Fiction Novels in the Digital Age

How enhanced e-books deal with narrative linearity and the power of imagination in the realm of fictional storytelling

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CONTENTS

Introduction 1

1. Enhanced e-books in the realm of new media 4
   1.1 The birth of the enhanced e-book 4
   1.2 The ambivalent nature of enhanced e-books 5
   1.3 New media terminology 7
   1.4 Enhanced e-books in the market – an overview 10
   1.5 First conclusion: The flexibility of amplification makes the enhanced e-book a versatile product 13

2. How narratives work – the concept of linear storytelling 14
   2.1 Throwing light on the terminology 15
   2.2 Excursus I: Gérard Genette’s ‘Paratexts: Thresholds of interpretation’ (1987) 17
   2.3 The definition of narrative 20
   2.4 Excursus II: Roland Barthes’ ‘Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative’ (1966) 21
   2.4.1 The first level: the level of function 22
   2.4.2 The second level: the level of action 24
   2.4.3 The third level: the level of narrative discourse 24
   2.5 The construction of story 25
   2.6 Second conclusion: Enhanced e-book fiction novels fit in the concept of linear storytelling 26

3. How literary reading works – the power of imagination 30
   3.1 The process of literary reading 32
   3.1.1 Literary reading: a structural approach 33
   3.1.2 Literary reading: a cognitive approach 34
   3.1.3 Literary reading: an evaluative approach 36
   3.1.4 Literary reading: an emotional approach 37
   3.1.5 Literary reading: a mental approach 38
   3.2 The phenomenon of literary reading – the loss of material reality 40
   3.3 Third conclusion: Enhanced e-book fiction novels correlate with the phenomenology of imagination 41

Final conclusion 45

References 49
That object wholly object, that thing made of paper, as there are things made of metal or porcelain, that object is no more, or at least it is as if it no longer existed, as long as I read the book. For the book is no longer a material reality. It has become a series of words, of images, of ideas which in their turn begin to exist. And where is this new existence? Surely not in the paper object. Nor, surely, in external space.

There is only one place left for this new existence: my innermost self.\(^1\)

**Introduction**

The haptic experience of holding a book, the visceral act of physically turning a page – this feeling cannot be matched with pixels on a digital screen. But as studies show e-books are slowly subsuming the print format. According to the Global entertainment and media outlook 2014-2018 from PricewaterhouseCoopers, the global consumer e-books revenue remains high over the next four years, including 2015, increasing at a compound annual growth rate of around 18 %. Looking ahead to 2018, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers, the share of consumer books, with a majority in fiction, will still be the overriding product type in digital publishing with almost half of the total e-book sales. About 42 % of global total consumer books revenue will come from e-books\(^2\) in 2018, compared with 16 % in 2013.\(^3\)

In their beginning phase, e-books were meant to be read on an e-ink-reader, single-purpose reading devices with a standard black-and-white e-paper screen without back lighting to produce a visible image – but times have changed. There is an indubitable shift from e-reader devices to tablet computers for reading e-books. Tablet computers have deeply penetrated into the reading market. Having a closer look at the current digital book market, sales numbers remarkably grew in categories like children’s books, western stories and graphic novels. What these literary categories have in common is that they incorporate colour, images and often rather smaller text bits in relation to the image component.\(^4\) Undoubtedly, they can perform better on tablets and smartphones than on single-purpose devices. E-reader sales figures are predicted to drop within the next years whereas tablet computer popularity grows. According to recent market

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\(^2\) When PricewaterhouseCoopers talks about e-books, the current market offers three types of e-books. The different types will be explained later in the chapter 1.


research, e-reader sales may have peaked in the last three years and are now decreasing whereas the number of tablet users is continuously but slowly growing and can be seen as the major factor in the decline of e-reader hardware sales.\(^5\)

Tablet computers bring many more opportunities to publishers and readers,\(^6\) there is a lot of experimentation around content performance and presentation which exceed the limitation of e-reader devices, where many are unsuitable for surfing the internet, watching videos or playing sound and mostly lack apps and games.

Due to the various technical possibilities, a new reading experience has developed in the digital book market within the last few years: reading enhanced e-books. Digital media supplements like audio, video, maps, contextual links or interactive\(^7\) widgets, embedded in the running text, enable the reader to access the primary text with enhanced insight and might offer a deeper text experience. The most successful enhanced e-books in the market are currently children’s books, cookbooks, travel books, or textbooks and publications in the educational, scientific and journalistic field whereas adult fiction novels has proven to be a harder sell.\(^8\)

It seems that fiction novels are a literary genre which follows directives which are hardly convertible to a digitally enhanced realm. The question this thesis raises is why enhanced fiction novels have not (yet) conquered the digital reading market.

Several academic approaches have been made recently to elaborate the new genre of enhanced e-books. In particular Ryan James and Leon de Kock have analysed the

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\(^6\) In this thesis, ‘the reader’ is treated in gender-sensitive language. When the text deals with situations where a pronoun needs to refer to a person whose gender is not known, respectively ‘the reader’ who can be either male or female, the text uses he/she, his/her or him-/herself.

\(^7\) Basically, a digital environment enables text to respond to the changing environments of computer systems. As soon as the reader and not the producer (the producer is not the giver in the sense of a narrator, as Barthes has defined; the giver follows a narrative strategy within the narrative course, the producer of a narrative stand outside the narrative and is responsible for the physical presentation, not the textual presentation of the narrative) changes the environment with his/her input, the text becomes interactive. This interactive character of digital texts manifests itself as a feedback loop that sends information from the user’s body and its extensions (mouse, keyboard, [touch screen] or headset) to the processor, often through the mediation of a virtual user body; from the processor to the display, which is modified by the execution of the command issued by the user; from the modified display to the mind of the user; and back to the acting body. Thus, digital media becomes interactive as soon as it situates the reader inside a dynamic environment where the reader becomes a user. The reader becomes a user within enhanced e-books. The question that leads the discussion is how the insertion of other media maintains or even enhances a work’s ability to tell the story. (For quote and paraphrasing see M.-L. Ryan (ed.), *Narrative across Media. The Languages of Storytelling*, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), p. 329.)

desirability of new digital readers to engage with e-books. Others, like Simon P. Hammond investigated how enhanced e-books and the inclusion of multimodal data may enrich qualitative academic research. And to mention finally Alexis Weedon, David Miller et al. who focus on new media forms of the book in digital real, ‘the outer borders of the book system within which content is formed and moulded, and around which society is shaped’ and analyse the social function of amplified e-books with regard to the reader-author communication.

What could be learned from comparing these different approaches is that particular research in the field of enhanced fiction novels, a literary genre of narrative, and their low acceptance in the market have not yet fully matured. Therefore, the present thesis is focusing on two aspects which might account for the low popularity of reading enhanced fiction novels: the thesis questions first if enhanced e-books and their additional embeddings neglect the tradition of linear storytelling, a defining feature of the literary genre of narrative. Second, the thesis analyses if and to what extent enhanced e-books restrict imaginative freedom of narratives. These two characteristics, the linearity of storytelling and the power of imagination, are the raison d'être of narratives and might suffer from the enhanced form of fiction novels. It would be short-sighted to ignore other aspects which could give reason for the backwardness of enhanced fiction novels as well, e.g. economic or technical reasons. Those aspects will briefly be discussed in Chapter 1 but as the digital book market is changing rapidly and unceasingly, those attributes can rather be seen as short-term observations.

The following three questions will lead the discussion in the present thesis: What is the precise nature of enhanced e-books and what function do digital amplifications fulfil within them? Do enhanced fiction novels still follow the traditional idea of narrative in the sense of a story embedded in a narrative discourse? And finally, how does digital enhancement influence the interpretation of the narrative?

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Chapter 1 gives a general overview of the rise of the e-book and analyses the current market situation. As the characteristics of enhanced e-books in general are specified with regard to the central subject matter, the enhanced fiction novel, Chapter 1 serves as a preparation of the ground for the following two chapters. As the terminological variety of new media related vocabulary is miscellaneous in definition and usage, the paper elaborates the characteristics of media in general and of enhanced e-books in particular based on the ideas of the literary scholar Marie-Laure Ryan, and her understanding of narrative in media. Chapter 2 first discusses if digital enhancements in e-books function as paratextual elements of the narrative and analyses second the traditional idea of narrative and examines, based on post-structuralist French semiotician Roland Barthes’ analysis of narrative, in how far the enhanced e-book can exploit the essential components of verbal narrative, the interplay of story and narrative discourse. The third and last chapter focuses on the process of literary reading and questions if digital enhancements in e-books distract the reader from the adjunct property of imagination. It uses the views of the Canadian research team David S. Miall and Don Kuiken and Michael Burke, professor of rhetoric at the Utrecht University. Each chapter provides its findings in interim conclusions.

1. Enhanced e-books in the realm of new media

With the so-called digital media revolution media started to depend on digital support. Writing literature started to be done with word processors in the nineteen-eighties. Since then, text became digital and was qualified as an application of a digital medium – media started ‘to use electronic technology for their production or operation’. Today, literature is not only produced but also consumed in a digital environment. As the paper showed in the introduction, the analogue book has transformed and has become digital: the e-book has conquered the book market.

1.1 The birth of the enhanced e-book

The current digital book market offers three types of e-books. There is the prototype of a very simple, flat digital version of print text in a fixed layout, especially for image-based books like children’s picture books and complex non-fiction books like cookbooks or textbooks. The fixed layout has specific styles and layouts which enable the e-book to keep the same page layout and design as their printed counterparts. In

contrast, the current standard e-book files which are most suitable for text-based books have reflowable formats. In a reflowable format, the presentation of text remains more or less unaltered but has basic features like linking within the e-book, linking to outside resources like dictionaries and offers the possibility to change font and font size and adjust other reading settings. The fixed format can also incorporate links but differs to the flowable format in its technical production process and the file format which decides about the readability on different reading devices. The fixed format is mostly based on a PDF format which means that text in a PDF format cannot reflow to fit small screens like smartphones or tablets whereas reflowable files have flexible formats like Mobipocket, ePub or KF8 which are supported by different reading devices. Finally to mention are enhanced e-books. Those amplified e-books can add new contents or functionalities which are impossible in a print book and even in standard flowable e-books: they contain supplements which make the e-book more informative or interactive but require also advanced reading support. It is important to note that enhanced e-books can be either a pre-existing text format of an actual e-book file with additional enhancements like video and audio, for example enhanced fiction novels, or so-called standalone e-book applications which are exclusively designed to establish a new product, the e-book app. Those are mostly introduced in the children’s book sector, for graphic novels or guidebooks. E-book apps are created with different codes using different tools and are more complicated and expensive in production as they offer more interactive features, animations and sophisticated amplifications. Nonetheless, as the following paragraphs will show, clear demarcations between the different product types are still to pan out in the publishing field, due to many hybrids and amalgamations within the product diversity.

1.2 The ambivalent nature of enhanced e-books

As stated in the previous section, enhanced e-books are more than a flat digital version of a printed text. Enhanced e-books enable the reader more than the ability to change font and font size, the basic features of the current standard e-book with a flowable format. Enhanced e-books incorporate more advanced features of enhancement, for

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instance embedded audio and video elements, animations and even more ‘endless enhancement possibilities’ like galleries, timelines, maps or digital jacket flaps which allow the authors to keep their readers updated with news and information about their publications. Additionally, the story world can be extended through modalities for creative author-reader collaborations via social networks and reader participation through social reading. Some enhanced e-books are produced with brand-related software programs like iBooks or the Kindle e-book which have strategically introduced certain functionalities which bind the reader to a certain supporting device. In contrast to most standard e-books, which take marginal artistic advantage of their digital support, enhanced e-books make more use of computational capacities to extend the reading experience but can only be accessed with a multimedia-capable reader and installed reading software wherefore only e-ink based readers are inappropriate.

