really going through withdrawal. And that's what happens in the clinic, going through withdrawal and getting medication in time to control the withdrawal symptoms. Yes, yes.

And in excerpt four?

Self-destructive USPS

Selfish USPS

Ah yes. **That's also strange, it comes up later too with his toe, he really needs pain to suppress that Fury. So, also a... Yeah, I find that strange.** Yes, yes, I also think it's so... **so unsympathetic and egocentric of that man, like, okay, there's a fury inside me. I'm being helped here, which is tough. I have to detox, and what helps me to, to, to, to, to forget?** That's enduring pain. I inflict pain on myself to forget. Yeah, maybe. I find that very unrelatable, I find it very difficult to connect with that.

Then you've answered my next question, which is, do you understand his reaction?

Yes, yes, I find it very strange.

And the last excerpt of his, excerpt six. Could you describe him there once again?

Excerpt six, ah, that's when he's walking in the woods and is comforted by Lily. Yes, yes, that's the beginning of the turnaround, right? From there... I don't really know what to say, actually. It's like, yes, I am a jerk. I struggly with myself and here is someone who numerous times, because it has happened before, comforts me, holds me, who, yeah, comforts and now it works. Yes... It's a long scene, where things are described a bit symbolically. Whether it's real or not, I don't know. That he is [unintelligible] or eventually held by Lily and finally comforted. It's not for nothing that it's a long scene, probably... Because it's, well, the beginning of the turnaround. Also, not very recognisable. I find, well, it's a very long scene to describe what happens, but you don't read why it happens or how it happens, like, okay, what?

And what exactly do you find unrecognizable about it?

Why that change happens. Ah yes, you recognize comfort and such, but that's not enough. I want to know more. I want to know what the mechanism is. What exactly happened. Because there is a shift, right? Why does that shift happen? I feel like I'm missing that a bit.

We also have the parents

Yes.

What was your impression of James' parents?

Typical worried, caring, and concerned people. They are described very little, there's not much about them. **They haven't done anything wrong, they have not abused them and just simple parents who want the best for their child and we don't know more than that.**

Supportive DSPS

Loving parent DSPS

Do you have a different impression of the mother than the father?

Different? I have very little impression of either parent. They are typically concerned. Yes, the father sheds fewer tears than the mother. A typical division of roles. But nothing special, really.

And if we look at them a bit more in the excerpts, a bit more in-depth. Could you describe them in excerpt seven?

Yes, I read that from his perspective. It's like a description of, I can't blame them for anything. They are typical parents who are concerned, who show it in their own way. But I only get angrier when they show that concern. It's more about him than about the parents, really. **He sees in it, like, yes, they are doing their best. It's really me, the attitude that doesn't help, but I can't help it. I have no attitude, I can't do anything about it. This is my attitude, yes.**

Distancing USPS

And in excerpt ten, do you feel you can say more about the parents there?

Excerpt ten. Yes, again, it's more about him than about the parents. The parents, well the father, a typical father saying, have you spoken to the lawyer yet? Make sure you have an appointment with the lawyer. It's mainly him who sees his parents in a different way. Now he is sensitive to his parents' tears. That wasn't the case before. So, I read it more from his perspective than from the parents' again.

Does this story bring back any memories? Do you recognise the story a bit, whether personally or maybe from other books or films?

I was thinking about the, **The Corrections** by... The things said, there's an entire book about it. Also about very typical worried parents and three children, one of whom is this artsy, free-spirited type. The other, I think, is also a drinker who also had a terrible, money means living. And then the sister, who also had her wild phase, but now tries to bring the three closer together for the parents. And it's about the same type of parents, the same kind of care, concern, and worry. Here, it's not described much, but in that other book, it's described beautifully. How concerned you can be, and how the relationship between those children and their parents

Past SPS

Off-spring S-S SPS *Worrying USPS*

changes. That, **I recognise in this, and I recognise it in myself too, the attitude towards those parents. You recognise that concern, that worry, like, is everything going okay? and at the same time, you feel annoyed by it, by that concern. You recognise that here as well, like, stop worrying about me, and you recognise that.** Yes, so yes, I'm referring to The Corrections. I don't remember the author anymore. But it's beautifully developed there, where you really see that relationship, which you don't really see here. But you recognise them as typical parents, even though it's not really described here.

And yes, I find it really fascinating that it makes you think of, not necessarily, because I often hear Beautiful Boy, for example, as a reference for stories about addiction. It's really interesting that you think of the caring parents. That's just very interesting.

Yes, but it's about... well, it's about an addicted son here. It's not explained why that is; often it can't be explained because it just is. And yes, it's about the relationship between those parents and their son, which is addressed through therapy. Fortunately, the therapy works here, which is also a bit of a feel-good factor in this text because it never goes as smoothly as described here, but it beautifully describes the change that he makes.

In the second excerpt, James is dropped off at the rehab clinic. In that situation, how would you feel? Whether from James' perspective or from the parents'?

