

Hooked on a Hope of Love

A close reading of “the hook” in Chris Kraus’s
I Love Dick and William Corlett’s *Now and Then*

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Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between literature and psychology. It explores how literature has the capacity to describe different aspects of the psychological phenomenon known as “the hook”. In short, the hook is “a nervous, romanticising, compulsive fixation on another person with strong elements of panic and addiction” (Gran 287). Based on close readings of Chris Kraus’s *I Love Dick* and William Corlett’s *Now and Then*, I argue that fiction can be more nuanced than general psychological theories, and therefore an asset to the psychological field. I also claim that the field of literature can gain in the use of theory from psychology to investigate what happens in novels.

I begin by presenting Sissel Gran’s definition of the hook from 2010 and explaining how it differs from other types of unrequited love. Then I give an analysis of the hooks the characters of *I Love Dick* and *Now and Then* are trapped in, demonstrating how the form of the novels makes the hook appear. I look at how literary techniques, such as story versus text, point of view, the narrator, reliability, delay and characterisation have been used in *I Love Dick* and *Now and Then*, and what their effects are on the presentation of the character’s one-sided, obsessive and ultimately unrequited love. Further, I compare and contrast the two hooks. The hook in *I Love Dick* shows a spontaneous hook, as Chris K gets hooked on a friend of her husband after only one meeting and one phone call. It also shows how attachment history can play a part in creating a hook and how writing can be used to overcome it. The hook in *Now and Then* contributes to the field of psychology by exploring how a hook can last as long as Chris M’s does, by showing an example of a homosexual hook, by showing a way of getting off the hook and by exploring how a character can be predisposed to get a hook and uses it to shape his adult life.

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1 Introduction

In *Hekta på et håp om kjærlighet* from 2010, the Norwegian psychologist Sissel Gran introduces a new definition of a psychological phenomenon I will refer to as “the hook” – in Norwegian named “hekt” – together with her friend Nora Skaug. At the same time that Gran and Skaug launched their book, they also created a blog about the hook (<http://hektablogg.blogspot.com/>), that became very popular and where people shared their stories and found someone to talk to. I believe this shows the relevance of exploring the term and phenomenon of the hook further, as in a country of about five million people, their book (and blog) became so important to so many people.

Therefore, this thesis aims to explore the relationship between literature and psychology and investigate how the two can benefit from one another. Through the close readings of Chris Kraus’s *I Love Dick* and William Corlett’s *Now and Then*, I wish to illustrate that literature has the capability to describe different aspects of the psychological phenomenon of the hook. I argue that fiction can be more nuanced than general psychological theories, and therefore can be a potential asset to the psychological field. I also claim that the field of literature can benefit from psychological theories. Since literature can be a major shaping force in creating ways to look at the external reality, the use of psychological theories can be beneficial to the act of reading and understanding. My intent is to show how literature can confirm, discredit or revise theories from other fields, in this case from psychology. I will also explore how the form of the two novels make the hook appear clearer than it would in a report, article or study made purely for a psychological audience.

The book *Hekta på et håp om kjærlighet* is a mix of a real-life story and a psychological analysis. This displays the need for more than psychological theory to fully understand and explore the phenomenon of the hook. The book is divided into two parts. It begins with Skaug telling her real-life story, the story of how she became hooked, in the form of her diary. In the second part, Gran analyses, defines and tries to explain the psychological processes that made Skaug hooked, and can make other people hooked, too. She then describes how one can get off the hook and makes a plea for everyone not to be someone who tries to get another individual on the hook. Gran draws examples from the field of literature in her analysis to elucidate that it is not a new phenomenon, and that it appears in many shapes. John Donne’s poetry is used to describe human emotions and the need of attachment to others (245, 290). She uses Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *The Sorrows of Young Werther* to

compare the hook of Werther in the 1700s with Nora's contemporary one (246, 270). This illustrates how storytelling and narratives – literature – can be important to explain psychological terms, since a psychologist used a narrative instead of clinical studies to introduce the hook, which is a kind of unrequited love.

When Roy F. Baumeister and Sara R. Wotman wrote about unrequited love in 1992, they also relied on autobiographical narratives, and some examples from literature, instead of case studies. They found this useful for the study of several phenomena, like divorce and romantic breakups, since these are very subjective and not easy to simulate (13). Although they claim that “fictional portrayals are scarce and misleading” (3), they also acknowledge the impact fiction can have on people when they describe the impact Goethe's novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* is said to have had on the audience when it was published: “All over Europe, young victims of heartbreak dressed themselves in Werther's style and killed themselves, sometimes clutching a copy of the book in their dying hands” (3). But how do we know what is one hundred percent real, and does it matter all the time? Can we really trust more in the memories and honesty of real people than we can in fictional characters? Of course, there is a huge difference between the two, but Julia Shaw writes about how easy it is to fabricate false memories into people's minds in her book *The Memory Illusion* from 2016. Therefore, I argue that a fictional narrative can be of equal significance as a real one in certain cases, and that an autobiographical narrative is not automatically more trustworthy than a literary text. A literary text can be just as good as an autobiographical narrative, for example, to acquire more knowledge of how psychological process works, which I am going to exemplify here. A literary text can also be as good as an autobiographical one to create empathy in readers, which was exactly what happened in the eighteenth century when the development of the novel as a genre led to the idea of a shared humanity, and elicited feelings and emotions of a shared humanity (Hunt). In addition, it can show power structures in society, or reveal unfairness one had not thought about had one not read a literary text.

Consequently, although something is fiction it can have an enormous impact on people, society and culture. For this thesis, I will explore two fictional novels. Even though one contains some autobiographical references, I believe it is important to remember it is still a literary text and should be treated as such. Since I want to contribute in a way to the field of psychology with my analysis of a psychological phenomenon in literary characters, I find the realistic argument which “sees characters as imitations of people” (Rimmon-Kenan 32) interesting. This because Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan in *Narrative Fiction*, which will be an

important source of theory in this thesis, writes that “A position of this kind facilitates the construction of a theory of character because it legitimizes the transference of ready-made theories from psychology or psychoanalysis” (32). Hence, one might attempt to analyse literary characters with theories from other fields that are made for real humans. Nevertheless, I see why this realistic argument of abstracting the characters from their verbal texture fails. Characters are not real people. Although they might imitate humans in many ways, as I argue, they are in essence textual constructs: words, grammar, syntax, semantics that the readers make sense of, and it is important not to forget that.