Enhanced e-books have successfully entered the market for several target groups and book types, as mentioned earlier. Nonetheless, enhanced fiction novels are still a literary genre in search of suitable contents and a wider market. Readers are not yet familiar with this new category of literary text. They have just adopted the idea of reading on a digital screen, thus interest for the opportunities that the new technology of enhancement can offer is still lacking, taking into consideration that ‘[t]echnology becomes obsolete almost as quickly as it is adopted these days – but the habits it forms last much longer.’ Particularly novels do not gain traction by word of mouth from the reader’s side or promotion from the publisher’s side. When readers are not aware of what they might miss, they cannot determine what they do or do not prefer. Furthermore, the production of enhanced e-books is still very expensive and the reader is not (yet) willing to pay more for the extra work that enhancing an e-book requires. Above that, this new category of e-book is still neglected on online sales platforms with regard to promotion and presentation efforts. Other limitations are in matters of distribution: publishers cannot distribute their products across the current markets, as

there are severely limited digital sales platforms for enhanced e-books with embedded properties like animation and interactive widgets. Still fewer outlets currently allow e-books with large file sizes like enhanced e-books as well as there are restrictions in the extent to which reading devices support e-books with embedded media.\textsuperscript{22}

As seen so far, the importance of the supporting reading device for enhanced e-books is coming more and more to the fore when talking about reading in the twenty-first century, the age of new media. In order to discuss the current market for and the significance of enhanced e-books, it is important to first conceptually define the medium and its reading system in the realm of new media before an examination of the different types of enhanced e-books follows in the market overview.

1.3 New media terminology

Thinking about the term media, about what a medium actually is, the very complex communication intermediate can be reached from different perspectives – from a technological, a narratological, a historical or a cultural perspective. Discussions depend a lot on the investigative field and the investigated object. Some types of media differ pragmatically from other types, others, the ‘new media’, have only recently entered the field of communication.\textsuperscript{23} Nonetheless, a medium can in principle have a dual definition as either a channel of communication or the material means of expression.

The following part serves as the preparation of the ground for the description of the medium enhanced e-book because, to quote Marie-Laure Ryan, it is important to discuss ‘the medium as material support for the form and content of message’,\textsuperscript{24} especially with regard to the latest developments in digital publishing and its crucial importance for text perception. Therefore, Ryan has developed a concept of media based on the above mentioned ambiguous idea of medium as both a channel of communication and the material means of expression. She distinguishes between two main concepts of media, the transmissive and the semiotic media.\textsuperscript{25}

Transmissive media is the type of media which transmits and yields a medium based on its technical and material aspects. It is the way for readymade, specifically in the mode of medium, encoded messages sent over a specific channel to be decoded on the

\textsuperscript{24} M.-L. Ryan (ed.), \textit{Narrative across Media. The Languages of Storytelling}, p. 22.
other end of the channel, like television, books, e-readers or the internet, with sub-channelling technical devices like smartphones, tablets or computers. For contemporary media the materiality of the medium is highly important to the encoding process. The size and shape of this channel imposes conditions on what kind of stories and their meaning\textsuperscript{26} can be transmitted. Accordingly, narrative messages must possess a conceptual core which is then flexibly adaptable to different types of material support. This conceptual core can be described with the reflowable format of standard and enhanced e-books, where the content can be easily adapted to different reading devices.

Semiotic media, the second concept of media, imposes generally speaking the idea of a medium as a ‘technical means of artistic expression’,\textsuperscript{27} the medium as a work which is both the substance out of which the work is fashioned and the material support under which it is meant to be apprehended, be it language, music or image. But due to the computational production processes of contemporary media in digital technological surrounding, these two attributes are split into two kinds of support.

With regard to digitized narrative, the narrative is fashioned out of digital codes but can either be distributed on the support of a print book or an standard/enhanced e-book. Today, the question of the substance of the means of production is obsolete as almost all media products are digitally produced. The decisive aspect for semiotic media definition is thus the material support on which the content is presented and reaches the recipient, having the status as the material means of expression. Furthermore, this status depends a lot on the extent to which the work uses the distinctive properties of its material support. This can be neutralised properties, in the case of a fiction novel which is produced digitally but published analogue on paper. Distinctive properties can also be weakly exploited properties, in the case of a fiction novel which is produced and published digitally in the form of a standard e-book. Finally, the last distinctive properties of material support are the fully developed, in the case of content which is digitally composed, enhanced with additional multimedial supplements, which can only

\textsuperscript{26} With regard to the act of giving meaning to a narrative it is necessary to demarcate narrative understanding as a concept of participatory sense-making from the reader’s interpretative act, the act of meaning-making when reading narratives. Understanding is dependent on factors like gender, knowledge, verbal expertise whereas meaning-making is a uniquely subjective and experiential process based on biographical memory and experience. The paper discusses this matter in depth in Chapter 3. Nonetheless, meaning and understanding are always correlative. In the sequel of the present paper, it is important to take that into account. (see Y. B. Popova, ‘Narrativity and enaction: the social nature of literary narrative understanding’, \textit{Frontiers in Psychology}, 5 (2014), pp. 4-5, 9).

\textsuperscript{27} M.-L. Ryan, ‘Media and Narrative’, p. 289.
be accessed and experienced in a digital environment, for instance in the form of an enhanced e-book.\textsuperscript{28}

Going even deeper, semiotic media can be subdivided into three broad categories, according to the way they are represented and how they engage the reading audience, conceptualising different modes and media. There is the purely temporal medium, supported by language exclusively, like paper books but also standard e-books.\textsuperscript{29} Those media are used to tell a story with text. Second, there is the purely spatial medium such as painting and photography. Those media want to show a story, but are not of any relevance for this thesis. Last, there is the spatio-temporal medium, which combines different technical features, so called dynamic kinetic properties, within one medium, such as film, image-language combinations and digital text. This type of media invites the reader to interact physically and kinaesthetically with the medium, the reader becomes a user, the medium becomes multi-media. Thereby it is important to consider the variety of semiotic codes being used in the medium and which senses are thereby addressed in the reader.\textsuperscript{30} The enhanced e-book is such a spatio-temporal medium. The verbal level of narrativity is enhanced with supplements like video and audio, images and maps. Those kinds of enhanced properties may influence the narrative’s ability of storytelling. Differences in technological support lead to significant differences in narrative expressivity.

With regard to the contemporary publishing field, publishers play and experiment with multimediality, readability and usability. The technical possibilities vary in very manifold and subtle distinctions and work differently for and with the reader. Therefore, the next section casts some light on the hitherto given idea of enhanced e-books and the actual nature of their amplifications by analysing the current products in the e-book market.

\textsuperscript{28} M.-L. Ryan, ‘Media and Narrative’, p. 289.
\textsuperscript{29} These standard e-books hardly carry any multimedial properties; they are so to speak a simple remediation of the printed book. With regard to the decisive aspect for semiotic media, the material support under which the content is presented, either print or flat digital, is of secondary importance at that state.
1.4 Enhanced e-books in the market – an overview

Going through the list of Dan Poynter’s 2014 Global Ebook Awards Winners list in the category enhanced e-book (called ‘Best Multimedia in an Ebook’), SHERLOCK: Interactive Adventure from HAAB Entertainment was rewarded with gold, an app offering an interactive book with Sherlock Holmes stories, ‘enhanced by real-life locations, leading and supporting characters, sounds of horse-drawn buses, squeaks, rattles and wind noises, background music for each scene, various factoids […] and a detailed map of London.’ Bronze was won by I Imagine by Nicola Lansdell from bizzibrains, a personalised interactive children’s story e-book app with ‘creative illustrations, interactions and a story which is largely fictional to engage the child’s imagination with some elements that are true and familiar to the child (such as their name, their photo face, some other characters).’ Similar to I Imagine can be mentioned Alice for the iPad, an e-book app which found a huge reading public among iPad users since its publication in 2010. Out of copyright, the original Lewis Carroll book ‘Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland’ was transformed into an interactive app edition and found its successor one year later in Alice in New York. More recent, an enhanced e-book from the young adult category can be mentioned, Chopsticks from the Penguin Group. Chopsticks is a love story of a troubled young piano prodigy which was created by a writer and a graphic designer and was released in a print and a digital version. The print version is an oversize, colourful text book with images whereas the e-book app ‘allows readers to enlarge images, flip through photo albums, watch video clips, listen to the characters’ favourite songs and read their instant messages [and] change the order of the story by shuffling the pages’, which lacks text-based content but offers a ‘reading’ experience through interactive engagement in the story.

But also publications in the scientific and educational field work more and more with multimedia enhancements in apps. Skulls or more recent the Leonardo Davinci Anatomy from touchpress are interactive apps, which enable a reading experience with ‘advanced interactive features [which] include an intuitive interface for exploring the

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collection and revolutionary differential scrolling in the chapter pages.\textsuperscript{36} Richard Dawkins' \textit{The Magic of Reality}, a book app developed by Random House UK, was voted best app at the 2012 Digital Book World. This digital introduction to science is a fusion of documentary and textbook, where ‘[p]lenty of well-designed, smoothly integrated special features only enhance this passionate, provocative scientific manifesto.’\textsuperscript{37} Lastly to mention is the German e-book app \textit{Der vergessene Held}, produced by Robin Burgauer. This video-based e-book is a historical biography about Carl Lutz, a Swiss vice-consul who was involved in a rescue operation of Jews in the Second World War. The app combines texts, image galleries, film excerpts, infographics and interactive timelines which are linked together in a consistent narrative about the life and work.\textsuperscript{38}

A closer look at those projects shows that these products differ in the extent to which enhancements are essential to the content and in relation, how important text is. The last example, \textit{Der vergessene Held}, is a non-fiction title which can convey the content even better when the text is paired with curated video and audio supplements for telling about the life and work of Carl Lutz. Low-text enhanced e-books seem to inaugurate new types of transmedial and interactive storytelling. Those interactive fiction projects often support rather gamified elements than text; many products are played rather than read. In this thesis those interactively enhanced e-books are introduced and classified as enhanced e-books from the first category of enhanced e-books.

But there are other projects which are actually mainly text-based novels with only image, sound and/or video supplements and which support hardly any interactive modalities. Those enhanced e-books are introduced and classified in another, the second category of enhanced e-books. The following examples describe this second category more closely.