Hopeless USPS

How I would feel. I find that... it's difficult. **From James' side, it's really clear that this is clearly a last chance. Although he, before that, it's not a hopeless case. It is this or committing suicide, then it might have been expected. So I think, yes, he is really hopeless and it's almost his last chance.** He's dropped off there, and it's that realisation, when you walk in there and get the insight that this is the last chance and I have this Fury in my head, and am I gonna give in to it or no? I don't know, but if I don't do it. But I don't even know if you can be so aware of if I don't do it, what happens if I don't? Does it end badly? But it's, it's, I can't go back. I have to be go inside. Something has to happen here because I can't go back. *Self-aware DSPS* **And that's, that's what it comes down to. It's almost like an obligation, but it's not yet. But, I have to end this or make something good of it. Almost like, like absolute.**

Defeated USPS

And then from the parents' side. **Yes, it's that deep, deep misery. Yes, they also see and know that this is really the last chance.** I mean, he's apparently also involved in criminal activities. He's ruining himself, so he has to go in. It's almost really pushing him in there, almost like his prison. Let the institution handle it and to him, like, fix it yourself. *Hopeless USPS* **And then a lot of anxious waiting. I think there's a moment for the parents where you read it also from him: Let it go. Yes, it's hopeless, push him inside, and if it fails, it fails.** *Afraid USPS* You can't blame anyone. It's the last chance. That's really clear. Yes, and as a parent... well, yes, [unintelligible] but at a certain point... [unintelligible] people, you hear that at a certain point: let it go. Push him inside and now it's done. And that's what happens here.

Do you think the story has a message? And if so, what is that message?

Possibly. It could be that you can make a turnaround. Yes. I find it somewhat positive. A bit naively positive, because I fear that no story goes that smoothly. I mean, here it's really, maybe not just once, but here the man has succeeded. I never believe it is that simple. *Persevering DSPS*

When you were reading, did you feel like you were reading fiction or non-fiction?

Oh. It could be both. I really don't know.

And what was your feeling while reading? What were your thoughts?

I hadn't thought about that. No. The first part, I said, he's a jerk, and he describes very well how much of a jerk he is. It's really annoying, so maybe it is real, I mean it's not fiction in that case. Otherwise, yes. So it's well-written fiction, but, if you want to read that kind of fiction, it's not pleasant. It's really not enjoyable to read. Yes, I don't really care if it's fiction or non-fiction. It's reasonably well-written, but it sounds a bit too idealistic. Yes.

We have reached the end. Is there anything else you would like to say? Anything you were thinking about?

Appendix H. Overview Prompted Storyworld Possible Selves

Appendix H shows an overview of the SPSs triggered during this study. Supplementary Table 4 shows the SPSs ordered on the frequency of occurrence, and Supplementary Table 5 presents the SPSs ordered on SPS category.

Supplementary Table 4. All of the triggered SPSs, ordered on frequency of occurrence. For instance, 24 out of the 24 participants triggered the undesired 'struggling' SPS. The SPSs outlined in red are the primary SPSs and the SPS slipnets are outlined in blue. The secondary SPSs fall between these categories. USPS = Undesired SPS, DSPS = Desired SPS, S-SSPS = Self-Schema SPS, PPS SPS = Past Possible Self SPS.

SPS	Frequency	SPS	Frequency
Struggling USPS	24	Glad DSPS	3
Substance abuser USPS	24	Good parent DSPS	3
Open DSPS	24	Emotional S-SSPS	3
Persevering DSPS	24	Persevering S-SSPS	3
Angry USPS	23	Hopeless PPS SPS	3
Self-destructive USPS	23	Substance abuser PPS SPS	3
Distancing USPS	21	Teacher PPS SPS	2
Lonely USPS	21	Annoying USPS	2
Supported DSPS	21	Boring USPS	2
Supportive DSPS	20	Cowardly USPS	2
Parent S-SSPS	20	Distrustful USPS	2
Hopeful DSPS	19	Social circle abuser USPS	2
Loving parent DSPS	19	Victim USPS	2
Self-aware DSPS	18	Worrying USPS	2
Empathic S-SSPS	18	Calm DSPS	2
Past SPS	18	Wise DSPS	2
Unsocial USPS	16	Introspective S-SSPS	2
Guilty USPS	15	Lonely S-SSPS	2
Hurt USPS	15	Non-self-destructive S-SSPS	2
Sad USPS	15	Struggling S-SSPS	2
Afraid USPS	14	Angry PPS SPS	2
Self-hating USPS	14	Hurt PPS SPS	2
Aggressive USPS	13	Supported PPS SPS	1
Hopeless USPS	13	Playful DSPS	1
Loving DSPS	13	Distancing PPS SPS	1
Indifferent USPS	11	Middle-class S-S SPS	1
Powerless USPS	11	Therapist possible self	1