So, instead, the merging of mimetic theories with semiotic ones, like Rimmon-Kenan suggests, is useful for the study of literary characters: “In the text characters are nodes in the verbal design; in the story they are – by definition – non (or pre-) verbal abstractions, constructs” (33). She adds that these constructs “are partly modelled on the reader’s conception of people and in this they are person-like” (33), so one can still apply psychological terms and definitions in the analysis of characters without making a realistic claim. This becomes clear once Lisa Zunshine demonstrates how readers tend to transfer knowledge about real people to literary characters “even as readers remain aware on some level that fictive characters are not real people at all” (“Theory of One” 849). Mind-reading, or Theory of Mind, is what Zunshine argues readers transfer directly to fictive characters: “Mind-reading is a term used by cognitive psychologists to describe our ability to explain people’s behavior in terms of their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and desires” (“Theory of One” 847). It is how we interpret signals from other humans, and we often transfer it directly to literary characters. Therefore, authors can also assume that readers will interpret characters by the use of mind-reading “because of our collective past history as readers” (Zunshine, “Theory of One” 846) and the fact that “every fictional story we read reinforces our tendency to make that kind of interpretation first” (“Theory of One” 847). So, writers can exploit the readers’ mind-reading when writing. Zunshine does not necessarily think we are correct in making these kinds of assumptions all the time (neither in real-life nor fiction), but she demonstrates how we often do. Thus, the field of psychology can benefit from contributions from fiction and fiction can benefit from psychological contributions, because readers tend to transfer knowledge from one to the other and vice versa, which can be beneficial for understanding the world. However, it is important to remember that a novel is a text, and therefore must be analysed based on textual information.

“In the story the character is a construct, put together by the reader from various indications dispersed through the text” (36) Rimmon-Kenan writes. Within the story the character “can be described in terms of a network of character-traits” (Rimmon-Kenan 59). Subsequently, it is up to the reader to find the written clues in the text to build up person-like characters, that inhabit the novel’s own universe. The novel’s universe is a space of its own, that distorts or re-creates reality. This implies that the novel is not a mirror of the real world, but an exploration or investigation of its own. Through these explorations of what can happen to different characters in different settings, literature can contribute to other fields, such as psychology. I argue *I Love Dick* and *Now and Then* do this. I will demonstrate it by analysing the hooks Chris K and Chris M get caught in. In this view, one can look at literature as a means of putting theory from a field into practice by investigating how psychological theory can work in a fictional reality.

Although literature has a long history of mirroring reality, it is a space of its own as argued above. However, it can still be used for the study or exposure of real phenomena. Many historical novels are written to show, critique or comment on current issues in society or politics to get through censorship. George Orwell had to write *Animal Farm* as an allegory to get it through censorship. This shows power structures: How large an impact literature can have on a public, seeing that the authorities and elite in society fear, and have feared, literary works enough not to let them be published, even though it can be argued it is merely fiction. What I will explore, the hook in literature, is arguably not as dangerous for the establishment as other topics can be. It will not cause an uprising, nor an attempted revolution to throw sitting governments out, but it can change other, smaller power structures nonetheless. If more stories about the hook come to light and readers know more about what the hook is, it can give less power to the objects of desire, and more to the ones on the hook. This may even become increasingly significant, owing to the fact that new technology, e.g. dating apps, Facebook, smart phones, may make it easier to get someone hooked. Terms like “ghosting”, “slow fade”, “stashing”, “breadcrumbing”, “benching”, “submarining” and “sidebarring” have made an entry into our vocabulary and are shady ways to treat each other when we date or stop dating. Editor Max Benwell calls this “a whole new confusing lingo” in *The Guardian*. Many of these new terms can play a large role in getting someone on the hook. By putting the spotlight on the hook, maybe people will do more “caspering”, which is “a friendly alternative to ghosting” (Benwell). “Instead of ignoring someone”, Benwell writes, “you’re honest about how you feel, and let them down gently before disappearing from their lives”.

Before moving on, I will start to define the term “hekta”, which I have decided to call “the hook”, since it is the psychological process I will be investigating. “Hekta” is a Norwegian word and directly translated into English it is “hooked”, which the Oxford Dictionary defines as “Addiction” or “Devoted to or absorbed in something”, with the synonyms: “very keen on, very enthusiastic about, devoted to, addicted to, obsessed with, fixated on, fanatical about, mad about, crazy about, gone on, wild about, nuts about, potty about, dotty about, a sucker for”, and the antonym: “indifferent”. The Oxford Dictionary is useful and straight to the point, seeing that being hooked really is all these things. However, for the hook of Gran, and of my thesis, it misses out one key element, which has to do with love, or at least a romantic feeling: A hope, an expectation, or a yearning, a desire there will be love, or a romantic relationship with the specific person one is “hooked on” in the end. It is close to the feeling and has many of the same characteristics as falling in love does, with the quavering, nervous expectation, and an excessive focus on the other person. Yet, unlike falling in love, one does not get the overall feeling of joy, being at ease, and in a euphoric state at almost all times. There are more nerves, and a strong need to interpret the other’s signals at all time to know where one stands, because in the hook the other person usually sends mixed signals, so the one on the hook is always on alert. The relationship, which is not really a relationship at all, but what Gran calls the hook, starts off with positive, “warm” signals, signalling that the other person wants and is interested in something. Out of the blue, the other person can get distanced, colder, hard to reach and so on, before shifting again to get warmer, closer, more “on”, and like this the circle continues. This push-pull, on-off, or hot-cold mechanism turns the person who is hooked into a sort of hunter. The hook becomes a hunt for the other person’s – the object’s – signals, attention and love. So, being hooked is being addicted, or obsessed with a person, because one thinks one has found “real love”, so one goes running with open arms to the other person exposing oneself, opening up to be loved with the risk of getting hurt, like in all love relationships (Baumeister and Wotman). However, in the hook the other person does not really love you, they just keep you hanging on, and send mixed signals, if any signals at all, and consequently one gets addicted or fixated on that person (Gran 11-13).

The hook differs from other types of unrequited love, often written about and studied in both psychological articles and fiction because of the mixed signals, and the fact that the other person often gets involved to a degree with the one on the hook. The object of desire might initiate contact in some way with the hooked, rather than giving a more straightforward

rejection. The pursuit is not only one-sided, at least not in the beginning. This is different from other types of unrequited love (e. g. Baumeister and Wotman). It is not quite like infatuation, because an infatuation is short-lived, and although the hook can vary in time, it can be long, like the hook in *Now and Then* is an example of. The hook is more like a desire, an obsession and an addiction hard to release oneself from. Therefore, I have chosen to call it the hook, or hooked (on a hope of love) in my thesis, directly translated from Gran. The words “hook” or “hooked”, also include the connotation of the actual, physical metal hook one uses to fish with, for instance. I think that is a good metaphor for what happens when someone is hooked. One can think of the person stuck on the hook, just like the fish with the hook in its mouth, being dragged closer or further away as the person in control pleases. One is still trapped, until one can release oneself from the hook, which as anyone who has gone fishing knows, is quite an achievement, if the hook is hooked in the right place.

Gran’s concept is primarily based on individuals – their choices, feelings, and psychological theories that make individuals act and react. It is founded on one person making another hooked. It is usually based on personal or individual motivations, be them conscious or not. Neil Strauss published the book *The Game* in 2005, where he goes undercover in the secret society of pickup artists, and basically presents a recipe to get someone hooked, or “getting exactly what you want”, as Strauss puts it on the back cover of the book. The book is both a manual to pick someone up, and a critical analysis of the modern dating sphere. Gran criticises these methods in her book, because being hooked on someone is not a positive state, as I will illustrate with the help of two literary characters. Baumeister and Wotman write that “Love is perhaps the supreme and most popular model of fulfilment in our culture” (1), so it is in us to want to pursue the hope of love, and maybe fall for these methods if we do not recognise them.