As happens with a classic work, there is an enhanced version of \textit{The Hobbit} from Harper Collins Publishers, with a forward by Christopher Tolkien on the writing process that Tolkien went through, ‘using many illustrations, manuscripts and other material which did not appear in the original version [and] also a number of audio

sections which have only recently come to light.’ But not only classics find their ways into enhanced versions. The number-one fiction bestseller of Stephen King’s 11/22/63, published in 2011, was released in parallel in an enhanced e-book format. The novel, which was built around the John F. Kennedy assassination in 1963, contains in its enhanced version ‘a 13-minute film, written and narrated by Stephen King and [is] enhanced with historic footage from CBS News, that will take [the reader] back – as King’s novel does – to Kennedy era America.’ Only recently in September 2014, Ken Follett’s Edge of Eternity, the last book of his century trilogy, was published by Penguin Books USA in an enhanced version. The story follows the fortunes of five intertwined families as they make their way through the turmoil of the twentieth century. The enhanced ‘deluxe edition of Edge of Eternity includes three exclusive, behind-the-scenes videos of Ken Follett as he travels through London, Berlin, and the route of the Freedom Ride to research the major events of the twentieth century.’ A last single title to mention is Falsch, a thriller by the German author Gerd Schilddorfer. The book is about the adventures of the pilot John Finch who sets out on his way to Europe to find out about a secret from the Nazi era. To disclose the secret, he travels the world across continents and through the decades. The enhanced version of the thriller takes the reader directly to the places which the author describes in his novel, each chapter heading identifies a specific place which embeds images and maps to click and zoom. In addition, the enhanced e-book contains a photo gallery, background information about the places and era, a video in which the author tells about the research and writing process and finally a social reading connectivity where the reader can highlight and share, post, review or comment on the book in social networks and online reading platforms. At state of the art, many publishing houses run projects where they publish whole series of enhanced e-book novels. To mention is Melville House who has currently amplified titles from Hans Fallada, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Herman Melville or

Thomas Hardy. With their project HybridBooks they experiment with digital enhancement where

[each book in the HybridBook program features not only the core text of the novel, but extensive additional material rendered in digital form – the Melville House Illuminations. The Illuminations consist of highly curated text, maps, photographs and illustrations related to the original book.43

1.5 First conclusion: The flexibility of amplification makes the enhanced e-book a versatile product

In order to answer the first leading question posed in the introduction, what is the nature of enhanced e-books and what function digital amplifications fulfil in an enhanced e-book, it is necessary to have a closer look at the two categories of enhanced e-books which were illustrated in the previous market overview. Enhanced e-books are either multimedial entertainment products or rather simply enhanced versions of verbal text.

The first category is mostly exclusively produced for a completely new type of reading experience: interactive modalities, animations and technically sophisticated applications create a new product for rather young target groups as many serve the children’s and young adult sector. By contrast, in the second category, the range of enhanced fiction novels with additional video or photo elements works without the reader’s interactive participation and text modulation. In enhanced e-books of the second category, the story itself works with or without enhancements because there is one single text source which is either allocated to a printed book, a standard e-book or an enhanced e-book. For instance, the reader is not obliged to experience the enhancements in an enhanced e-book if he/she does not want to because the story works with or without the digital enhancements.

Argued as a preliminary consideration, digital supplements in enhanced e-books of the first category become full elements of the narrative; they become essential elements for the story. The narrative cannot be understood without them. Digital supplements in enhanced e-books of the second category are not essential for understanding the story.

As the scope of the thesis determined earlier, the paper is focusing its analysis on enhanced fiction novels, the second category of enhanced e-books.\textsuperscript{44} Novels take an extraordinary position within literary text because they have a very complex and highly branched structure, a climactic linear plot with ‘framing, embedding, branching, digressions, disruptions of temporal sequences, and multiple plotlines’\textsuperscript{45} which makes reading a novel a unique experience. It may now be asked if and how far enhancements in fiction novels influence this complex narrative structure, although, as stated above, digital enhancements obviously do not actively contribute to the storyline with the reader’s interactive participation and text modulation.

This question will be carried forward in the next chapter. To understand how digital enhancements could influence the narrative structure of fiction novels, the perception as to how narrative actually works, needs to be examined first. Therefore, the following chapter will focus on an investigation of the interplay between story and narrative discourse and the importance of causal linearity.

2. How narratives work – the concept of linear storytelling

Narratives are part of all human cultures, they are told every day, in every moment of human lives. Whenever one puts verbs together with nouns, a little narrative sequence starts the presence of narrative in various forms and is engaged in a narrative discourse, moreover, ‘in this infinite variety of forms, [the narrative] is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; indeed narrative starts with the very history of mankind’.\textsuperscript{46} The human race tries to apprehend the world in the mode of narrative. Narrative consciousness comes always from a composed succession of necessary events and incidents that leads up to the understanding of the world. All consciousness, be it perception, imagination or memory, is intentional in the sense that it has directedness towards a person or an object.\textsuperscript{47} Even with static images, narrative time is inserted in order not only to see a depicted moment in a picture but in order to know what is happening in the picture and what happened just before the moment the picture shows. The obvious climax of a narrative is depicted in a still image but the whole idea of the

\textsuperscript{44} From now on when the paper talks about enhanced e-books it is meant to be enhanced e-book fiction novels, as they are the subject of research in this paper.


\textsuperscript{47} Y. B. Popova, ‘Narrativity and enaction: the social nature of literary narrative understanding’, p. 2.
image, the story behind, can only be understood in the context of a story being in progress.\textsuperscript{48} Therefore, verbal language is an adequate semiotic code for storytelling. Narrative perception can give meaning to what is seen in pure pictures, because pictures are limited in their ability to retell stories, they lack the code to make propositions for meaning.\textsuperscript{49} The picture itself cannot tell a whole story, therefore the human brain can activate narrative templates and formulas which are stored in memory and can fill certain elements in a non-delineated story, with a range of possibilities and propositions for meanings. In order to understand the world, what can actively be seen, it is necessary to understand the narrative which gives context and thus meaning to the even very uneventful visible scenes.\textsuperscript{50}

Before it comes to the meaning of those visible scenes, to the importance of imagination as the source of meaning, the idea of a narrative is presented in the following sections. Narratives always follow a story line, a certain overall structure which tells a story. The capacity to tell and follow narratives makes memory possible, narratives give shape to human mental record, the ‘imaginative imposition of form on life’,\textsuperscript{51} of narratives, are bound to one’s perception of the world.\textsuperscript{52}

2.1 Throwing light on the terminology

In order to understand how narratives work, it is important to first specify narration-related terminology. Basically said, literary text genres\textsuperscript{53} are either narratives or non-narratives. Based on Eva Müller-Zettelmann’s general scheme of narrative genres,\textsuperscript{54} narratives are either verbal or performed. Performed narrative genres are the play, the film or the opera. Verbal narrative genres, which follow a story-based structure, are either novels, short stories, narrative poems or scripts (play-, film-, opera-scripts). Non-

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{49} M.-L. Ryan (ed.), \textit{Narrative across Media. The Languages of Storytelling}, p. 10.
  \item \textsuperscript{50} H. P. Abbott, \textit{The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative}, pp. 6-12.
  \item \textsuperscript{51} H. P. Abbott, \textit{The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative}, p. 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{52} H. P. Abbott, \textit{The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative}, pp. 1-3.
  \item \textsuperscript{53} Can narrative be a genre? The thesis defines the terminology of genre according to Mary-Laure Ryan statement: ‘It all depends on whether we interpret genre in an analytical or a cultural sense. […] In the analytical interpretation, genre (or analytical category) corresponds to any kind of criterion that can be used to build a discourse or text typology. In the cultural sense, by contrast, genre designates text types not merely drawn by theorists but enjoying widespread recognition in a given community. Within the medium of language the genre system of Western cultures correspond, for instance, to traditional literary labels, such as the novel poetry, drama, essays, and short stories. […] Narrative, however, does not seem to possess the recognition of a cultural genre. […] Yet, as a property of texts, narrative enters into the definition of many, genres, in combination with other features that operate further distinctions. It is, therefore, a prime example of an analytical category.’ (quote see M.-L. Ryan (ed.), \textit{Narrative across Media. The Languages of Storytelling}, p. 6.)
\end{itemize}
narrative genres are lyric poems or essays which do only follow the one order which is that of the technical structure of a poem or an essay.\textsuperscript{55} Furthermore, narratives can either be fiction or non-fiction. Non-fictional narratives claim to tell a story which is factually true, narratives from the fields of history, policy, popular science or economy all have, just like biographies, reference to the real world. By contrast, fiction, represented by the prose form of novels, does not tell a ‘true story’. In both kinds of narrative the factors story and narrative discourse are at play, but the fictional story is neither true nor false.\textsuperscript{56} The distinction between fictional and non-fictional narratives is important for this thesis with regard to Chapter 3. Due to the assumption that non-fictional novels work less with the power of imagination in comparison to fiction novels, literary reading of fiction novels happens differently when it comes to examine the role of imaginative input and external stimuli for text interpretation.

Identifying fiction or non-fiction is rather simple with regard to their paratexts. Gérard Genette’s theory of paratextuality is based on the assumption that liminal devices and conventions within and outside the book mediate the book to the reader. Within the text, there are so-called peritexts like the title and subtitle, the blurb, the dust jacket, foreword and dedications, notes, the epilogue and the afterword are framing elements, mostly in responsibility of the publisher, which guide the reader through the book. Outside the book, in the epitext, there is a public epitextual context, like literary reviews, bestseller lists or author’s public readings, where the author already tracks the reader’s text interpretation – the way how the author delivers the text, the reading’s stresses and intonations and the gestures and facial expression of the author.\textsuperscript{57} Private epitexts, like authorial correspondence to publishers or an individual correspondent or unpublished pre-texts are messages which have certain value and meaning only to a very selectively chosen and not the broad audience but give nonetheless a certain kind of statement about the writing process and the history of the work, ‘about its creation, its publication, and reception by the public and critics, and about his view of the work at all stages of this history.’\textsuperscript{58} Texts, and particularly novels can be identified as novels and non-fiction can be identified as non-fiction through their paratextual intentions.

Paratexts are important for the perception of narrative, therefore the following section

\textsuperscript{58} G. Genette, Paratexts: Thresholds of interpretation, p. 374.
gives a short introduction to Genette’s theory which will be considered in the final conclusion.

2.2 Excursus I: Gérard Genette’s ‘Paratexts: Thresholds of interpretation’ (1987)

Genette suggested that there is always more than the plain written narrative; it usually comes embedded in a physical context, its paratexts. This tangential material, these paratexts, has impact on the interpretation of the narrative. Paratexts lie on the threshold of the narrative and are thus part of it. The influence of paratexts can be very profound, and can also impact the set of expectations and mind-set that comes e.g. with a certain book cover or binding. The reception of a narrative can permanently be affected through the influence of paratextual information from outside the narrative.59 The fact that paratexts work on human perception, paves the way for the statement that ‘where the narratives actually happen is in the mind.’60

Genette’s theory is based on the assumption that liminal devices and conventions within and outside the book mediate the book to the reader. According to him, paratext helps the reader to step inside the book; it enables a text to become a literary piece of work and situates it in a certain genre. Thus, the work can be offered as such to the reading audience. Paratexts rather function as an undefined zone without sealed and hard boundaries between peri- and epitexts, between the inward side which turns towards the verbal text and the outward side which is turned towards the discourse about the text from the outside world. Paratexts control one’s reading of the text as there is a permanent conveyor of a commentary, legitimated by the author and pushed by the publisher. Paratexts are a strategy which influences the public reception. Whether poorly or well understood and achieved, the transaction with a public reading audience is at the service of a better reception for the text, considering that the ways and means of paratext change continually and always depend on contextual, cultural and technological circumstances.61

Applying this last statement to enhanced fiction novels, it can be said that technology has considerably changed traditional publishing and gave birth to the present phenomenon of enhanced reading. According to the fact that paratexts depend on contextual, cultural and technological circumstances, digital enhancements in e-book novels of the second category, like images, sound and/or video supplements which

support hardly any interactive modalities, could act as ‘new’ paratextual elements, as liminal devices of the e-book. The question arises as to how far digital supplements in e-books of the second category are de facto paratextual elements.