Distant Parent USPS	10	American macho USPS	1
Weak parent USPS	10	Guiltless USPS	1
Relieved DSPS	10	Irresponsible USPS	1
Offspring S-SSPS	9	Pitiful USPS	1
Non-substance abuser S-SSPS	9	Regretful USPS	1
Social circle abuser PPS SPS	9	Weak USPS	1
Compassionate S-SSPS	8	Apologetic DSPS	1
Defeated USPS	8	Experimenting DSPS	1
Hurtful USPS	8	Guiltless DSPS	1
Protective DSPS	8	Guilty DSPS	1
Strong DSPS	8	Self-accepting DSPS	1
Forgiving DSPS	7	Distancing S-SSPS	1
Proud DSPS	7	Experiencing life S-SSPS	1
Responsible DSPS	7	Hesitant S-SSPS	1
Social circle abuser S-SSPS	7	Non-angry S-SSPS	1
Proactive DSPS	6	Old S-SSPS	1
Ashamed USPS	5	Optimist S-SSPS	1
Hesitant USPS	5	Proactive S-SSPS	1
Insecure USPS	5	Self-destructive S-SSPS	1
Unsettled USPS	5	Social worker S-SSPS	1
Worthless USPS	5	Steadfast S-SSPS	1
Brave DSPS	5	Supported S-SSPS	1
Grateful S-SSPS	5	Teacher S-SSPS	1
Uncomprehending S-SSPS	4	Therapy-going person S-SSPS	1
(Sexually) Abused USPS	4	Abandoned PPS SPS	1
Considerate DSPS	4	Abused PPS SPS	1
Intelligent DSPS	4	Aggressive PPS SPS	1
Offspring PPS SPS	4	Forgiving PPS SPS	1
Lonely PPS SPS	4	Guilty PPS SPS	1
Struggling PPS SPS	4	Indifferent PPS SPS	1
Abandoned USPS	3	Non-conforming PPS SPS	1
Disappointed USPS	3	Persevering PPS SPS	1
Fragile USPS	3	Powerless PPS SPS	1
Selfish USPS	3	Self-destructive PPS SPS	1
Emotional DSPS	3	Unempathic PPS SPS	1
Empathic DSPS	3	Worthless PPS SPS	1

Supplementary Table 5. All of the triggered SPSs, ordered on SPS category. The categories are separated by a red line. USPS = Undesired SPS, DSPS = Desired SPS, S-SSPS = Self-Schema SPS, PPS SPS = Past Possible Self SPS.

SPS	Frequency	SPS	Frequency
Struggling USPS	24	Glad DSPS	3
Substance abuser USPS	24	Good parent DSPS	3
Angry USPS	23	Calm DSPS	2
Self-destructive USPS	23	Wise DSPS	2
Distancing USPS	21	Playful DSPS	1
Lonely USPS	21	Apologetic DSPS	1
Unsocial USPS	16	Experimenting DSPS	1
Guilty USPS	15	Guiltless DSPS	1
Hurt USPS	15	Guilty DSPS	1
Sad USPS	15	Self-accepting DSPS	1
Afraid USPS	14	Parent S-SSPS	20
Self-hating USPS	14	Empathic S-SSPS	18
Aggressive USPS	13	Offspring S-SSPS	9
Hopeless USPS	13	Non-substance abuser S-SSPS	9
Indifferent USPS	11	Compassionate S-SSPS	8
Powerless USPS	11	Social circle abuser S-SSPS	7
Distant Parent USPS	10	Grateful S-SSPS	5
Weak parent USPS	10	Uncomprehending S-SSPS	4
Defeated USPS	8	Emotional S-SSPS	3
Hurtful USPS	8	Persevering S-SSPS	3
Ashamed USPS	5	Introspective S-SSPS	2
Hesitant USPS	5	Lonely S-SSPS	2
Insecure USPS	5	Non-self-destructive S-SSPS	2
Unsettled USPS	5	Struggling S-SSPS	2
Worthless USPS	5	Middle class S-SSPS	1
(Sexually) Abused USPS	4	Distancing S-SSPS	1
Abandoned USPS	3	Experiencing life S-SSPS	1
Disappointed USPS	3	Hesitant S-SSPS	1
Fragile USPS	3	Non-angry S-SSPS	1
Selfish USPS	3	Old S-SSPS	1
Annoying USPS	2	Optimist S-SSPS	1
Boring USPS	2	Proactive S-SSPS	1
Cowardly USPS	2	Self-destructive S-S SPS	1