Although Gran focuses primarily on the individual, I will also try to explore if there can be outside factors, too, that may partially explain why the characters in the two novels get hooked. This is especially interesting for me, for I have one heterosexual example, and one homosexual. Therefore, I want to look at if the causes of the lack of response from the beloved can and will be different in an all-male romance from a heterosexual situation. Is the problem always the individual, or is society also a part of the equation for my two characters that are hooked on a hope of love? To help me investigate these questions I will use theory from Eve Kosofsky Sedwick’s *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. Her argument about men structuring their relationships to each other through the

relationships they have with women, and the erotic triangles, is the part of her theory I aim to use. My methodology, which is close reading based on narrative theory, queer theory and psychological theories of the hook, and the comparison and contrast between the two novels, profit from Sedwick's argument.

My intention is to use two novels to explore the dynamics that can appear in the type of relationships presented above, so evidently I had to choose novels that have clear cases of hooked characters in them. The two novels were chosen rather differently, but they both show aspects and forces at work of the hook worth exploring further. They are also different from one another, which is an advantage in my eyes, because it shows that this phenomenon is indeed a complex psychological process that can come in many forms. The first novel I selected was *I Love Dick* by Chris Kraus, first published in 1997, then rediscovered and printed again in a new edition in 2015. I came over *I Love Dick* at an airport around the time it was rediscovered and bought it simply for its witty, amusing title, and simple but cool cover design. I had no expectations, as I had never heard of it before, nor did I know in advance that the main character Chris gets hooked. Therefore, it was a pleasant surprise for me to read the book, and I have thought about using it for my academic writing ever since but did not find the right moment until now. The critics were rather unimpressed by Kraus's work when it was first published. *I Love Dick* was viewed as a cult book for people with a special interest, not for a general, broader reading public. In contrast, the reception the book got when it was rediscovered in 2015 was more positive, and critics praised Kraus. Emily Gould from the *Guardian* even wrote that "This is the most important book about men and women written in the last century". Given this recent approval and reassessment, I believe it is about time the book was included in an MA thesis at the University of Oslo. I want to use it to explore how the hook is portrayed in literature and illustrate how the form of the novel makes the hook emerge.

My second novel was more difficult to find. I had not given much thought about there being a phenomenon of the hook until I read Gran, so I only started noticing symptoms of the hook in literary characters from 2015 onwards. My supervisor suggested looking at gay literature, and I found one of his suggestions, the novel *Now and Then* by William Corlett from 1995, to be a perfect fit. This novel gives me the opportunity to compare and contrast the heterosexual situation in *I Love Dick* with the homosexual one in *Now and Then*. It also shows that the hook can appear in many types of relationships, have different durations, that both men and women can be hooked, and that it is not a "one size fits all" phenomenon. The

two novels were also both published in the 1990s, so they are contemporary, and without the presence of new modern technology like Facebook, Tinder, and smartphones, which undoubtedly has added a new dimension to the phenomenon. These new technologies would be interesting and important to explore further in other circumstances.

In this thesis, I would like to prove that the main character in *I Love Dick* and the one in *Now and Then* suffer from being hooked, and that it affects their lives so much that they are victims of the condition in many ways. Yet they both manage to get off the hook in the end by telling their stories. My aim is to explore how the form in these two novels makes this phenomenon emerge through literature. I believe it is important to examine how the hook is portrayed in literature, and what the dynamics that can appear in such relationships can look like. It can help readers become aware of such situations; to not feel so alone in the world, if they are experiencing something similar; to reflect upon how to support someone on the hook; in addition to becoming aware of the possible patterns that can make one hooked. Even though there are differences between real life and fiction, fiction “helps us to pattern in newly nuanced ways our emotions and perceptions . . . and it creates new forms of meaning for our everyday existence” (164) Zunshine writes in her conclusion to *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel*. On that account, fiction matters to readers, and psychology mixed with fiction can matter, too. For instance, knowing what the hook is and being able to recognise it in literature might make it easier to recognise it in other situations too, which can be a part of creating meaning in everyday existence.

I intent to do a close reading of my two novels and compare and contrast them. I will use theory about the hook from Gran and Skaug, and narrative theory from Rimmon-Kenan to base and pursue my inquiry. Rimmon-Kenan explores how one can analyse different narratives by looking at time, story, text, narration, focalisation and characterisation, for instance. The book I will use is called *Narrative Fiction*, a term which she defines as “the narration of a succession of fictional events” (2). Here, her emphasis is on a succession of events, which must be present for it to be narrative fiction and not lyrical poetry or expository prose, for instance (2). The two novels I will look at have a succession of events, which makes them narrative fiction. I believe it is beneficial to analyse them using her narrative theory since she separates and presents time, story, text, narration, focalisation and characterisation. This puts the focus on the close reading and exploration of different devices and helps make the comparison and contrasting clear.

Among others, Baumeister and Wotman, Kosofsky Sedwick and James Phelan will also help me explore certain topics throughout the investigation. There are no academic articles written about *Now and Then*. Two book reviews and two obituaries of William Corlett were the only obtainable sources about that novel. There is not much more material about *I Love Dick*, at least not in the academic field. There have been written forewords and afterwords to different editions of the novel and some book reviews. A large part of the material written about *I Love Dick* is written about the Amazon TV series based on the novel, and therefore not relevant for my thesis. Hence, the main emphasis of the thesis will be on the close reading of the texts, and theory about the hook from Gran, with reviews as supplements.

Since the phenomenon I am going to explore was only named with its current name and characteristics in 2010, and in Norwegian, there are few scholars who have explored the same or similar questions as those I intend to deliberate on. Nevertheless, the one who has asked similar questions confirms my premise that literature is valuable to the study of the hook. In her MA thesis “Hektet på falsk kjærlighet” from 2013, Tina Skog states that “Ved å ta i bruk litterære verk kan vi berike vår forståelse av psykologiske fenomener og teorier” (1). She claims that fiction is an asset to exploring and getting answers to how psychological processes, phenomena and theories work. Skog uses her thesis to deliberate on how fiction can enlighten and inform us about complex psychological processes, and how the psychological field can create an understanding for what she calls the riddle, or the mystery, in the novel. This understanding can be created by suggesting answers to why the characters act and think the way they do, for instance. Skog even utilises the fact that Sigmund Freud was inspired by fiction, used a lot of it in his work, and desired to unite the disciplines of fiction and psychoanalysis, to make her hypothesis stronger. I find her questions and answers interesting, and I intend to show how literature can explore complex psychological phenomena too, but I want to do it by examining the form of the novels, not by showing how psychology helps solving the “mystery” of the novel. I will look at how some literary devices, such as story versus text, point of view, narrator, reliability, delay and characterisation have been used in *I Love Dick* and *Now and Then*, and what their effects are. In addition, I will try to show how these narrative choices make the hook emerge in the novels.