Text, analogue and digital, cannot exist without paratexts. Nonetheless the reader is not unvaryingly obligated to consult paratextual elements, likewise certain elements are only addressed to certain readers.\textsuperscript{62} To make it more concrete, the reader is not required to read a foreword or attend an author’s public reading, just as the reader is not obliged in an enhanced e-book to watch embedded videos about the author’s explanation of the writing process or to listen to thrilling background music when reading a crime novel.

This aspect must be borne in mind for the continuation of this paper. In this section, paratextual elements in general will be approached with five features which allow the reader to define the status of the paratextual message of the element – the paratextual message’s spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic and functional characteristics.\textsuperscript{63} In order to find an answer to the question if digital enhancements in fiction novels are rather paratextual elements than narrative elements of the storyline, these five features will be applied to digital enhancements in enhanced fiction novels further along the line of the thesis.

Determining the spatial location of a paratextual element, the element can always be situated in the relation to the location of the text itself. First to mention are peritextual elements. Those paratextual elements are located within the text, e.g. the book title or the foreword. Paratextual elements outside the text, the epitextual elements, are for example interviews with the author to promote the book. The temporal situation of paratextual elements can also be defined in relation to the text and its presence in the market. Some elements appear before the publication, like announcements of forthcoming publications or pre-published text bits in newspapers or magazines, other paratextual elements appear at the same time as the text, like prefaces or public readings from the author. And even some elements appear later than the text, e.g. the preface within a second edition. The substantial status of paratextual elements is expressed in the materiality of the element. Most peritextual and epitextual elements share a linguistic status and are themselves of a textual or at least of a verbal kind, like prefaces, interviews or announcements. There are other paratexts which are conveyed in other types of manifestation. These may be iconic, material or factual elements.

\textsuperscript{63} G. Genette, \textit{Paratexts: Thresholds of interpretation}, p. 4.
Iconic elements are illustrations and images, material elements originate in the manufacturing process like significant typographical choices and factual elements are elements which exist apart from the text but are contextual affiliated. Factual elements provide some invisible commentary on the text and influence how the text is perceived by the reading audience. Factual elements can be the age, the sex or the cultural background of the author, his/her receipt of literary prizes or the publishing date of the work. The pragmatic status of paratextual elements is defined by the communication situation between the sender and the receiver of the text. The sender of the paratextual message is either the author and his/her authorial paratexts or the producer with the publisher’s paratexts or a combination of both. The nature of the relationship is defined by an acceptance and authority and decides about the portion of each responsibility for the paratexts. Sometimes, this responsibility is shared with a third party, e.g. the writer of a foreword or the magazine who is publishing an interview with the author. The receiver of the paratexts is, in general, the whole reading public. Certain paratextual elements like the title or the cover are actually addressed to every literate and perceptive person but do not reach everybody; other elements, like the foreword, are addressed more specifically, only to the actual readers of the text. Still others, mostly epitextual elements, are exclusively addressed to selected groups of critics or booksellers. Finally, the functional aspect of the paratext is its dedication to text, as 'the paratext in all its forms is a discourse that is fundamentally heteronomous, auxiliary, and dedicated to the service of something other than itself, that constitutes its raison d’être.'\(^{64}\) Paratext is always subordinated to its text and thus its existence, its functionality is determined.\(^ {65}\)

Keeping these lines in mind for further examinations at a later stage, the paper will now analyse the literary nature of the narrative and deals with the question to what extent digital enhancements in fiction novels might actually be part of the storyline of the narrative. In the conclusion of this chapter, the paper gives an answer to this question, if digital enhancements function as structural elements of the narrative or if they rather work as paratextual elements for the narrative. Although the paper has already stated in Chapter 1.4 that digital supplements in enhanced e-books of the second category are not essential for understanding the story, it is still to answer if they can nonetheless be part of the narrative structure. Therefore, the next sections define the narrative structure of fiction novels.

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2.3 The definition of narrative

Defining narrative undergoes new debates in current times of the new means and ways of storytelling in digital age. But still, every narrative, no matter of what media format, follows the very bare idea of the representation of events. Without events, respectively actions, the literary text is rather a description or an argument. Although there are scholarly voices which restrictively claim either that a narrative requires only one or at least two events, the essential point in the capacity of a narrative is to represent a single event or a sequence of events, either in words or in some other way. With regard to the narrative continuity and narrative coherence of a sequence of events it is to consider that continuity and coherence do not parallel automatically with each other. A longer text may be thematically coherent but lack narrative coherence because it consists of many micro-narratives and thus could be considered not to work as a whole self-contained narrative. By contrast, shorter texts, considered narratives each by themselves, all contain events and characters which belong to the same narrative chronology from beginning to end and can be seen as a whole long narrative. In this work, as stated before, the focus of this discussion lies on the narrative genre fiction novels, narrative units with longer and compact narrative structures in their traditional appearance.

Coming back to the question what narrative is, it might be defined as ‘the complex transaction that involves events, their manner of representation (whether it be by narrator, actor, paint, or some others means), and the audience.’ This definition reveals three participants of narrative: the existence of events in a story, their representation in a semantic medium, as Ryan puts it, and the perception by the reader. This finding suggests the interplay of the two large levels in narrative (beside the reader who is not directly engaged in the production of narrative): the story and the narrative discourse. The important difference between the two is that the mere formation of an event or a sequence of events makes a story. The narrative discourse mediates the story to the reader. The narrative discourse decides how the story is conveyed and represented to the recipient. Creating a narrative discourse is mandatory to making the story come to life. Stories always need the mediator for narrative discourse; they can never be seen without a narrator – a voice, a style of writing or an actor’s interpretation.

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The difference between story and narrative discourse is a difference between two kinds of order. In narrative discourse, the reader is aware of the order in which things are read, in the story, in which order they are supposed to occur in the storyline. The narrative discourse can be changed but is still dealing with the same story, narrative discourse can leap backward and forward, it can expand and contract. But the reader sorts out this malleability of the narrative discourse and reconstructs an order of events, the story. This order proceeds chronologically from the beginning to end. The order of events in the narrative discourse and the story are often very different from each other.  

In order for a better understanding of the idea behind story and narrative discourse, Roland Barthes’ *Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative* can give a precise description about how the two components of narrative, story and narrative discourse, are linked to each other. Hence, the next section is dedicated to his analysis.

2.4 Excursus II: Roland Barthes’ ‘Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative’ (1966)

Barthes suggests that, although every society, every human group of all cultural backgrounds has its very own variety of stories, every narrative implies a model which can refer to a common scheme, an implicit system of the smallest narrative units and rules. In linguistic terms, every sentence can be described on several levels which stand in hierarchical relation to each other. Each level has its own units with an independent description, without correlation to a level, it cannot produce any meaning of itself – it must be integrated into a superior level. The analysis of discourse can only operate at those rudimentary levels and will be explained in detail later. From his approach of defining narrative, Barthes concludes that the focus of narratology is on the structure of narrative rather than its content, because structure is never abstractable from its content.  

Narrative is not only following an unfolding story but also following a hierarchy of levels within the story, reading a narrative is more than only passing from one word to the next. It is to pass from one level to the next. Every narrative does thus carry different units which are horizontally set in narrative relations, word for word but those words also need to be embedded in sentences in order to give meaning to the narrative. According to Barthes, every narrative work can distinguish three main levels, the level of

functions, the level of actions and the level of narrative discourse. Those levels are
bound together: the level of function cannot produce meaning by itself, it is integrated
in the general line of action; in turn, this action only receives its ultimate meaning when
it is being told, embedded in a narrative discourse. The level of function and the level
of action can be seen as the large level of story.

2.4.1 The first level: the level of function
To start at the very beginning, the smallest narrative units which can be isolated in a
narrative are functions, their functional criterion is their meanings. In order to
understand functions of a narrative, it is necessary to define, better said, to determine
and classify units and to figure out the functional syntax of units. Narratives can be
integrally broken down into functional units: Every unit is meaningful and has a
functional character which is correlated to other units. Thus, ‘a narrative is made up
solely of functions; everything, in one way or another, is significant.’ Functional units
are meaningful and have a noticeable functionality either immediately when the units are
operating on the same level or less immediate when the units operate on different levels.
Because not all units correlate to units from the same level but from a different level,
they can be distributed into two broad classes: the class of functions with distributional
units and the class of indices with narrative units.

Distributional units from the class of functions refer to properly defined operations
on the same level – every unit has its immediate distributional correlation to another
unit, it refers to a complementary and consequential act. Narrative units, comprised in
the class of indices, refer to a rather scattered concept of correlations of units, to a
signified, not to an operation. The relations between the unit and its correlate are
integrative; they do not necessarily refer to a consequential act but are nonetheless
necessary to the story: traits concerning characters, notations of atmosphere etc. To put
it briefly, functions and indices bear different relations: functions are functional in terms
of action; indices are functional in term of being.

Within the class of function, not all units are equally important, so the class carries
two subclasses: the nuclei and the catalysis. The units which constitute cardinal
functions for the narrative are called nuclei and the others, units of complementary
nature are called catalyses, which rather fill narrative spaces and separate the hinge-type

73 R. Barthes, ‘An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative’, p. 244.
functions from each other. A nucleus is a functional unit which refers to another unit in order to open, maintain or close an alternative action in a fragment of narrative and it directly affects the continuation of the story: ‘procedures that are bound to carry the story along different paths’.\textsuperscript{75} These constituent events, the nuclei, drive the story forward and lead to other events; they are the units which give answer to the questions of ‘what-comes-after’ and ‘what-is-caused-by’ and constitute turning points. They carry a double functionality, a chronological and a logical functionality for the narrative, cardinal functions are thus both consecutive and consequential. A unit is a catalysis and so functional once it enters into correlation with a nucleus, but it possesses only unilateral, chronological functionality of rather marginal importance for the narrative. A catalysis thus only describes what separates two moments in a story, it only fills narrative space which separates the hinge-type functions, as described above. This filling function retains a discursive one, it delays or quickens the pace of the narrative, and it may anticipate or confuse the reader and constantly reactivate the semantic tension of the narrative discourse. In short, catalyses maintain contact between the reader and the narrator.\textsuperscript{76}

In his \textit{Introduction to Narrative},\textsuperscript{77} H. Porter Abbott has an additional point to the meaning of catalyses, he sees them as supplementary events to the narrative which are not necessary for the story and can therefore be left out, generally speaking. Constituent and supplementary events, as Abbott calls the nuclei and catalyses, can be set in hierarchy in which constituent events can be rated higher – but only if the constituent events are a sequence which constitute the story itself. Constituent events are only more important for the story, when the sequence of the events constitutes the story itself. Supplementary events, often a series of micro-events, can deliver important input for the meaning of the narrative as a whole. They raise the question why they are included since they are not ‘necessary’ and are therefore profitable hints to the interpretation of the narrative.\textsuperscript{78} Those supplementary events are ‘side information’ which describes for example relationships between different characters. This information is not necessarily essential for the storyline but important for the text interpretation. As soon as supplementary events are of importance and overall impact the narrative, catalyses are

\textsuperscript{75} R. Barthes, ‘An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative’, p. 248.
not of less meaning than nuclei.\textsuperscript{79} Or as Barthes puts it, ‘one cannot delete a nucleus without altering the story, but then again one cannot delete a catalysis without altering the discourse.’\textsuperscript{80}

To conclude the classification of units, catalyses are expansions in their relation to the constituent events, the nuclei. Nuclei are very finite sets of few terms which constitute the frame of the story – their combinations are logically controlled and at once necessary and sufficient, the other units only have to fill the remaining narrative space with supplementary events, without any theoretical limits.\textsuperscript{81}