Cowardly USPS	2	Self-destructive S-SSPS	1
Distrustful USPS	2	Social worker S-SSPS	1
Social circle abuser USPS	2	Steadfast S-SSPS	1
Victim USPS	2	Supported S-SSPS	1
Worrying USPS	2	Teacher S-SSPS	1
American macho USPS	1	Therapy-going person S-SSPS	1
Guiltless USPS	1	Past SPS	18
Irresponsible USPS	1	Social circle abuser PPS SPS	9
Pitiful USPS	1	Offspring PPS SPS	4
Regretful USPS	1	Lonely PPS SPS	4
Weak USPS	1	Struggling PPS SPS	4
Open DSPS	24	Hopeless PPS SPS	3
Persevering DSPS	24	Substance abuser PPS SPS	3
Supported DSPS	21	Teacher PPS SPS	2
Supportive DSPS	20	Angry PPS SPS	2
Hopeful DSPS	19	Hurt PPS SPS	2
Loving parent DSPS	19	Supported PPS SPS	1
Self-aware DSPS	18	Distancing PPS SPS	1
Loving DSPS	13	Abandoned PPS SPS	1
Relieved DSPS	10	Abused PPS SPS	1
Protective DSPS	8	Aggressive PPS SPS	1
Strong DSPS	8	Forgiving PPS SPS	1
Forgiving DSPS	7	Guilty PPS SPS	1
Proud DSPS	7	Indifferent PPS SPS	1
Responsible DSPS	7	Non-conforming PPS SPS	1
Proactive DSPS	6	Persevering PPS SPS	1
Brave DSPS	5	Powerless PPS SPS	1
Considerate DSPS	4	Self-destructive PPS SPS	1
Intelligent DSPS	4	Unempathic PPS SPS	1
Emotional DSPS	3	Worthless PPS SPS	1
Empathic DSPS	3	Therapist possible self	1

Appendix I. Participant Index Cards

Presented here are the index cards that were created for each of the participants. These cards contain their gender, age, whether they know someone who struggles with substance use, their recoded fictionality perception, any additional information regarding their recoded perception and an overview of the SPSs that they triggered. Appendix I.1 contains the Fiction condition, Appendix I.2 the Non-Fiction condition, and Appendix I.3 the Control condition participants.

Appendix I.1 Participant Index Cards: Fiction Condition

Participant F1		
Gender: M Age: 62 Environment: Past with substance use (12-20).		
Recoded fictionality perception: Non-fiction Additional information fictionality: N/A		
Number of primary SPSs: 9 Number of secondary SPSs: 30 Number of SPS slipnets: 6 Total of SPSs: 45		
Desired SPS (9)	Hopeful Intelligent Loving Loving parent Open* Persevering* Strong Supported* Wise	
Undesired SPS (20)	Abused Abandoned Afraid Aggressive Angry* Disappointed Distancing* Guilty Hesitant Hopeless	Hurt Indifferent Insecure Lonely* Self-destructive* Struggling* Substance user* Unsocial Worrying Worthless
Past possible self SPS (10)	Abandoned** Offspring Forgiving** Hopeless Indifferent** Lonely Self-destructive** Struggling Substance user Worthless**	

Self-Schema SPS (6)	Offspring Empathic Hesitant** Introspective Parent Persevering
Past SPSs	Raymond Carver, 1981. *What we talk about when we talk about love.*

* Primary SPS

** SPS slipnet

Participant F2		
Gender: V Age: 57 Environment: Students who struggle with substance use.		
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: But could be non-fiction, the author is very well-informed.		
Number of primary SPSs: 8 Number of secondary SPSs: 20 Number of SPS slipnets: 0 Total of SPSs: 28		
Desired SPS (10)	Calm Forgiving Hopeful Loving parent Open* Persevering* Proactive Protective Supported* Supportive	
Undesired SPS (16)	Afraid Aggressive Angry* Distant parent Guilty Hurt Hurtful Indifferent Insecure Lonely*	Powerless Sad Self-destructive* Struggling* Substance user* Weak parent
Past possible self SPS (0)	N/A	
Self-Schema SPS (2)	Empathic Parent	
Past SPSs	Hanya Yanagihara, 2015. *A Little Life*. A fragment of a young woman with bulimia	

Participant F3		
Gender: M Age: 57 Environment: Has struggled with alcohol use.		
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: "The best fiction is more realistic than non-fiction."		
Number of primary SPSs: 9 Number of secondary SPSs: 25 Number of SPS slipnets: 2 Total of SPSs: 36		
Desired SPS (13)	Empathic Forgiving Good parent Hopeful Loving Open* Persevering* Protective Relieved Responsible	Self-aware Supported* Supportive
Undesired SPS (15)	Abused Aggressive Angry* Ashamed Distancing* Fragile Guiltless** Insecure Lonely* Powerless	Self-destructive* Struggling* Substance user* Unsocial Weak parent
Past possible self SPS (3)	Lonely Struggling Substance user	
Self-Schema SPS (5)	Emotional Parent Persevering Therapy-going person** Compassionate	

Past SPSs	Felix van Groeningen, 2018. *Beautiful Boy*. Podcast on oxycontin Michel Houellebecq Howard Phillips Lovecraft General socially realistic traumatic Northern American narratives