I have organised my thesis into two main chapters, focusing on a close reading of each of the novels. In the beginning of each chapter, I will give a short summary of the novel, before I move on to examine form, look at how the characters have been created, and the structure of the ending. I want to investigate how this can contribute to illuminate the theme

of the hook as a phenomenon. I will follow the development of the hook of Chris Kraus from *I Love Dick* and the hook of Chris Metcalfe from *Now and Then* and try to pin down which literary devices make the hook emerge in each novel. Are they similar to one another, or not? I also claim that narrative itself is imperative for the hook as a phenomenon, because both Chris K and Chris M break free from the hook, either by writing their story, or re-telling it. So, the narrative, or narrative theory, is both important for my analysis of the novels, and to an extent it is important for each individual hook, be it fictional or not. As Rimmon-Kenan asserts, and which is an important premise for me: “Narration is not restricted to literature. In order to make sense of experiences, people consciously or unconsciously, audibly or inaudibly, tell stories to themselves as well as others” (147). James Phelan confirms this in his book about rhetoric and ethics of character narration “for almost all of us living and telling are inextricably connected: we make sense of our experience through the stories we tell about them, even as those stories influence our future experiences” (ix). I believe this shows how the subject explored in this thesis matters. Finally, I will compare and contrast the symptoms of the characters that are hooked, and the literary devices used.

2 *I Love Dick*

The novel *I Love Dick* by Chris Kraus is about Chris, who after an evening with her husband, Sylvère, and an academic colleague and friend of his, Dick, starts developing a hook on Dick. Her hook grows from positive signals and attention given to her by Dick in their first encounter, which “makes her feel powerful” (3), and maybe from her attraction to his intellect and ideas. Maria Suarez suggests in a book review about *I Love Dick*, that Chris becomes attracted to Dick’s ideas, thoughts, quotes and writings to a point where she becomes sexually aroused by them. There might be some truth in that it is not the physical or emotional level that drives Chris “mad with desire”, as described by Suarez, but Dick’s intellect, at least in the start. This is in stark contrast to what popular culture makes us believe about first encounters. TV shows and magazines are very clear that it is the physical aspects that usually catch the attention first and light the first sparks.

After this first “warm” encounter, where Dick even invites the couple to spend the night at his place after their dinner, and Chris “dreams about him all night long” (5), Dick has vanished from his house when Chris and Sylvère wake up there the next morning. Chris tells her husband, who she has stopped having sex with, and therefore they supposedly maintain their intimacy by telling each other everything, “how she believes that she and Dick have just experienced a Conceptual Fuck” (5). This conclusion comes from her experience with guys leaving without any explanation after one-night stands, and Dick doing the same. The evening is followed up by an explanatory and apologetic phone call from Dick to the couple, which Chris answers; then there are unanswered phone calls, faxes, letters and voice mails from the couple to Dick, and Dick contacting them from time to time, while ignoring them other times. Eventually, there are more meetings between them and at least two real sexual encounters between Chris and Dick, together with many acts of rejection from Dick’s side.

This illustrates the classical push-pull mechanism of the phenomenon known as the hook. Sometimes Dick is hot, and other times he is cold. Nonetheless, he started this game or connection with Chris as hot, and he makes the “second” move, in a way, with the apologetic phone call, still being hot and pulling her closer to him, before pushing her away again, like he did when he left before the couple woke up. Like Sylvère writes in one of his first letters to Dick: “So why did you call? Because you really wanted it to continue, right?” (20). This push-pull mechanism is part of what keeps the one on the hook hanging on (Gran 310-11, 324-25). In short, Gran defines the hook as “a nervous, romanticising, compulsive fixation on

another person with strong elements of panic and addiction” (287), which is what Chris shows more and more and signs of as the hook grows.

I Love Dick is divided in two parts: “Part 1: Scenes from a marriage” and “Part 2: Every letter is a love letter”. “Part 1” has a chronological time span from December 3, 1994, which is the evening Chris meets Dick the first time, to January 30, 1995, when Chris leaves her husband Sylvère. It consists of some sort of diary entries made by a third-person narrator on different days, generally with a heading with the information about what day it is and sometimes what time. It also contains fourteen “exhibits” that are labeled from A to N, with descriptive titles, which may make it easier for the reader to follow the plot. For instance: “Exhibit N: Sylvère thanks Dick for his new-found sexuality” (94) and “Exhibit F: The secret fax”. These “clues” put the otherwise fragmented and chaotic writing into a kind of structure. Even here, the form reflects the content, the hook, because the feelings in the hook are chaotic, messy, and one can get increasingly more perplexed and confused as time goes by (Gran 277). So, a chaotic writing intensifies the emotional chaos in the hook. The exhibits are letters from Chris and/or Sylvère to Dick (as they start writing letters to him as a common project), faxes from both or one of them to Dick, a transcript of a phone conversation between Dick and Sylvère, dialogue transcriptions between Chris and Sylvère, an account of what Chris imagines her first night alone with Dick may be like, and the report of the action, or lack of action taking place between December 3 and January 30, made by the narrator.

“Part 2” is made up of eight chapters or subdivisions. It also consists of diary entries, letters to Dick, essays, poems and “exhibits” that are dated most of the time. The timeline of the story the reader follows is from February 1, 1995, when Chris writes the first letter to Dick after leaving her husband, to September 19, when Dick finally writes back. However, the second chapter “Route 126” consists of a letter that breaks the chronology of the letters since it is dated January 17, 1996, and the chapter “Sylvère and Chris write in their diaries” also breaks chronology with a letter dated March 31, 1997. But then again, “Route 126” contains memories and reciting of meetings and conversations between Chris and Dick that fit into the 1995 story timeline, among other flashbacks and thoughts Chris has and writes about. Plus, the 1997 letter also explains and refers to 1995 events. Therefore, the story timeline is somehow intact, although the text timeline makes major jumps in time, and requires an observant reader.

In her book about narrative fiction, Rimmon-Kenan distinguishes between story and text. She writes that: “Whereas ‘story’ is a succession of events, ‘text’ is a spoken or written

discourse which undertakes their telling” (3). So, the text is what we read, and the story contains the events we read about put in chronological order, even if the text is not necessarily in chronological order. Additionally, she adds that it is rare that a text is one hundred percent chronological. “Part 1” of *I Love Dick* is narrated in chronological order, but includes flashbacks to earlier points in the characters’ lives, while “Part 2” jumps more back and forth in time and uses more flashbacks as a literary device than “Part 1”. There is even repetition of events from “Part 1” and “Part 2” told differently.