\textbf{2.4.2 The second level: the level of action}

So far, Barthes has revealed that catalyses can be determined from a narrative but not the cardinal functions, the nuclei. The small group of cardinal functions, arranged in a logical, in a linear string of nuclei and linked together by a solidarity relation, is called sequence. Every narrative is divided in a number of named sequences. The small number of nuclei set in the logical succession of a sequence always involve moments of risk for the progress of the narrative. Each nucleus makes another choice, another meaning possible for the sequence. A syntax exists within each sequence and between different sequences, but it happens that some terms belong to several sequences and can thus easily dovetail into each other. Within a literary work, this dovetailing of sequences can interrupt the structure of the independent episodes but makes the single units to a whole story. The level of function can be topped accordingly with the level of action, from where the meaning of the units from the functional level derives.\textsuperscript{82}

\textbf{2.4.3 The third level: the level of narrative discourse}

The level of narrative in a narrative work distinguishes the two participants of narrative communication, the giver and the recipient of the narrative. There are signs which try to identify the codes of the narrative. In written literature, certain verbal elements define the narrative level, like ‘the coding of beginnings and endings of narrative, the definition of various styles of representation (the \textit{oratio directa}, the \textit{oratio indirecta}, with its \textit{inquit}, the \textit{oratio recta}), the study of “points of view”’.\textsuperscript{83} The form of narrative is the content of the story and the narrative forms, the functions and actions, as the paper has analysed so

\textsuperscript{79} H. P. Abbott, \textit{The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative}, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{80} R. Barthes, ‘An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative’, p. 249.
\textsuperscript{81} R. Barthes, ‘An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative’, p. 250.
\textsuperscript{82} R. Barthes, ‘An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative’, pp. 253-256.
\textsuperscript{83} R. Barthes, ‘An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative’, p. 264.
far. But above that, the form or narrative can indeed only receive meaning from the world which makes use of the narrative. Seeing the narrative level at the top of the narration pyramid, above the level of function and the level of actions, there is the external world which does not only include the narrative but elements of other systems. Historical, economic and social context as well as contemporary ideologies influence and form the meaning of narration beyond the narrative level. This is the moment when narrative becomes discourse. The narrative is put in a narrative situation, a narrative framework, which adapts to a certain extent to the external world the narrative is exposed to. Narrative code is flexible, the narrative level can open to the new circumstances, and the narrative is adapted to and situated in the world in which the narrative is consumed.  

With the background idea of the three basic levels of narrative Barthes has described in his introduction, the following chapters build the bridge from enhanced e-books to the double process which makes narrative work: structure and meaning. As will be shown, the process of giving meaning to narrative is closely connected to the enormous potency of mental imagery as the means to reach the imagination. As adumbrated in the introduction, the following sections show that enhanced e-books do not lack in the maintenance of a linear structure and thus qualify as full-fledged narratives.

2.5 The construction of story

As the paper showed through Barthes’ analysis, stories can never be experienced directly; they are always picked up through a narrative discourse. Thus, stories can be adapted; they are not necessarily bound to any particular discourse, to any particular mediator. They can travel from one prose rendition to another but remain recognizable as the same story. But then, what is necessary for the story to be recognized?

On the one hand, it is what dominates the receiver’s individual but biased perception. Everybody reads differently and thus identifies and appraises events of a story individually. But stories are not only recognizable by diligent readers and how they construct the story from the narrative discourse. So on the other hand, a text is recognisable as a story when it has ‘successfully controlled the process of story

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This process of story construction is the narrative ‘bone structure’ of a narrative work. There is for instance the narrative bone structure of a rich man who falls in love with the poor girl next door, which can be embedded in different narrative discourses where the bone structure of the story is maintained but open to revision. The core elements of the story persist and can show up in different incarnations. There are constituent events, Barthes uses the term ‘nuclei’, which drive the story forward, turn the story or lead to other events and can release revelatory power of a story. Supplementary events, the ‘catalyses’, are not necessary for the story, they can be removed and the story is still recognizable. A story can constantly change, in its events, characters and settings.87

The concept of narrative discourse enables the story to freely move within the narrative framework of the discourse, which adapts to the external digital world the narrative is exposed in the twenty-first century. Therefore, stories ‘can be conveyed in a variety of media, with a variety of devices, none of which, including the device of a narrator, will necessarily be present in any particular narrative.’88 The degree of medium dependence of the story can be discussed, of course. There are voices, like Seymour Chatman,89 who acknowledge that text-based presentation may express narrative contents more easily than e.g. oral- or picture-based presentation.90 Although language-supported forms of narrative might be those forms which offer the fullest implementation of the story, other forms of media, like non-textual digital enhancements in enhanced e-books, can serve the requirements of narrative, as long as they convey the story in a communicative structure from the giver to the recipient.91 These thoughts open the question if digital enhancements in fiction novels are actual non-text-based enhancements which are elements of the story and can serve the requirements of narrative. The second conclusion will answer these speculations.

2.6 Second conclusion: Enhanced e-book fiction novels fit in the concept of linear storytelling

As the paper has shown so far, narratives need to follow a certain structure and narrative linearity. Coming back to the second leading question of this paper, if

91 M.-L. Ryan (ed.), Narrative across Media. The Languages of Storytelling, p. 15.
enhanced e-books still follow the traditional idea of narrative, it is necessary to elucidate the narrative coherence and continuity in enhanced e-books.

The concept of story requires a coherent set of entities and a recoverable chronological order of connected events. But as stated, a story can constantly change, in its events, characters and settings. What need to persist are the core elements of the story, they have to follow a certain order which proceeds chronologically from the beginning to the end although the narrative discourse may present them in a different order. But how flexible is this order of a story, what are the limits and how fixed are they? When Barthes wrote ‘An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative’ in the 1960s, he saw the tradition of narrative threatened by the world it is exposed – a world of technical achievements and changes where vanguard creators and readers of narrative started to break with existing rules. Digital publishing which started in the 1980s allowed experiments with the tradition of narrative under digital conditions. New forms of narrative found fertile ground in the field of digital publishing and storytelling: electronic literature and hypertext fiction shook the literary world to the very foundations. Hypertext narrative as a type of electronic literature which

makes use of the hypertext linking function to allow readers to shift
instantaneously to other virtual spaces in which almost anything can be found
[…] – supplemental narrative discourse, alternate continuations of the story,
fragments of still other narratives – but links can also consist of footnote
material, definitions, pictures, poems, music, and so on.\textsuperscript{93}

Giving a deeper explanation of hypertext fiction is beyond the scope of this paper, of course. Nonetheless it is to figure out that in hypertext fiction the traditional idea of linear storytelling is often not in evidence anymore. As the thesis stated earlier, non-linearity is not per se unusual in narrative discourse. Going forward or backward has always been usual practice in story-telling. But the definition of story implies the idea of a linear order, following text in an order from earlier events to later events, in the one direction that time moves. So when it comes to ask if hypertext is still narrative in the

\textsuperscript{92} Electronic literature is text which is born digital, it is not print literature which is digitized with certain enhancements but is a digital object which was exclusively created to be read on screen. Hypertext fiction is a genre of electronic literature. (see K. Hayles, \textit{Electronic Literature} (Notre Dame: University Notre Dame Press, 2008), p. 3.)

\textsuperscript{93} H. P. Abbott, \textit{The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative}, p. 33.
traditional sense it needs to be answered whether linearity in the story predominates over non-linearity.\textsuperscript{94}

As stated earlier, a narrative gets meaning when it develops a coherent structure, when it follows a logically rather than a chronologically organised linear storyline with reasonable causation. Contrary to hypertext fiction, enhanced e-books fulfil these requirements. Embedded videos about the writing process neither deal with the story itself nor do they contribute to the storyline in form of constituent or supplementary events. With or without these embeddings, the story can be recognized in the narrative discourse it was put; the story holds the capacity to represent events in a logic order, produces narrative building blocks which subsequently build the more complex forms in the narrative; the narrative discourse through which the story is picked up stays untouched through digital embeddings. The enhanced version of \textit{The Hobbit} is using illustrations and manuscripts which did not appear in the original version, they do not contribute in any manner to the storyline just as a foreword by Christopher Tolkien about the writing process does not deliver additional information relevant for the story but only for the reader. The same goes for Stephen Kings novel \textit{11/22/63}. With an additional documentary film, written and narrated by Stephen King and enhanced with historic footage, the reader is taken back to the time of 1963. The enhanced version of Ken Follett’s \textit{Edge of Eternity} includes behind-the-scenes videos of the author as he travels through different cities to research the major events for his story. And to mention lastly, Gerd Schilldorfer’s thriller \textit{Falsch} is enhanced with images and maps to follow the route of the characters and a photo gallery with background information about the places and era.

In relation to the central subject of the present paper, it is to argue that digital enhancements in current literary works, respectively fiction novels, do not function as structural elements of the narrative but as paratextual elements. At this point it is important to apply Genette’s five features which define the status of paratextual elements, the spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic and functional characteristics, to the properties of digital enhancements in fiction novels.

Some digital enhancements are located within the text as peritextual elements, like maps, illustrations or images. Others, like videos, photo galleries or historical timelines, can rather be located outside the text, as epitextual elements. The appearance of enhancements can be temporally situated at the same time as the text, as they are

\textsuperscript{94} H. P. Abbott, \textit{The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative}, pp. 33-34.
(internally or externally) incorporated in the text corpus. Sometimes, as the temporal situation implies, embedded videos can also be previously published to either announce the release of the book itself or of the enhanced version into the market. The substantial status of digital enhancements is mostly not of a textual kind, as enhancements try to implicate new sensory levels of reading experience.

Genette says that paratexts can be conveyed in other types of manifestation than textual ones. These types may be iconic, material or factual elements. Digital enhancements can be seen as those non-textual elements. They are either iconic elements, like maps, photo galleries, moving images or illustrations, historical timelines and also sound effects embedded in the text corpus. Enhancements can also be factual elements, which exist apart from the text but are contextually affiliated, like videos with interviews and comments of the author. According to Genette, factual elements can be the age or the sex of the author. Digital enhancements can be seen as factual elements which convey an even stronger explanatory power about the work as a whole. Due to detailed information about the writing process, the author and his/her writing is becoming more paramount. Factual elements which only refer to the gender and literary honors of the author cannot deliver a comparable extensive contextualisation. Authorial enhancements in e-books are no longer invisible commentaries on the text, as Genette states, as they are inserted with not only informative but economic and entertaining purpose. Digital enhancements offer new input for the text interpretation: getting intimate thoughts of the author about his work was not possible only a few years ago, when the author’s personality was unreachable for the reader. The publisher also profits economically from the author’s popularity. Thus, the paratextual message is sent by a combination of authorial and the publisher’s input whereas the author’s participation is often put in the foreground and is thus dominating the paratextual message of the publisher. The receiving target group of a story with digital enhancements is clearly restricted because only those readers actually experience an amplified e-book who deliberately and knowingly buy an enhanced e-book version. Accordingly, enhancements in e-books exclusively address a selected group of tech-savvy, -versed and -equipped readers. Lastly, the functional property of paratexts is clearly definable for digital enhancements. They can be seen as a dedication to the verbal text which is in

\[95\] Nonetheless it is to consider with enhanced e-books in digital publishing that, of course, the publisher enables and guides the authorial paratextual message and is thus the authoritative part of the both.
itself untouched; they are in service of a new reading experience in addition to a plain text reception.