* Primary SPS
** SPS slipnet

Participant F4		
Gender: V Age: 58 Environment: Encounters people who use substances in her work as a social worker.		
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: Could be autobiographical as it is very realistic.		
Number of primary SPSs: 9 Number of secondary SPSs: 25 Number of SPS slipnets: 1 Total of SPSs: 35		
Desired SPS (13)	Considerate Empathic Forgiving Hopeful Loving Loving parent Open* Persevering* Relieved Self-aware	Strong Supported* Supportive
Undesired SPS (18)	Afraid Aggressive Angry* Distancing* Distant parent Guilty Hesitant Hurt Lonely* Powerless	Sad Self-destructive* Self-hating Struggling* Substance user* Unsettled Unsocial Weak parent
Past possible self SPS (0)	N/A	
Self-Schema SPS (3)	Empathic Optimist** Parent Social circle user	
Past SPSs	N/A	

* Primary SPS
** SPS slipnet

Participant F5		
Gender: M Age: 64 Environment: A brother and close friend died from substance use (alcohol) and another friend used heroin and took their own life. Was a 'wild child'.		
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: Written realistically.		
Number of primary SPSs: 9 Number of secondary SPSs: 36 Number of SPS slipnets: 12 Total of SPSs: 57		
Desired SPS (16)	Emotional Empathic Experimenting** Forgiving Good parent Guiltless** Loving Loving parent Open* Persevering*	Playful** Proud Relieved Self-aware Supported* Supportive
Undesired SPS (19)	Abused American macho** Angry* Ashamed Boring Defeated Distancing* Guilty Hurt Hurtful	Lonely* Powerless Sad Self-destructive* Self-hating Struggling* Substance user* Unsettled Worthless
Past possible self SPS (9)	Abused** Distancing** Offspring Guilty** Hopeless Non-conforming** Social circle user Struggling Teacher	

Self-Schema SPS (13)	Offspring Distancing** Emotional Empathic Experiencing life** Introspective Lonely Non-substance user Old** Parent	Persevering Struggling Supported**
Past SPSs	Stephen Streker, 2016. Noces. Mike Mills, 2021. C'mon C'mon. Charles Bukowksi Bret Easton Ellis, 1991. American Psycho. Ken Kesey, 1962. One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. Fyodor Dostoevsky, 1866. Crime and Punishment. George Orwell, 1949. 1984. Hanya Yanagihara, 2015. A Little Life. Lecture Em. Prof. Dr. Peter Adriaenssens, child psychiatrist ☑ General coming of age narratives	

* Primary SPS
** SPS slipnet

Participant F6		
Gender: M Age: 62 Environment: N/A		
Recoded fictionality perception: Non-fiction Additional information fictionality: Reads like autofiction.		
Number of primary SPSs: 8 Number of secondary SPSs: 22 Number of SPS slipnets: 2 Total of SPSs: 32		
Desired SPS (13)	Considerate Emotional Glad Guilty** Hopeful Loving Loving parent Open* Persevering* Protective	Self-aware Supported* Supportive Therapist possible self**
Undesired SPS (14)	Afraid Aggressive Angry* Defeated Distancing* Guilty Hopeless Hurt Powerless Self-destructive*	Struggling* Substance user* Unsocial Victim
Past possible self SPS (0)	N/A	
Self-Schema SPS (4)	Emotional Empathic Parent Social circle user	
Past SPSs	General movies and TV shows on substance use Cliché American movies	

* Primary SPS
** SPS slipnet

Participant F7		
Gender: V Age: 58 Environment: Her ex-brother-in-law struggled with substance use (alcohol). He has been in recovery for fifteen years now.		
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: N/A		
Number of primary SPSs: 8 Number of secondary SPSs: 24 Number of SPS slipnets: 2 Total of SPSs: 34		
Desired SPS (12)	Brave Forgiving Hopeful Loving Open* Persevering* Protective Proud Self-aware Strong	Supported* Supportive
Undesired SPS (15)	Aggressive Defeated Distancing* Fragile Guilty Hopeless Hurt Indifferent Lonely* Sad	Self-destructive* Self-hating Struggling* Substance user* Unsocial
Past possible self SPS (3)	Social circle user* Struggling Supported**	
Self-Schema SPS (4)	Empathic Non-self-destructive Parent Self-destructive**	
Past SPSs	Christiane Vera Felscherinow, 2013. *Christiane F. Mein zweites Leben.*	

* Primary SPS
** SPS slipnet

Participant F8		
Gender: V Age: 56 Environment: N/A		
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: N/A		
Number of primary SPSs: 9 Number of secondary SPSs: 19 Number of SPS slipnets: 0 Total of SPSs: 28		
Desired SPS (13)	Forgiving Loving parent Open* Persevering* Proactive Relieved Self-aware Supported* Supportive	
Undesired SPS (16)	Afraid Aggressive Angry* Disappointed Distancing* Distant parent Hurt Hurtful Lonely* Powerless	Sad Self-destructive* Selfish Struggling* Substance user* Weak parent
Past possible self SPS (0)	N/A	
Self-Schema SPS (3)	Empathic Parent Compassionate	
Past SPSs	Felix van Groeningen, 2018. *Beautiful Boy*.	