Rimmon-Kenan uses the term analepsis to explain this device of flashbacks: “An *analepsis* is a narration of a story-event at a point in the text after later events have been told. The narration returns, as it were, to a past point in the story” (46). Further, she separates the analepses into external and internal analepses, where the external analepses return to a past before “the starting point of the first narrative” in the text (48), and the internal analepses return to a past after the starting point of the first narrative, or story, in the text and are “either repeated analeptically or narrated for the first time” (48). The internal analepses “often fill in a gap created previously” (48) or a gap the reader was not aware of until it is filled. “Part 2” of *I Love Dick* includes many analepses, because it follows that when you write a letter, that the events one writes about have already happened. There are both external and internal analepses. In “Route 126” Chris writes to Dick that “Three weeks before I met you I caught a Sun Charter Jet Vacation plane to Cancun” (125) where she makes use of an external analepsis, but the ones that are relevant to the analysis of the hook are the internal ones. Chris sometimes repeats events that have already been mentioned previously or adds more details to them in “Part 2”, using internal analepses frequently.

The function of the analepses in the text is that it demands a reader on the alert, and it drives the story forward, as the reader gets more and more extra information to fill in in her understanding of the story, the characters, and the phenomenon of the hook. Besides, even though the letters are dated and named most of the times in “Part 2” too, they are complex and sometimes long, so it demands a reader that is always aware of clues in the text to understand where in the story one is at any given moment. There can be pages of reflection about something else between the first sign and expectation of a narration of a meeting: “This would be my first time ever seeing you alone” (128) until the narration of the meeting starts: “You got up and at the door we kissed hello” (136). Then there can be even more reflections and digressions before the rest of the meeting is described, which demands a vigilant reader.

The letter dated January 17, 1996 in the “Route 126” chapter is a clear example of the narrator always keeping the reader on her toes. Every time a new section starts, one must look for markers of time to follow the story timeline. Examples are: “Three weeks before I met you” (125), “The last time I was at your house for dinner back in January” (136), and “After dinner” (140). The dinner on page 136 is not the same as the one on page 140, and the letter is further chaotic by its mixing of memories and stories about a trip Chris had to Guatemala before December, when she met Dick for the first time, in between the recitation of the meetings and talks she had with Dick. This form, and literary device of analepsis displays a characteristic of the hook. Gran states that the one on the hook often gets a need to interpret everything the object of desire says or does, or does not say or do (268). In a hook, one gets too observant, Gran says, and one tries to read an extra meaning into every action and utterance of the other person (269). It is like the observant reader this book demands. Hence, there might be a parallel between the hook in the story and the reader getting a hook on the book, because the reader must interpret and look for signals everywhere to follow the story, the reader must get hooked to understand the plot. This need to interpret everything is also what Chris does when she reanalysis what has happened between herself and Dick; or when she dwells on what could have been the hidden meaning behind this or that comment made by Dick, or this or that facial expression: “You were listening, eyes moving up and down between me and your wine glass on the table. I saw what I was saying register across your face . . . cryptically, ambiguously, shifting between curiosity and incredulity” (138). Here, the interpretation fever, as Gran calls it (268), is visible, because Chris tries to read additional meaning into every detail in Dick’s body language and decode any hidden messages he might have. So, there is a parallel between form and content here, and it shows that form is important for the hook to emerge through literature. It also displays that some literature has the ability to make the reader hooked on the book.

Yet another example of keeping the reader on her toes is in “Part 1”, when Chris writes her story “Last night at Dick’s”. It is “Exhibit I”, and just the word “exhibit” connotes something that it is supposed to be based on facts and truth, but the last sentence before the story starts is: “She types this story” (62), which signifies it is not. If one missed this clue, there is another after “the story”: “Months later, parts of Chris’ story would turn out to be remarkably prophetic” (63). However, the clues are brief, so one cannot skim through and get the point; one must get hooked and search for signs everywhere. The last clue is also a hinting at a future occurrence, and although it is not a prolepsis, it has the same function as

prolepses have, because it replaces: “the kind of suspense deriving from the question ‘What will happen next?’ by another kind of suspense, revolving around the question ‘How is it going to happen?’” (Rimmon-Kenan 48). So, this hint can hook the reader more, as an expectation is built in about finding out how Dick and Chris will go from one meeting, one phone call, crazy letters and faxes, Dick ignoring Chris, to perhaps ending up in bed together.

In the first seven chapters of “Part 2”, the narrator switches from the third-person narrator of “Part 1” to a first-person narrator; Chris, before changing back again in the last chapter called “Dick writes back”. So, there is a circular form of narration: from a third-person narrator in the beginning, to a first-person one in the middle, to the third-person narrator reappearing at the end. This circular narration mirrors Chris’s power in the hook she becomes trapped in, and the relationship between her and Dick. She holds, or feels like she holds, the power in their relationship at the start of the novel: “when the check comes she takes out her Diners Club card: ‘Please’, she says. ‘Let me pay’” (3), and when Dick gives directions to his house to her this is her reply: “Don’t worry,’ she interrupts, flashing hair and smiles, ‘I’ll tail you.’ And she does” (4). This reveals that she believes that she has the upper hand, or at least that they are equal.

Not long after this night and the first phone call from Dick, her obsession starts. The narrator asks a rhetorical question: “But how long can anyone continue analyzing a single evening and a 3-minute call?” (9), and the answer to this question is revealed in the course of the novel: Longer than one would objectively think, if one is not emotionally involved in the hook, like Chris is. After the call she soon starts losing her grip on everyday life and tasks, which is also a symptom of the hook according to Gran (256). “Wednesday and Thursday disappear. It’s obvious that Chris’ new film isn’t going very far” (9). Already, before a week has passed from her first encounter with Dick, Chris has stopped doing things she normally does and experiences a sort of inability to act when it comes to everyday responsibilities. Everything except her object of desire, Dick, becomes uninteresting to her. She even leaves her husband as a result of her longing for Dick. After the 3-minute call from Dick, Chris’s hook is displayed in various ways through the novel, and it is sustained by Dick’s hot and cold behaviour. He switches from hot to cold and then back again frequently, which nourishes the hook (Gran). Had Dick not given anything back at any time, Chris would not have become hooked. In the middle of the story, Chris also gives away the control she previously had held by letting Dick pay when they meet: “You paid the bill” (239).

However, in the last chapter, where the narrator is back to the third-person, Chris takes the power back again. She does this by stepping out of the cab she is in while reading the letter from Dick and showing her film, despite the letter that she has been waiting for during the whole novel being a “xerox copy of Dick’s letter to Sylvère” (245), and not at all what she was expecting, or desired. After all the letters she had written to Dick, where she had poured her heart out for him, and even being described as “a new kind if literary form” (242) by Sylvère, she wanted a more direct response than she got. Dick even misspells her name three of the five times he mentions her in it. He writes Kris instead of Chris. This might be a “neg”, as described by Strauss in *The Game*, which Gran labels as an introduction to the hook theory (315) and asks people to steer away from, although it is effective. A “neg” is “an ambiguous statement or seemingly accidental insult” (Strauss 481) delivered to a woman with the intent to demonstrate “a lack of interest in her” (Strauss 481) to awaken an emotion in her. It will be negative, but a negative emotion is better than no emotion, or a rejection, for the pick-up artist, because it makes the woman emotionally involved, which is better than no involvement (Gran 337). Making a woman emotionally involved with a “full range of emotions” might in turn get her hooked. So, by “negging” Chris, Dick might hope that the relationship or non-relationship between them continues as it has, because there are perks for him: phone calls when he pleases, sex, total adoration from a woman, and so on.