Enhancements are subordinated elements to the textual corpus, their functionality is circumscribed in the sense that they do not actively contribute to the storyline of the narrative but give additional information which might enable an easier access to the story world of the narrative. Nonetheless, as showed earlier, the reader is not necessarily obliged to watch embedded videos about the author’s writing process or to follow the journey of the characters on Google maps when he/she is reading an enhanced fiction novel as the story itself works with or without enhancements.

To conclude this chapter, enhancements in e-book fiction novels do not change the idea of linear storytelling. All these authorial and historical background information, images and maps do not actively intervene in the linear character of the story nor do they influence or change the narrative discourse. But this background information might influence the reader’s perception of the story. Those pre-assembled elements might restrict the infinite imaginative freedom of the reader. The knowledge about the writing process, the author’s intention and the places described in the book, might impact the unique property of fiction: the power of imagination. Based on the idea that ‘narrative understanding [is seen] as a process of communication in which the written text offers meaning and leads to interpretation through some degree of involvement on the part of the reader’, the next chapter focuses on how narratives gain meaning. But before the thesis has a closer look at the power of imagination for text perception, the paper paraphrases Barthes’ concluding idea about reading narratives. According to him, narrative implies two ways of reading: the horizontal and the vertical reading. The following chapter will, inter alia, shortly analyse his findings and will conclude with emphasising the importance of human imagery for literary reading.

3. How literary reading works – the power of imagination

To capture two effects with regard to the discussion so far: Consuming narrative always incorporates interpreting the narrative and interpreting the narrative always means elaborating ideas and judging factualities. Both processes derive, for one thing, from the general understanding of narrative, the sophisticated interplay of story and narrative discourse. As Ryan argues, ‘narrative is a textual act of representation – a text that

96 Y. B. Popova, ‘Narrativity and enaction: the social nature of literary narrative understanding’, p. 3.
encodes a particular type of meaning. The definition remains unspecific about what type of signs is used to encode this meaning.\textsuperscript{97} For another, interpreting narrative cannot happen without human imagination, ‘narrative is a mental image – a cognitive construct – built by the interpreter as a response to the text.’\textsuperscript{98}

Giving a very rough first idea, literary reading is a cognitive process of encoding text – from strings of words, the reader generates thoughts and constructs images around existing patterns of experience. The reader tests the textual ideas critically from his reading experience and associates text within the free flow of imagination in a very intimate mode of reading.\textsuperscript{99} The reader has always control over his/her reading. He/she can decide to reread, to pause to reflect, he/she can skip over sentences and controls the pace of reading speed, can skim or brood over the text.\textsuperscript{100} Literary reading does not mean to give the reader finished knowledge but to give stimulating information about things which begin to become unique knowledge through personal experience within a social world.\textsuperscript{101} The reader can only experience the form of the narrative but cannot observe presented reality because, ‘[i]t is the passion to discover meaning, it is a striving towards a higher order of relation, which also carries its emotions, its hopes, its threats, its triumphs. What goes on in a narrative is, from the referential (real) point of view, strictly nothing.’\textsuperscript{102} This nothing, like Barthes states, gets meaning through human imagination.

To quote the American philosopher and cognitive scientist Nigel J.T. Thomas,

[\textit{Imagination is what makes our sensory experience meaningful, enabling us to interpret and make sense of it, whether from a conventional perspective or from a fresh, original, individual one. It is what makes perception more than the mere physical stimulation of sense organs. It also produces mental imagery, visual and otherwise, which is what makes it possible for us to think outside the confines of our present perceptual reality, to consider memories of the past and possibilities for the future, and to weigh alternatives against one another. Thus,}

\textsuperscript{97} M.-L. Ryan (ed.), Narrative across Media. The Languages of Storytelling, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{98} M.-L. Ryan (ed.), Narrative across Media. The Languages of Storytelling, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{100} D. G. Singer and J. L. Singer, Imagination and Play in the Electronic Age, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{102} R. Barthes, ‘An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative’, p. 271.
imagination makes possible all our thinking about what is, what has been, and, perhaps most important, what might be.\(^{103}\)

Thomas' definition of imagination will be the guiding idea through this chapter. Nonetheless it must be mentioned that the term ‘imagination’ is used to convey a different meaning from ‘mental imagery’, a term which Thomas has introduced in his definition of imagination. The term ‘mental imagery’\(^{104}\) enters the field in relation to human consciousness. As mental imagery was and still is a highly debated object in philosophical, literary and neuro-scientific discourse, the paper cannot focus more deeply on that topic. A clear demarcation to imagination would require a more extended analytical approach in a larger perspective and would exceed the scope of this thesis. Thus, the thesis picks out imagination as the central theme in Chapter 3 and sticks to the definition of Thomas in the subsequent argumentation.

### 3.1 The process of literary reading

The stream of thought is a central feature of human consciousness. Human consciousness has long not only been the object of philosophical and religious debates but is today scientifically defined as ‘in its simplest form […] the awareness of one’s environment and the capacity to use one’s perceptions to attempt to steer one’s motor apparatus through a given physical situation.’\(^{105}\) Human consciousness manifests itself best as it is able to assign meaning to experience by associating new events to related earlier images and experiences. The human brain labels and categorizes experience, which allows the efficient retrieval of memories. The creation of images, the existence of mental imagery, makes human consciousness possible.

Reading fiction probably shows best how human consciousness works, given that the perception of fiction always implies the power of imagination, the ability of the individual human brain to reproduce images which originally derived from the basic senses of the perception of text through literary reading reflected on one’s

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\(^{104}\) ‘Mental imagery (varieties of which are sometimes colloquially referred to as ‘visualizing’, ‘seeing in the mind’s eye’, ‘hearing in the head’, ‘imagining the feel of’, etc.) is quasi-perceptual experience; it resembles perceptual experience, but occurs in the absence of the appropriate external stimuli. It is also generally understood to bear intentionality (i.e., mental images are always images of something or other), and thereby to function as a form of mental representation.’ (definition see Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mental-imagery/> (13 February, 2015).

consciousness. These basic senses derive from ‘pictures in the mind’s eye’, mental conversations, anticipated smells or touches which are reshaped and recombined into new images, by forming diverse and multiple associations and weaving experiences into relations.\textsuperscript{106} Those images can then be transformed in human thought and the story of the narrative starts to be understood. Understanding of narratives happens through the power of imaginative capacities and mental storytelling. Consequently, interpreting narratives happens because mental imagery and the capacity to visualise in reading are different for every single reader.

It is of remarkable importance, of course, to consider the interplay between the images which the verbal text delivers with words and how the reader correlates these narrated images to his/her own imagination to create mental images and thus can interpret the narrative.\textsuperscript{107} In brief, literary reading imposes the demand for the conversion of written text to cognitive perception, followed by meaning extraction.

But how does it work in detail, this meaning extraction out of a narrative? The process of literary reading will be examined elaborately in the next sections. The paper tries to follow the process of narrative interpretation in order to fully reach the level of absorption in fiction.

\textbf{3.1.1 Literary reading: a causative approach}

As remarked earlier in Chapter 2, narrative implies two ways of reading, the horizontal and the vertical reading. In narrative relations, horizontal reading explains the process of articulation, the dispersal of functional units throughout the story. It implies reading unit by unit and thus forms the logical and linear order of the narrative. Vertical reading comes with the process of integration, when the units are collected into higher ranks and compensate the complexity of units situated in one level, are interlocked with different levels, give meaning to the narrative and make the story move forward. Every reader has to go through certain levels (the level of function, of action and of narrative


\textsuperscript{107} Some other observation should be mentioned here. Readers do especially access the mental imagery of childhood locations through the reading. In reading he/she comforts him-/herself by reliving memories of protection, the reader participates in his/her childhood intimacy where he or she felt most protected. Those locative childhood spaces influence the reading experience, the reader often even read the description of the childhood space which seems to be represented by the text. This remark seems interesting with regard to the importance of mental imagery in fiction novels and their set of instructions for mental composition. (see M. Burke, \textit{Literary Reading, Cognition and Emotion. An Exploration of the Oceanic Mind} (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 6-7.).
course, the last being articulated by its giver and receiver) in a narrative following the suspense of the story.

The reading process by itself is a systematic text encoding procedure. It starts on the phonematic level, when the reader is physically recognizing units. Then the reader reaches the level of the single sentence with the highest level of combinatory freedom because every sentence is still read as a self-contained unit. As soon as the reader is dealing with sequences, which gather a group of sentences into small micro-sequences, he/she soon enters the level where micro-sequences culminate into broader actions, gaining an even greater measure of freedom and flexibility until the reader reaches the level of narrative discourse. The narrative discourse is accountable for the representation of the story, as the paper has show in the previous chapter. Thus, the reality of the narrative does not lie in this order of actions that make the narrative up but in the logic that is unfolded, exposed and confirmed by the reader.\textsuperscript{108}

Paraphrasing Barthes’ conclusion of his analyse of narrative, the passion of following a narrative is to discover meaning. The passion to follow the elements of a story comes from those elements which evoke the strong combination of feeling and thought which is experienced during reading. Thus, those elements affect how the narrative is understood, and further, how the narrative finds its meaning. Things get meaning when they develop a coherent narrative structure, when they exhibit causation. The inevitable linearity every story exhibits, the distribution of events in an orderly and consecutive fashion, gratifies the need for causation.\textsuperscript{109} To put it briefly, ‘understanding is apprehending a meaning’.\textsuperscript{110}

\subsection*{3.1.2 Literary reading: a cognitive approach}

The apprehension of meaning is not able to be experienced without the reader’s imaginative input during the reading process. In order to understand a narrative, the reader re-creates moments and situations. Understanding a text is an associative and therefore memory-enriched process. Literal content is based on syntactic and lexical rules which are verifiable by personal semantic memory. The syntactic and lexical rules and conventions are common to all speakers of the language but the semantics are always dependent on the reader’s own memory structures and the ability to cue related

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associations through rich memory.\textsuperscript{111} Thus, as the thesis figured out before, understanding is on the one hand the ability to comprehend the textual conventions of a continuous text, more precisely a narrative, and the embedded structure of the story. On the other hand, in order to apprehend the meaning of a narrative, the human mind uses memory and imagination. The reading process works from text-related input to text-related imaginative involvement, so to say. The power of imagination is a characteristic feature of interpreting fiction narrative:

[If we define narrative in cognitive terms, it is not a linguistic object but a mental image. While it may be true that only language can express the causal relations that hold narrative scripts together, this does not mean that a text needs to represent these relations explicitly to be interpreted as narrative.\textsuperscript{112}]

At its most fundamental level, literary reading ‘is an outcome of our psychobiological inheritance’,\textsuperscript{113} which involves the expression of feelings and self-perception. Literary reading alters the reader to new perspectives on him-/herself and the social and cultural environment.\textsuperscript{114}

But still, as stated above, different people read narrative differently – because narrative consciousness varies. Readers see some narrative as stories actually experienced, the template of effects which always follow causes could easily be applied to a reading experience and thus to the interpretation of meaning. Bringing events into a certain coherent order can also override the idea of what is true and what is false. Stories which follow the qualities of continuity and narrative coherence are convincing but not necessarily real in the reader’s interpretation.\textsuperscript{115} Therefore, narratives, however convincing, ‘carry ideas and judgments with them’\textsuperscript{116} which are unique to every reader and do not claim to truth in the sense of general validity for every reader.