* Primary SPS

Appendix I.2 Participant Index Cards: Non-Fiction Condition

Participant NF1	
Gender: V Age: 58 Environment: N/A	
Recoded fictionality perception: Non-fiction Additional information fictionality: N/A	
Number of primary SPSs: 8 Number of secondary SPSs: 13 Number of SPS slipnets: 0 Total of SPSs: 21	
Desired SPS (9)	Brave Hopeful Intelligent Loving parent Open* Persevering* Relieved Self-aware Supported*
Undesired SPS (10)	Angry* Distancing* Hopeless Lonely* Sad Self-hating Struggling* Substance user* Unsocial Worthless
Past possible self SPS (0)	N/A
Self-Schema SPS (2)	Offspring Empathic
Past SPSs	Cliché American Midwest movies without hope John Williams, 1965. *Stoner*.

* Primary SPS

Participant NF2		
Gender: V Age: 60 Environment: Seen people in own social circle struggle with substance use. Knows a young man who took his own life. Also seen people who struggle with substance use in her professional life.		
Recoded fictionality perception: Non-fiction Additional information fictionality: But could have been fiction.		
Number of primary SPSs: 9 Number of secondary SPSs: 26 Number of SPS slipnets: 1 Total of SPSs: 36		
Desired SPS (12)	Brave Hopeful Intelligent Open* Persevering* Proactive Protective Relieved Responsible Self-aware	Supported* Supportive
Undesired SPS (17)	Angry* Ashamed Distancing* Guilty Hesitant Hopeless Hurt Hurtful Indifferent Lonely*	Sad* Self-destructive Self-hating Struggling* Substance user* Unsettled Weak parent
Past possible self SPS (1)	Social circle user	
Self-Schema SPS (5)	Offspring Empathic Non-angry** Parent Compassionate Social circle user	

Past SPSs	Felix van Groeningen, 2018. *Beautiful Boy*. Irvine Welsh, 1993. *Trainspotting*. Barbara Kingsolver, 2022. *Demon Copperhead*. Charles Bukowski Documentary of the fentanyl addiction in the USA

* Primary SPS
** SPS slipnet

Participant NF3		
Gender: M Age: 58 Environment: One side of the family drinks a lot. Used to drink a lot as a teenager. Ex-brother-in-law struggles with alcohol use.		
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: But everything is fiction.		
Number of primary SPSs: 9 Number of secondary SPSs: 20 Number of SPS slipnets: 2 Total of SPSs: 31		
Desired SPS (7)	Glad Hopeful Loving parent Open* Persevering* Self-aware Supported*	
Undesired SPS (16)	Afraid Angry* Cowardly Disappointed Distancing* Guilty Hesitant Hopeless Hurt Lonely*	Powerless Self-destructive* Self-hating Struggling* Substance user* Unsocial
Past possible self SPS (5)	Aggressive** Lonely Persevering** Social circle user Substance user	
Self-Schema SPS (3)	Grateful Parent Social circle user	
Past SPSs	General movies and documentaries on substance use	

* Primary SPS
** SPS slipnet

Participant NF4		
Gender: V Age: 63 Environment: N/A		
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: N/A		
Number of primary SPSs: 9 Number of secondary SPSs: 28 Number of SPS slipnets: 3 Total of SPSs: 40		
Desired SPS (14)	Forgiving Hopeful Loving Loving parent Open* Persevering* Proactive Protective Relieved Responsible	Self-aware Strong Supported* Supportive
Undesired SPS (15)	Afraid Angry* Cowardly Defeated Distancing* Distant parent Guilty Hurt Lonely* Self-destructive*	Self-hating Struggling* Substance user* Unsocial Weak parent
Past possible self SPS (5)	Angry Offspring Hurt Social circle user Unempathic**	
Self-Schema SPS (6)	Empathic Grateful Parent Proactive** Social circle user Steadfast**	

Past SPSs	N/A

* Primary SPS
** SPS slipnet

Participant NF5	
Gender: M Age: 56 Environment: N/A	
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: Based on true events in author's social circle of workplace.	
Number of primary SPSs: 9 Number of secondary SPSs: 16 Number of SPS slipnets: 0 Total of SPSs: 25	
Desired SPS (7)	Loving parent Open* Persevering* Proactive Proud Supported* Supportive
Undesired SPS (14)	Afraid Angry* Ashamed Distancing* Distant parent Guilty Indifferent Lonely* Powerless Self-destructive* Struggling* Substance user* Unsocial Weak parent
Past possible self SPS (0)	N/A
Self-Schema SPS (4)	Empathic Non-substance user Parent Compassionate
Past SPSs	Charles Bukowski Raymond Carver A book on cancer and chemotherapy (description of body)