In the afterword to the 2016 edition of *I Love Dick*, Joan Hawkins writes that “Dick—when he finally writes back—erases Chris” (251), and further she notes that Anne-Christine d’Adesky writes that Dick’s letter is “a breathtaking act of humiliation, an unambiguous Fuck You” (252) in a book review for *The Nation*. Even though these conclusions might have some validity, I argue that Chris takes back the power over her own life by getting out of the cab and showing her film, in spite of Dick’s letter, which may have been a move to repress her or a “neg” to keep her on the hook. Instead, she reestablishes her former life as an artist and turns a weakness (her hook on Dick, and her inability to concentrate on other things than him) into a strength (the hook gives her inspiration to write, and although it was primarily to Dick, she ends up finding or rediscovering her voice as an artist), which are among Gran’s suggestions to get off the hook (379, 382). I also see Chris stepping out of the cab as a metaphor of stepping out of the role of being a victim, which Gran also points to as important to move on (391). By stepping out of the cab and showing her film, she regains the power in the relationship and she moves on. The fact that Dick and Chris’s relationship comes to an end here in the final scene, and she breaks free from the hook that has trapped her during the

novel, shows how the circular form of the novel is important for the portrayal and the understanding of the phenomenon of the hook. There is a process from not being hooked, to being hooked, to not being hooked again, just like the narrator goes from third-person, to first-person, then back to third-person again.

I also disagree with Hawkins's statement that Dick erases Chris by writing back, since Chris, because of Dick and her adoration of him, actually frees herself from conventions she believes society has concerning female writers. After leaving Sylvère, moving alone up to the country, and being in an obsessive state, she finds a story she wrote 20 years ago in Wellington: "It was written in the third person, the person most girls use when they want to talk about themselves but don't think anyone will listen" (213). So, Dick, and Chris's hook on Dick, frees her from conventions, since she starts writing in the first-person. It forces her in a way to find a voice of her own, regardless of norms. Since she is already acting crazy by society rules in the hook, she can also break norms in art.

Dick is a character in the novel, and he is also the narratee of much of it. Chris writes her letters to him, and so does Sylvère. Rimmon-Kenan writes that: "the narratee is the agent addressed by the narrator" (105). So, especially when Chris takes over the role as narrator in the middle of the novel, Dick is the clear narratee, in addition to being the narratee of the letters in "Part 1". He is thus an extradiegetic, homodiegetic narratee, since he is a character and recipient of letters written by the extradiegetic, homodiegetic narrator (and character) Chris. There is also another narratee in the novel who is extradiegetic: the implied reader. The implied reader is the extradiegetic narratee of the entire novel, while Dick is only the narratee of the letters.

The narrator in *I Love Dick* is always extradiegetic but varies from being homodiegetic when Chris is the narrator, as she is also a character in the story, and heterodiegetic, when the third-person narrator narrates, because she does not participate in the story (Rimmon-Kenan 96). Rimmon-Kenan writes that an unreliable narrator "is one whose rendering of the story and/or commentary on it the reader has reasons to suspect" (101). Third-person narrators are seldom considered to be unreliable, but from the start the reader is given good reason to pay extra attention to reliability: The narrator presents Chris as "no intellectual" (3), and later evidence proves that statement wrong. There is no other evidence of unreliability by the third-person narrator, so this may simply be a manoeuvre to get the readers hooked on the book, by making them interpret everything from an early point, and always be looking for clues of misrepresentation.

Rimmon-Kenan gives examples of the main sources of unreliability: “the narrator’s limited knowledge, his personal involvement, and his problematic value-scheme” (101). Based on this, the narrator starts (or possibly continues) to be unreliable when she shifts from the third-person to Chris. A first-person narrator will always have limited knowledge, because she sees events only from her point of view, and bases what she tells on her subjective experience of the events. Seen from Dick’s point of view, for instance, the novel might have looked very different. As Gran writes, there are always two sides to the phenomenon (247), two sides to the story: On one side, the one on the hook becomes a victim of his or her own hope of love, stimulated by the object’s charm and unpredictability or ambiguity. On the other side, the one on the hook is both his or her own, and the object of desire’s, pain in the neck and annoyance. One becomes a hunter who is unable to stop running after a person, who really gives plenty of signals that the hunt is in vain. The one on the hook can also become a nuisance to friends, and in novels to the readers, as will be explored later.

Additionally, since Chris is hooked, a psychological state of many emotions, and personally involved, her conclusions and disclosures of events will be coloured by that. A problematic value-scheme might also apply to Chris, as a person on the hook will, by Gran’s definition, lose the ability to think rationally, and let emotions control her (368). However, the convention of letter writing as a genre will help the readers be attentive to a certain subjectivity where Chris narrates, because letters are coloured by experience. Yet, one must also be attentive to the third-person narrator in this text, because as shown above, she deliberately misrepresented Chris at least once. No matter what, the use of a homodiegetic narrator in parts of the novel demonstrates better what might happen in a hook, since it is a complex, emotional state, and best described by personal, subjective experience; something a first-person narrator does best. Therefore, this literary device of making shifts in narrator and narratee makes the hook more visible, and ready to contribute to the field of psychology, with an exploration of the complex emotions that might appear in a hook.

Chris is the main character in *I Love Dick*. It is clear, that the title of the book refers to something she does from an early point in the novel. Already in her first letter to Dick, Chris writes that she loves him twice: “Sylvère thinks it’s nothing but a perverse longing for rejection, the love I feel for you” (11), and “I love you Dick” (12). So, right from the start, after only one positive meeting and a 3-minute phone call, it seems like Chris gives herself to Dick entirely. It may seem strange how Chris can confess her love to Dick after two meetings, but although the first letter was written on December 9, it was not until January 22, when

Sylvère and Chris were invited to Dick's house for dinner again, that she actually gave him that letter, along with the others (altogether 90 pages). "Clearly the letters were unsendable" (27) Chris seems to think during a segment of free indirect discourse, when she deliberates on how she is going to get in touch with Dick again, after the first phone call. Consequently, although the text is constructed in a way which makes Chris seem a little mad based on our norms, because of these early confessions of love, among other revelations, she also seems to realise how her feelings might be interpreted as odd: "I know how lame these letters are" (38). Therefore, she may be a difficult character to form a hypothesis about, because she seems to think one thing, then do another. If one takes into account that she suffers from a hook, though, it might be easier for the reader to comprehend.