\textsuperscript{111} V. Nell, \textit{Lost in a Book. The Psychology of Reading for Pleasure}, pp. 78-82.
\textsuperscript{112} M.-L. Ryan (ed.), \textit{Narrative across Media. The Languages of Storytelling}, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{114} D. S. Miall and D. Kuiken, ‘What is literariness? Three components of literary reading’, p. 125.
In order to understand a narrative, the reader evaluates whatever he/she reads, puts it in comparison to experienced events and builds new ideas and concepts from what he/she reads. This process makes a story understandable for the reader. Some concepts bear the author’s signature; some are apparently visible through the narrative guidance of the narrator, others through the imaginative ability of the reader’s mind.

Delving deeper into the evaluative nature of literary reading, it is of great value to look at David S. Miall’s and Don Kuiken’s three components of literary reading. The first component is the occurrence of stylistic variations and narrative features that are distinctively associated with literary texts, e.g. metaphors or polysemic nouns or descriptive passages which evoke striking moments. Those stylistic and narrative variations confront the reader with unfamiliarity which unsettles his/her conventional understanding of meaning. This process is the second component of literary reading, the occurrence of defamiliarisation. The narrative features might be devices which provide shifts in the action sequences, contrasting thematic entities or insights in character perspective, those expressive devices which create the fictive story world of the narrative. He/she is modifying these unfamiliarities, reflecting on the implications on his/her understanding of the text and trying to find familiarising response to the stylistic or narrative features. Thus, the reader is evaluating what he/she reads. He/she starts to judge and even transform the images and emotions which do not seem immediately obvious. The reader is starting to interact with those properties which influence the reading process and the text perception. This process is the third component of literary reading, the modification of conventional concepts and feelings with reinterpretative effort. To put it briefly, ‘[literary reading] is constituted when stylistic or narrative variations defamiliarise conventionally understood referents and prompt reinterpretative transformations of a conventional feeling or concept.’

According to Miall’s and Kuiken’s empirical studies, the primary vehicle for this contextual search are feelings the reader has once experienced, the actively living

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experience is involved through particular literary reading.\textsuperscript{119} And feelings evoked by defamiliarising story features are specific to every individual reader and permeate this reader’s interpretive engagement with the story. Thus, literature evokes ‘what is individual in the individual.’\textsuperscript{120} It is not only to understand a narrative but feeling it. Whenever the reader understands what he/she reads, any feelings proposed to him/her are immediately assumed to him/her, it is like if ‘mental objects rise up from the depths of consciousness into the light of recognition.’\textsuperscript{121}

3.1.4 Literary reading: an emotional approach

As the paper just showed, interpreting narrative always involves an active living experience, feelings the reader has once experienced. This view can be applied in a more precise framework which Miall and Kuiken have established in 2002. They classified four different types of feelings which are involved in the experiential process of literary reading and explain the emotional approach to examine the process of literary reading: evaluative, narrative, aesthetic and modifying feelings.

The reader’s primary goal is the pursuit of evaluative feelings like pleasure, enjoyment or satisfaction, evaluative feelings do not involve text interpretation but the text as a whole. The reader feels relaxation and familiarity with a view on his/her own life, during reading he/she takes part in something he/she is already familiar with from his/her own life or from reading other books. In contrast, narrative feelings are prompted by events and characters in the fictional and imaginary world of the text. Narrative feeling plays a mimetic role for the reader. He/she engages in a scene, imagines him-/herself in the position of a character, therefore narrative feelings unfold along conventional pre-scribed lines. In contrast, aesthetic feelings are prompted by the formal features of the text. Aesthetic feelings reflect heightened interest in those passages which hold the reader’s attention and which formal aspects of a text the reader appreciates most. Those formal features of a text may initiate changes in the reader’s interpretation of the text’s meaning because they motivate attempts to revise the reader’s existing framework for understanding narratives.\textsuperscript{122} Lastly, modifying feelings

\textsuperscript{120} D. S. Miall and D. Kuiken, ‘What is literariness? Three components of literary reading’, p. 134.
\textsuperscript{121} G. Poulet, ‘Phenomenology of Reading’, p. 57.
‘evoke [...] personal memories and reflections in a manner that provides a framework for understanding subsequent narrative developments.’

While reading, the reader is recollecting personal memory in two contrasting modes. The properties of modifying feelings can evoke either remembered or fresh emotions while reading. In remembered emotions, the reader finds similarities between the narrative world and comparably scripted situations in his memory. The reader is recognizing the settings from either autobiographical comparisons, like a character’s behaviour, or from similar scenes he/she is familiar with from another text. In experiencing fresh emotions, the reader realises something in the narrative which he/she has not previously experienced. Nonetheless, whenever the reader starts to create fresh emotions he/she returns to implications from previous readings and similar settings and actions, ‘the experience of feelings in one situation leads to the re-experiencing of those feelings in situations that are similar’. Thus, feelings which occur during literary reading have anticipatory properties which enable the reader to steadily monitor his/her current response to text.

3.1.5 Literary reading: a mental approach

Reading opens minds. While reading, as George Poulet states in his essay ‘Phenomenology of Reading’, the human brain perceives a number of mental entities which sort themselves in an interior world of words, images, thoughts and ideas which are, in order to exist, dependent on the reader’s consciousness. In contrast, exterior objects, objects from the real world, as Michael Burke calls them, can dispense with any interference from the mind, they are directly perceivable images. Interior objects are purely mental entities. As soon as the reader surrounds him-/herself with words in fiction, he/she enters the ‘world of unreality’, as Burke calls it, constituted by language, and steps of the direct perception of reality. The transmutation from reality to a fictional equivalent enables the reader to experience an inner universe of mental entities. Those mental entities are subjectified, mental objects, objects which have become compatible with the reader’s consciousness.

Literary reading, the process of forming mental images from the perception of linguistic symbols, is a non-immediate process of ready-formed images. The elementary

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base for this process comes from the emotive and somatically infused long-term memory, ‘a kind of theoretical storage system that is available to cueing and is characterised by the notions of duration, accessibility and size.’ Imagery which is channelled through the perception of linguistic symbols is grounded in the unconscious remembrance of past events and lived experiences. Due to only having black marks on a page and the limited verbal expressiveness of the words, reading fiction relies on imaginative visions whereas the superior visual expressiveness of direct images of video or film can rely on its primary pictorial input. Objects from the real world are directly perceivable images which are formed in the brain where they evoke aesthetic and emotive responses represented in the object. This initial neurobiological process of real imagery, where information travels from the eye to the brain on to the visual cortex, takes place in every human brain in broadly the same way. In contrast, mental imagery is a very individual process, not only partly very conscious during thinking and reflection but also very unconscious during dreaming or reading. Thus, every literary discourse process is different to every single reader and his/her autobiographical memory and experience and has fundamental meaning to his/her life. Locations, events and activities which are carried in the mental imagery of the reading process bind the reader to the very fundamental questions of life: who I am, where I come from and where I am going to.

Thus, the dissimilarity between real and mental imagery is that real imagery relies on direct stimuli from the outside whereas mental imagery mainly depends on mind-based input which comes from long-term personally experienced memory evoked by the text. Meaning not only comes from the reader’s experienced memory but also from background knowledge corresponding to cultural subjectivism and literary precognition. Like the British psychologist Sir Frederic Charles Bartlett suggested, the comprehension of a new situation, in literary discourse the new imaginative situations, can only be perceived and understood when relevant areas of existing knowledge are activated and organised, always affected by factors such as emotions, interests and attitudes. The power of prior knowledge of previous texts and previous experience of the reader can produce substantial interpretation of text whereas pure semantic content and only textual information can actually be countermanded. For understanding the meaning of text, reader-based knowledge, both of the real and of previous literary reading, plays an

important role. To some extent Bartlett’s theory counters Julia Kristeva’s concept of intertextuality, which says, in short, that all texts are made of other texts. She emphasises the idea that texts are not hermetic products which function as closed systems but are always in a state of production, with no stable meaning at all. According to her, each text encourages the reader to interpret what is produced at the moment of reading, due to the cross-fertilization of his reading knowledge. From Kristeva’s approach it is to say that narrative has no borders but is always part of an ever-changing tapestry of outreach events. And this ever-changing tapestry makes reading a very personal and intimate act, as every reader is reading the narrative with his/her very inimitable reading memory. And this memory, developed and shaped through the narrative discourse, the reader has experienced through the human ability of imagination.

3.2 The phenomenon of literary reading – the loss of material reality

As the paper has shown so far, experience, biographical memory and feelings provide interpretative assistance which refers to ‘external states, events, goals and other internal states, emotional reactions, actions, and outcomes’ which help the reader to understand the given text and to undertake interpretive activities. The power of imagination is what makes the reading of fiction novels a unique pleasure to every single reader.

Reading a work of fiction is like a ‘cinema of inner consciousness’ which takes place not on screen but in the reader’s mind. The setting, the characters, the events are evoked as images, the primary sense of sight prevails but additionally, the reader starts to experience taste and smell, he/she can e.g. the feel panic of the characters, smell the fragrance of fresh-ground coffee they enjoy and hear the heartbeat of lovers as the narrative moves through the reader’s consciousness.

Mental storytelling conveys the power of absorption in a fictional world. The immersion in text is a phenomenon of fiction reading. The reader’s subjective experience, the route he/she follows from encoding words to perception to
comprehension of the text often ends in the creation of a new world. Fiction reading has the power to absorb the reader completely in a fictional world, a construct of a skeletal story structure and imaginative elaboration. Being completely lost in another world, the reader’s state of consciousness can be changed through entrancement. Thereby reading itself is effortless.\(^{136}\) As soon as the reader is immersed in the story, his/her mind and not only words guides through the narrative. But as Victor Nell notes further, as soon as outside distractions demand for response, like replying to questions or visual and auditory stimulation, the sense of effortfulness in reading increases. Once an absorbed reader is disturbed in obedience to a variety of outer stimulus, reading attention is perturbed and the reading process becomes effortful. As a result, the reader’s attention is drawn away from a self-concern to the external environment of the text. Reading attention, so to say, can hardly be shared – it is either focused on the reader him-/herself and the story existing exclusively in his/her mind, or on the external environment of the text.\(^{137}\)

3.3 Third conclusion: Enhanced e-book fiction novels correlate with the power of imagination

When Nell stated his findings in the late 1980s, digital reading was not the focus of his studies. Applying his thoughts to contemporary reading modalities, reading enhanced e-books certainly demands actively for the reader’s anticipation. Embedded technical properties like video, maps, galleries or links, the reader is interfered with in his/her self-concern due to the interactivity between text and device-dependent sensory perception. These distraction concerns also arise amongst reading communities on the internet. Jane Litte, an American book blogger, finds reading enhanced e-books is not very satisfying for her:

> What I vaguely remember about Cornick’s [referring to Nicola Cornick’s romance novel ‘Unmasked’] enhanced ebook was that it took me outside the book. I’d read, click on a link and rather than having the information slide smoothly from within the content, a new window was launched and I was out of the book, onto the internet.\(^{138}\)

\(^{136}\) It is important to bear in mind that this point of view argues from the reader’s perspective and his/her subjective perception of effortlessness may also be misreported effort.\(^{137}\) V. Nell, *Lost in a Book: The Psychology of Reading for Pleasure*, pp. 73-76.\(^{138}\) J. Litte, ‘Enhanced ebooks v. Collector’s Hardcovers’, Dear Author, 07 July, 2013 <http://dearauthor.com/ebooks/enhanced-ebooks-v-collectors-hardcovers/> (10 February, 2015).
This concern leads to the last question which this paper posed in the beginning, namely how digital enhancement influences the act of interpretation of the narrative, the fiction novel. This last intermediate conclusion tries to find answers to that.