* Primary SPS

Participant NF6	
Gender: V Age: 63 Environment: N/A	
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: Reads like Young Adult fiction.	
Number of primary SPSs: 7 Number of secondary SPSs: 5 Number of SPS slipnets: 1 Total of SPSs: 13	
Desired SPS (4)	Apologetic** Hopeful Open* Persevering*
Undesired SPS (9)	Aggressive Angry* Hopeless Lonely* Self-destructive* Self-hating Struggling* Substance user* Unsocial
Past possible self SPS (0)	N/A
Self-Schema SPS (0)	N/A
Past SPSs	Olga Tokarczuk, 2009. *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead.* ☑ Typical narratives on substance use

* Primary SPS
** SPS slipnet

Participant NF7		
Gender: M Age: 58 Environment: Encounters people who use substances in his work as a social worker and in his own social circle.		
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: N/A		
Number of primary SPSs: 7 Number of secondary SPSs: 21 Number of SPS slipnets: 0 Total of SPSs: 28		
Desired SPS (8)	Hopeful Loving parent Open* Persevering* Proactive Protective Self-aware Supportive	
Undesired SPS (13)	Abused Aggressive Angry* Defeated Distancing* Guilty Hopeless Indifferent Sad Self-destructive*	Self-hating Struggling* Substance user*
Past possible self SPS (1)	Social circle user	
Self-Schema SPS (6)	Empathic Non-self-destructive Non-substance user Parent Compassionate Social circle user	
Past SPSs	N/A	

* Primary SPS

Participant NF8		
Gender: V Age: 56 Environment: Has seen students who struggle with substance use and harm themselves. There is a man in the neighbourhood who struggles with substance use.		
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: Written like a novel but could be an autobiography.		
Number of primary SPSs: 9 Number of secondary SPSs: 24 Number of SPS slipnets: 0 Total of SPSs: 33		
Desired SPS (13)	Brave Calm Considerate Hopeful Loving Loving parent Open* Persevering* Proud Relieved	Strong Supported* Supportive
Undesired SPS (16)	Abandoned Afraid Angry* Defeated Distancing* Distant Parent Fragile Hopeless Hurt Lonely*	Sad Self-destructive* Self-hating Struggling* Substance user* Unsocial
Past possible self SPS (0)	N/A	
Self-Schema SPS (4)	Offspring Empathic Non-substance user Parent	
Past SPSs	N/A	

* Primary SPS

Appendix I.3 Participant Index Cards: Control Condition

Participant C1		
Gender: V Age: 62 Environment: Has friends whose children struggle with substance use and students.		
Recoded fictionality perception: Non-fiction Additional information fictionality: At first read as fiction, but eventually based on true events		
Number of primary SPSs: 9 Number of secondary SPSs: 29 Number of SPS slipnets: 6 Total of SPSs: 44		
Desired SPS (9)	Glad Loving parent Open* Persevering* Relieved Responsible Self-aware Supported* Supportive	
Undesired SPS (19)	Aggressive Angry* Distancing* Guilty Hopeless Hurtful Indifferent Irresponsible** Lonely* Pitiful**	Powerless Sad Self-destructive* Selfish Struggling* Substance user* Unsocial Weak parent Weak**
Past possible self SPS (7)	Angry Offspring Hopeless Hurt Powerless** Social circle user Teacher	

Self-Schema SPS (9)	Offspring Empathic Grateful Non-substance user Parent Social circle user Teacher** Middle class** Compassionate
Past SPSs	N/A

* Primary SPS
** SPS slipnet

Participant C2	
Gender: M Age: 57 Environment: N/A.	
Recoded fictionality perception: Non-fiction Additional information fictionality: N/A.	
Number of primary SPSs: 8 Number of secondary SPSs: 9 Number of SPS slipnets: 0 Total of SPSs: 17	
Desired SPS (8)	Hopeful Loving Loving parent Open* Persevering* Responsible Strong Supportive
Undesired SPS (7)	Aggressive Angry* Distancing* Lonely* Self-destructive* Struggling* Substance user*
Past possible self SPS (0)	N/A
Self-Schema SPS (2)	Offspring Struggling
Past SPSs	N/A

* Primary SPS

Participant C3		
Gender: V Age: 56 Environment: Has a friend who died from substance use (alcohol).		
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: Based on true events.		
Number of primary SPSs: 9 Number of secondary SPSs: 27 Number of SPS slipnets: 1 Total of SPSs: 37		
Desired SPS (13)	Brave Considerate Hopeful Intelligent Loving Loving parent Open* Persevering* Proud Self-accepting**	Self-aware Supported* Supportive
Undesired SPS (18)	Abandoned Afraid Angry* Defeated Distancing* Guilty Hopeless Indifferent Insecure Lonely*	Powerless Sad Self-destructive* Self-hating Struggling* Substance user* Unsocial Worthless
Past possible self SPS (1)	Social circle user	
Self-Schema SPS (5)	Empathic Non-substance user Parent Uncomprehending Compassionate	
Past SPSs	Felix van Groeningen, 2018. *Beautiful Boy*.	