It might also be easier to understand how Chris can become so absorbed so early if one takes into account that it might be Dick's intellect she is most fascinated by in the beginning, like Suarez suggested in a review. Chris likes to "dip into other people's books, to catch the rhythm of their thinking" (190-1). She even finds it "better than sex" (191) to write around the edges of different authors, including Dick. So, hearing "the two men discuss recent trends in postmodern critical theory" (3) at the first dinner, might have turned her on, and made it easier to use the word "love" so soon, because a spark was lit. She writes that: "Reading delivers on the promise that sex raises but hardly ever can fulfill—getting larger 'cause you're entering another person's language, cadence, heart and mind" (191). So, even though she ends up craving for Dick physically early on, she also longs for him intellectually just as much, and that may be another reason for the attempt to reach him by letters, too, not only through physical meetings.

Gran explains that our fundamental human need for attachment can initiate a hook. She writes that we search for intimacy and closeness with others from cradle to grave, and that we are dependent on others to become human beings (290). She even uses John Donne's metaphor "No man is an Island" to illustrate her point and claims that humans have an attachment system designed for survival (291). Further, she states that everyone has a personal attachment history and our experiences from the past will influence how we in the present and future reacts in meetings with a possible love interest (293). From reconstructions of Chris's history before the meeting with Dick, it looks as if she has had troublesome relationships or simply one-night stands in the past, which was largely spent in New Zealand. Subsequently, it seems that another reason for her quick passion for Dick may be because of her previous attachment pattern: "Because you reminded me of so many people I'd love back

in New Zealand” (137). In addition, it looks like Sylvère became a safe haven in her life when they got together: “Crohn’s Disease is a hereditary chronic inflammation of the small intestine. Like any chronic ailment its triggers can be physical, psychic or environmental. For Chris the trigger was despair” (91). “Sylvère’d become an expert at tricking the disease” (92), after realising “Chris’ sickness could have anything to do with him: that by accepting her he could save her life” (93).

This shows that Chris has a previous history of falling in love with people who trigger her disease, which may have made her more receptive to Dick, and the hook. Although her symptoms of sickness stopped when she and Sylvère got together, twelve or thirteen years before the meeting with Dick, they return when she feels like she cannot reach Dick but wants desperately to have sex with him. Yet, the symptoms are seemingly kept in check by sleeping with Sylvère. However, “sex with Charles did not replace Dick for Emma” (97). Here Charles is synonymous with Sylvère and Emma is synonymous with Chris. The reason for the changes in names is that the couple recognize themselves in characters of Gustave Flaubert’s novel *Madame Bovary*, and start acting and writing as if they are characters: Chris “felt she understood Emma Bovary’s situation very well” (52), and Sylvère starts one of his letters with: “This is Charles Bovary” (94). They even sign letters with their fictional names. So, even though Chris gets sex from Sylvère, it is Dick’s penis she longs for, parallel to Emma Bovary who longed for someone outside her marriage, too.

Here, one can find a double meaning in the novel’s title: The *Dick* of the title can refer to, and probably is, both the person Dick and his intellect as described above, and his sexual organ. In the start, it can seem as if Chris becomes attracted to Dick’s ideas: “his vast intelligence straining beyond the po-mo rhetoric and words to evidence some essential loneliness only she and he can share” (4), and a need for attachment like Gran describes arises. Then, she longs for the body part, the “dick”: “All she’d really wanted, for the past seven days was a chance to kiss and fuck Dick” (27). Later, in a conversation with her husband the day after, she says this: “I don’t even know what I want from Dick anymore” (43), when she is frustrated because Dick is not answering their phone calls. It becomes clearer that her attraction is not only mental and/or physical when Sylvère writes: “HIS WIFE LOVES ANOTHER MAN” (51), and when Chris states that: “My love for you was absolutely groundless” (128). By this point, it seems like there are all kinds of feelings involved: physical attraction, attraction to the intellect, and attraction to and emotions about Dick as a complete person. The reason Chris wants to sleep with Dick so badly and be

physically intimate with him, may also be because she has not been intimate with her husband for quite some time, and humans search for attachment on all levels (Gran).

Chris is a round character, located at the polar ends of the axis of complexity, the axis of development, and the axis of penetration into the inner life of a character, as described by Rimmon-Kenan (41). She is complex, because her character is not solely constructed around a single or dominant character trait. The text shows evidence of various traits. She develops through the text, and that is best illustrated by how she gets hooked, and then gets off the hook again, and through that process she changes. What is more, the readers get insight in Chris's inner life constantly through the letters and diary entries.

The characterisation of Chris happens both by direct definition and by indirect presentation, but the two collide, giving the reader a reason to suspect the reliability of the third-person narrator. On the first page of the novel, Chris is presented directly: "Chris Kraus, a 39-year-old experimental filmmaker" (3). These are purely facts that are easy to accept as true. The problem comes some sentences later in a judgemental phrase like: "Chris, who is no intellectual" (3). This is a portrayal of her that the rest of the novel proves wrong, both through her own writings, where readers can read how she analyses art, refers to various other literary texts and academic theorists such as Lacan and Félix Guattari, and through Sylvère. One example is in a dialogue with Sylvère, where he says to her: "Chris you can't send that. It makes no sense at all. You're supposed to be intelligent" (49). Another is indirectly through Sylvère: "And while Chris was obviously intelligent, even unusually cultivated" (93), the reader understands that the statement about Chris's lack of intelligence is false. This challenges the reliability of the third-person narrator. To counteract this, narrative accounts of incidents from "Part 1" in "Part 2" grant the third-person narrator some sort of reliability again, when what Chris tells herself confirms the third-person narrator's account. An example is the occurrence on the first night at Dick's house: "The night Sylvère and I slept over at your house I'd dreamt vividly about having different kinds of sex with you" (141), which is in harmony with the narrator's earlier statement: "She dreamt about him all night long" (5). So, again the text demands an ideal reader always on the alert to confirm or contradict earlier information given. The text does not give room for any moment of distraction or daydreaming, for one might miss a clue if one gets distracted, so the ideal reader is one hundred percent involved in the process of reading. In other words, the reader is hooked.

Indirect presentation of Chris happens all through the novel, as the reader gains insight into her thoughts and feelings through her letters and diary entries. "A presentation is indirect

when rather than mentioning a trait, it displays and exemplifies it in various ways” (Rimmon-Kenan 61). Speech, and in particular Chris’s speech, “as a silent activity of the mind” (Rimmon-Kenan 63), is what indicates most of Chris’s character traits, since the largest part of the novel is made up of Chris’s writings. It is also what makes it easier to analyse the phenomenon of being hooked, as the readers get insight in Chris’s hook directly. Even Chris analyses it herself at some points: “I never understood before people who would do this (i.e. turn their lives around)” (115), which Gran states as a symptom of a hook (256-57, 379). “But will, belief, breaks down . . . & now I do” (115). So, although Chris is trapped in a hook in many ways, it seems as if she is well aware of it at many points in the novel. Acceptance of one’s own condition is one of Gran’s steps to getting out of the hook (357), so this might be a reason why Chris manages to get out of the hook before too much time has passed by.