Seeing the enhanced e-book with regard to the first of the five different approaches to literary reading, the causational approach, enhancements in fiction novels do not enter the linear story world of the narrative from a structural point of view. Digital enhancements neither intervene in the order of actions that make up the narrative nor do they counter the logic that is unfolded, exposed and confirmed by the reader: the causative structure of the narrative is maintained. As for the cognitive approach of literary reading, enhancements in e-books start to pose the question as to how they engage as an intermediate between reading only verbal input and the reader’s individual ‘psychobiological inheritance’ the reading process follows. Enhancements are pictorial input which might impact the ability to comprehend the textual conventions.

So if additional digital material is, as shown earlier, epitextual paratext, which can be seen as an intermediate between textual causality and textual interpretation, how does it affect the interpretative act, how does it influence the reader’s understanding of the text? The evaluative approach can shed some more light on this matter.

During literary reading stylistic or narrative variations defamiliarise conventionally understood referents of text. Thus, the reader modifies these unfamiliarities and starts to judge and even transform the images and emotions which do not seem immediately obvious to understand the meaning of the narrative. To some extent, visual or auditory supplements cannot be seen as a form of narrative variation which is unfamiliar to the reader. The reader can factually see or hear the variation, it is immediately obvious and does not need any further reinterpretative effort from the reader. The process of the modification of the unfamiliar to an appropriate context is becoming superfluous. The primary vehicle of this contextual search, as Miall and Kuiken name it, the feelings the reader has once experienced to modify new understanding start to become incapacitated by the persuasive power of exterior objects.

These modifying feelings, as the emotional approach explains, are the personal memories and experiences which build the framework for understanding the meaning of the narrative. The reader recognises narrative settings from either autobiographical comparisons or from similar scenes he/she is familiar with from other texts. But when a
video is implemented in an e-book which visually describes all the places and locations the characters have been to, when the narrative setting is somehow explained by an embedded travel journal or Google maps, the reader does not necessarily recognise from his/her remembered emotion but from the new, external input. Those digitally enhanced elements can therefore be seen as fresh emotions which have not been previously experienced. At this point it is important to distinguish the moment when the pictorial enhancement is actually consumed. The order in which the reader consumes the text and the enhancements is relevant for the intensity of the experience of fresh emotion: if the reader for example consumes an enhanced map of travelled places described in the book before reading the actual verbal explanations, the reader perceives the fresh emotion without any textual input which comes from the textual depictions in the book. Vice versa, the pictorial enhancement might influence the perception of text-based fresh emotion because there is already a pre-formed idea in the reader’s mind of the travelled places which are described in written form later during the reading process. For both cases, fresh emotions build on emotions which can be remembered because, as explained in Chapter 1, no image works without mental imagery. Therefore, the modifying feelings can be seen to be restricted due to digital enhancements in the narrative.

Finally, as the mental approach suggests, the reader exits on the one hand, to some extent, from the ‘world of unreality’ as Poulet calls it, and on the other hand, from the world of personally experienced imagination. Autobiographical memory and experience and their fundamental meaning to the interpretative act of narrative become less important when those personal attributes are, at least partly, substituted by exterior objects as digital enhancements. From that, the ‘world of unreality’ is shaken because of direct stimuli from the outside: visual and auditory external stimulation, which intervenes in the imaginative process. Interviews with the author about the locations and the writing process, photos, illustrations or the terra incognita mapped from an interactive Google view may override mental imagery and undermine, to some extent, the power of imagination.

Nonetheless, it is important at this point to undertake an excursus back to the idea of reading hypertext fiction novels in order to point out that digital enhancements in fiction novels have very much less impact on the reading process and text perception in comparison to hypertext fiction novels. There are obvious reasons which can explain
why reading hypertext presents some difficulties for the reader which do not occur for the consumption of digital enhancements.

The interpretive freedom in hypertext fiction is curtailed when the text burdens the reader with cognitive demands, when the responsibility to determine the semantics of a link, of the story, lies with the reader. Above that, readers have problems to deal with the chronological instability of hypertext narratives. Presented with a series of narrative forks, the reader feels to some extent mentally blank. Dealing with multiple choices to move forward in the story, the reader feels uncomfortable having to constantly make navigational decisions to enable the continuation of the story. But once the reader has made a decision on a certain branch, he/she might begin to wonder about the constraints that put a limit to the range of other optional choices he/she could have made instead. In comparison to a linear narrative, hypertext fiction imposes freedom of choice according to the reader’s own motivations. This demands active decision making which might overburden the reader and impairs the pleasure of reading. The problem arises that the reader constantly asks if he/she has made the right choices.

In comparison, the reader of linear narrative can rely on the story the narrative tells. When asking Why the heck did she marry him? the reader poses a rather trivial question which implicitly accepts the fixity of the narrative. Whereas in hypertext fiction, the reader has to make nontrivial decisions about What man shall she marry – Brad or Matt or Jason? … Can I reverse the decision for Matt? Or shall I rather combine the choices not to marry anyone and buy a dog instead? – The reader is obliged to manipulate the text, to intervene in the fictional world and does so urge on real-life proclivities and anxieties.¹³⁹

Fiction narrative thus becomes part of the reader’s real world which is not the intention of fiction narrative, because ‘[t]he moment a part of reality appears in its stark nonfictional form within fiction, the latent reference that fiction maintains to reality is interrupted, and the fiction itself begins to come apart.’¹⁴⁰

To sum up, enhancements in e-books can be judged as slight confinements of the individual imaginary freedom. To some extent, the reader’s imagination is guided from digital enhancements and this guidance has impact on his/her text interpretation. As soon as the reader shares the same pictorial input, he/she also shares the same digital enhancements with the whole reading audience what means that the very personal and

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¹⁴⁰ M. Chaouli, ‘How Interactive Can Fiction Be?’, p. 613.
intimate act of reading fiction novels, the creation of a new world is not an unique process anymore. The reader-based knowledge which plays an important role for the interpretation of fiction is somehow standardised when all readers consume the same paratextual input.

This neglect of imaginary freedom leads to another consequence, the neglect of immersion in the fiction novel. The power of absorption, which mental storytelling conveys when the reader’s mind is guided through the narrative, can, as Nell made clear earlier, be disturbed in obedience to outer stimulus. Digital enhancements in fiction novels can be judged as a type of disruptor. Digital embeddings in enhanced e-books are, as introduced in Chapter 1.3, dynamic kinetic properties within the enhanced e-book which invite the reader to interact physically and kinaesthetically with the medium on another than only the verbal level of narrativity. The text-based layer is extended with a non-textual layer that puts the reader, either offline or online, out of the pure textual context in order to fully enjoy the enhancements. The external distraction through opening windows, interruption in downloading, buffering or freezing images might diminish the power of absorption in fiction and can take the reader out of the narrative and make him/her exit from ‘the cinema of the mind.’

Final conclusion
The present thesis has investigated two characteristics of fiction novels, narrative linearity and mental imagery, and their continuity in enhanced fiction novels in order to answer the initial question, why enhanced fiction novels have not (yet) conquered the digital reading market. The paper revolved around the concern as to how far narrative linearity is neglected and the power of imagination is restricted due to digital enhancements in fiction novels.

Enhanced e-books as they are described in this thesis are literary works which work with or without amplifications. The reader is not obliged to experience the enhancements if he/she does not want to; nevertheless the reader is bound to digital support and computational capacities. But the textual story exists and works with or without digital support and enhancements, as Chapter 1 elaborated. This textual story can be perceived through a chronological storyline and the power of human imagination. Imagination in narrative is always embedded in the reading process itself. Reading a narrative means

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following a story with a stream of consciousness which makes imagination work and which enables the act of interpretation. Narrative interpretation always functions in a dual role. The process of interpreting narrative originates on the one hand in the general understanding of narrative, the interplay of story and narrative discourse. This line of argumentation has been substantiated in detail in Chapter 2. Enhanced fiction novels stick to the attributes of linear storytelling and are of an obviously different nature than hypertext novels, as the previous section has clearly depicted. The curtailment of interpretive freedom due to the burdens of cognitive demands in hypertext reading and the chronological instability of hypertext narratives do not occur in enhanced fiction novels. On the other hand, interpreting narrative always entails human imagination, as the paper showed in Chapter 3, and this process of interpretation and imaginative freedom can be confined due to digital enhancements in fiction novels.

In summary, enhanced e-books do not lack in narrative linearity but might neglect the freedom of imagination. Enhancements are perceived as paratextual messages, additional sensory modes of expression, such as sound, moving pictures, videos or maps, which influence the comprehension of the narrative more than exclusively verbal narrative can do.

It can be argued accordingly that language-only narratives might have the highest narrative potential because they are able to articulate a fully new and determined story because of their broad imaginative possibilities. But there actually can be narrative meanings which are better evoked through pictures, sounds or gestures than through language, an aspect which should not be declared a priori irrelevant to the narrative experience. Meanings, for example, which are conveyed by photos in an embedded photo gallery, enable the reader to better understand the narrative and give an idea about places the reader has neither experience in remembered nor in fresh emotion and autobiographical memory. Above that, non-verbal enhancements in fiction novels are not a phenomenon of the era of new media. Reading a traditional print version of W. G. Sebald’s *Austerlitz* the existence of images in the verbal text shows that also in the print era images made contributions to the text reception, but as the thesis showed in the beginning of Chapter 2, pictures themselves can never tell a whole story. The question is how the images intervene in the narrative.

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Coming back to the different types of digital enhancements in fiction novels the paper has depicted in Chapter 1, most of them are authorial contributions which are, of course, published in accordance with the publisher, collected and selected to support the story the author wants to convey. Therefore, digital enhancements of the second category, as defined in this thesis in Chapter 1.4, can be seen as paratextual elements, authorial or the publisher’s traces which do not actively contribute to the innermost narrative structure. Nonetheless, they do influence, as they appear as external, visual objects within a language world, the reading experience. As soon as text has audio and video material within the text by which the author preserves his/her ideas, his/her writing advancement and his/her feelings during the writing or by which the publisher adds supplementary information to the literary text, those embeddings impact the reader’s text perception.\(^{143}\)

But, just as Genette states, paratextual messages always serve in a subordinated function to the text. Paratextual messages are unable to create self-sufficient narrative worlds, they are dependent on other types of signs, the verbal signs of the text.\(^{144}\)

Finding an answer why enhanced fiction novels still have not (yet) conquered the digital reading market was approached with a look at the narrative linear consistency and the imaginary freedom of the product. As narrative linearity is not neglected in enhanced fiction novels at all, the determination of imaginary freedom through paratextual elements might give reason for the rather low popularity of enhanced fiction novels. But still, there must be other reasons, like technical and commercial restrictions, which have a stronger share in the fact that substantial sales success has not yet materialized. Digital enhancements in e-books are, paraphrasing Poulet, paratextual information which does not coincide with the fact that enhanced fiction novels are still mental entities of textual understanding and mental imagery. To say it in his words,

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\text{‘[w]hatever may be the sum of the information I acquire on Baudelaire or Racine, in whatever degree of intimacy I may live with their genius, I am aware that this contribution […] does not suffice to illuminate for me in its own inner meaning, in its formal perfection, and in the subjective principle which animates it, the particular work of Baudelaire or Racine the reading of which}
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\(^{143}\) G. Poulet, ‘Phenomenology of Reading’, p. 58.

now absorbs me. At this moment what matters to me is to live, from the inside, in a certain identity with the work and the work alone.\footnote{G. Poulet, ‘Phenomenology of Reading’, p. 58.}

It is the innermost self, where stories and imagination meet and where in the end, no digital enhancement can interfere.
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