* Primary SPS
** SPS slipnet

Participant C4		
Gender: V Age: 61 Environment: N/A		
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: Based on true events: autofiction.		
Number of primary SPSs: 9 Number of secondary SPSs: 26 Number of SPS slipnets: 1 Total of SPSs: 36		
Desired SPS (9)	Hopeful Loving Loving parent Open* Persevering* Proud Self-aware Supported* Supportive	
Undesired SPS (22)	Afraid Aggressive Angry* Distancing* Distant Parent Distrustful Guilty Hesitant Hurt Hurtful Indifferent	Insecure Lonely* Powerless Regretful** Sad Self-destructive* Self-hating Struggling* Substance abuser* Unsocial Weak parent
Past possible self SPS (0)	N/A	
Self-Schema SPS (5)	Empathic Grateful Non-substance user Parent Compassionate	
Past SPSs	🎥 A TV-show with a lawyer who struggles with alcohol use. ☑ General books/movies about substance use.	

* Primary SPS
** SPS slipnet

Participant C5		
Gender: M Age: 58 Environment: N/A		
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: Could be both fiction or non-fiction.		
Number of primary SPSs: 8 Number of secondary SPSs: 17 Number of SPS slipnets: 0 Total of SPSs: 25		
Desired SPS (7)	Loving parent Open* Persevering* Responsible Self-aware Supported* Supportive	
Undesired SPS (16)	Afraid Angry* Annoying Boring Defeated Distancing* Hopeless Hurtful Self-destructive* Self-hating	Selfish Struggling* Substance user* Unsocial Victim Worrying
Past possible self SPS (0)	N/A	
Self-Schema SPS (2)	Offspring Uncomprehending	
Past SPSs	Jonathan Franzen, 2001. *The Corrections*.	

* Primary SPS

Participant C6		
Gender: V Age: 56 Environment: N/A		
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: Based on true events.		
Number of primary SPSs: 9 Number of secondary SPSs: 18 Number of SPS slipnets: 0 Total of SPSs: 27		
Desired SPS (11)	Hopeful Loving Open* Persevering* Protective Proud Responsible Self-aware Supported* Supportive	Wise
Undesired SPS (14)	Afraid Angry* Distancing* Distant parent Hurt Hurtful Indifferent Lonely* Sad Self-destructive*	Struggling* Substance user* Unsettled Weak parent
Past possible self SPS (0)	N/A	
Self-Schema SPS (2)	Empathic Parent	
Past SPSs	Scandinavian detective shows.	

* Primary SPS

Participant C7		
Gender: V Age: 56 Environment: Ex-brother-in-law struggled with substance use and died. Students and clients who struggle with substance use.		
Recoded fictionality perception: Fiction Additional information fictionality: But first thought it was non-fiction.		
Number of primary SPSs: 9 Number of secondary SPSs: 27 Number of SPS slipnets: 1 Total of SPSs: 37		
Desired SPS (11)	Emotional Good parent Hopeful Loving parent Open* Persevering* Relieved Self-aware Strong Supported*	Supportive
Undesired SPS (18)	Afraid Aggressive Angry* Annoying Distancing* Distant parent Distrustful Hopeless Hurt Indifferent	Lonely* Sad Self-destructive* Social circle user* Struggling Substance user Unsettled Unsocial
Past possible self SPS (2)	Lonely Social circle user	
Self-Schema SPS (6)	Empathic Lonely Non-substance user Parent Social worker** Uncomprehending	

Past SPSs	Irvine Welsh, 1993. *Trainspotting.* Jotie T'Hooft, 1981. *Junkieverdriet.* Christiane Vera Felscherinow, 2013. *Christiane F. Mein zweites Leben.*

* Primary SPS
** SPS slipnet

Participant C8		
Gender: V Age: 56 Environment: N/A		
Recoded fictionality perception: Non-fiction Additional information fictionality: N/A		
Number of primary SPSs: 8 Number of secondary SPSs: 19 Number of SPS slipnets: 0 Total of SPSs: 27		
Desired SPS (9)	Hopeful Loving Loving parent Open* Persevering* Self-aware Strong Supported* Supportive	
Undesired SPS (13)	Angry* Ashamed Distant parent Guilty Hurt Lonely* Sad Self-destructive* Self-hating Social circle user	Struggling* Substance user* Worthless
Past possible self SPS (0)	N/A	
Self-Schema SPS (5)	Offspring Grateful Non-substance user Parent Uncomprehending	
Past SPSs	Terrence Malick, 2011. *The Tree of Life*.	

* Primary SPS

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