Dick, on the other hand, is a character who is absent or distant from most of the action taking place in the novel, with the exception of a few meetings between him and either the couple or Chris alone. During these meetings, there is a description of the events taking place and the dialogue from the point of view of either Chris or the third-person narrator. Dick’s own voice is only present on a transcript of a taped phone call between him and Sylvère, and then finally in the letter he sends to Sylvère and Chris at the end, but he is present in Chris’s thoughts and letters all the way through the novel. Chris even writes that: “I don’t need your encouragement, approval or response as long as you are listening” (80). However, that is a false statement, because both Chris’s hook on Dick, and in some sense her writing, are only driven forward if there is some fuel given by the object Dick. Sylvère seems to know this: “he knew if there wasn’t another event soon, another point of contact to fuel Chris’ expectations, all this would end” (27). As Gran explains, the on-off, hot-cold, push-pull mechanism that keeps the one on the hook hooked must have some hot moments to work (367). Hence, in a way, Sylvère is also partly to blame for the hook Chris gets trapped in, because he also gives fuel to her expectations by contacting Dick and presenting to her the taped phone conversation where Dick does not reject the project the couple has been working on (the letters and faxes), but says instead: “I will think about it” (34). Nonetheless, at other times Sylvère also tries to stop it: “But it’s time to put an end to this craziness. You can’t go on messing people’s lives up like this” (21). Although it is probably for egoistical reasons that he writes this to Dick, he implies that Dick do exactly what Gran encourages the objects desired to do. Gran wants the “Dick” in the relationship to take responsibility for saying it is over and stopping the push-pull mechanism by not doing or saying anything that might be analysed as

positive signals for the one on the hook. For the hook, this means to avoid all sort of contact (Gran 399), because as we have seen, a person on the hook will read extra meaning into everything and try to find a positive signal even where there is none.

Dick's character might be located at the opposite ends of the axes of character-classification from Chris. On the complexity axis, he is constructed around one dominant character trait of ambiguity. This is the character trait that is displayed of him continually through the novel: "I think our telephone call went well last night, despite the ambiguous archness of your question: "And you only want to talk, right?" (115), "I was going to your house, if not by invitation, at least with your consent" (128), and "On the phone you'd said, 'I won't say no' when I asked what you thought" (141). In the last example, he is answering what he thinks about sleeping with Chris. This is another example of an answer he gives about wanting to have sex with her: "I'm not... uncomfortable ... with ... the idea" (143). Despite the vagueness of his answers, they are in a way positive, until he shifts: "But you don't know me! . . . [Y]ou project all this shit all over me, you kidnap me, you stalk me, invade me with your games, and I don't want it! I never asked for it!" (147). So, he both makes this claim, and he has said several times, that he won't say no (to sex), and that he will think about being a part of the project to Sylvère, so ambiguity or indetermination is his core character trait. This fits with his role as a character who gets another on the hook, because it feeds the push-pull, hot-cold mechanism, and his ambiguity gives extra nourishment to the analyses the one on the hook does.

Dick's ambiguity, and the fact that Chris and Dick actually have physical sex, although Dick denies needing or really wanting it later, might induce the reader's sympathy for Chris. The first sexual encounter happens when Chris goes to Dick's house on a Thursday night "if not by invitation, at least with your consent" (128). They kiss and drink wine (136). Then, Dick asks Chris what she wants several times. She responds that she wants to have sex with him and asks Dick if he wants them to have sex. He says: "I won't say no" and "I'm not uncomfortable with the idea" (143). So, they end up having sex "for maybe hours. We have sex 'til breathing feels like fucking" (145) and they have "fuzzy halting morning sex" (146). After the sex, Chris says she will be in town until Tuesday and asks if they can meet again. Dick has other plans with another woman, so they end up arguing and Dick says: "I don't owe you anything" (147) when Chris asks for an explanation for why he did not tell her before the sex. He continues the insults: "I never asked for it! I think you're evil and psychotic!" (147), to which Chris responds: "You said to come. You must have known then what I wanted"

(148). Finally, Dick says: “I didn’t need the sex. . . . Though it was nice” (148). His reaction might provoke sympathy for Chris, although one can say he did try to warn her before they ended up in bed: “There’s no such thing as a good time. It always ends in tears and disappointment” (142), but because of his constant ambiguity and her desire, the hint is not taken. The sex scenes in the novel are important to distinguish what Chris is experiencing, the hook, from classical unrequited love relationships, where there is little or no interaction and certainly no sex.

Dick is also on the opposite pole of the axis of development from Chris, as he does not develop through the novel. One might think he has, when he writes that: “*I really didn’t want to cause either you or Chris unnecessary pain*” (243) and “*I feel I should have been absolutely unambiguous*” (244). But he also misspells Chris three times in the letter and writes that he believes the attention he has gotten was “*unwarranted and uninvited aftermath of your overnight stay*” (243-4). He forgets that he was the one who made the first move by making an unapologetic phone call to them. By misspelling Chris’s name, he might be trying to erase the connection they had, but it does not erase the fact that they had sex at least two times, they had some real-life meetings, and many phone calls: “Long distance bills fill the gaps left in my diaries” (214), “Hello Chris,’ you said. ‘it’s Dick” (225). So, he is a dick from the start, when he leaves the couple without saying good bye, like one does after a one-night stand, leaving them with mixed emotions. He is a dick during the novel by giving all the mixed signals, being on one moment and off and rude the next: “So–’ you said.–‘Did you want to see me?’ . . . I just have to check my schedule. . . . ‘Why don’t you call me back around this time tomorrow?’” (221). Then “When I reached you you were cold, ironic, wondering why I’d called” (241). Finally, he is a dick at the end, when trying to erase all his sins by blaming every interaction between them on Chris’s fantasy, not his own encouragement. Penetration into his inner life is also something the text does not offer, as the reader follows Chris’s inner life in most of the novel. Of course, from another point of view, the character Dick could have been different, but here he does not develop.

Dick is also characterized through direct definition in the beginning, like Chris was: “Dick____, a friendly acquaintance of Sylvère’s” and “Dick is an English cultural critic who’s recently relocated from Melbourne to Los Angeles” (3). Later, he is characterized through indirect presentation, like we have seen above. His actions and speech help the readers form a picture of him. Sylvère also characterizes him, in a way, by saying this to Chris about him: “I already told you he wouldn’t call. He has a tendency to pull away” (43). So

here, a red flag is displayed in the text to Chris, among others to come. But since one becomes a hunter when in a hook, the hunt for one's object of desire becomes one's main project in life (Gran 258), and nothing else matters. Consequently, Chris is not willing to stop the hunt because of something Sylvère says to her, and ignores the red flags, like one often does in a hook (Gran 266). In a fight where Dick is extremely rude, Chris recognises this but thinks: "Well this was very cruel, but loving you'd become a full-time job and I wasn't ready to be unemployed" (146). This shows that Chris is extremely zealous in her hunt, another characteristic of the hook (Gran 311). It also shows that she is aware of (to a certain degree) that Dick has taken over her life. This may be a factor to why she is able to get off the hook faster than Chris M from *Now and Then*.

The text creates an ideal reader who partly sympathises with Chris, and partly finds her ridiculous and tragic, and wants to scream at her to get a grip and stop longing for a man that obviously does not want her; at least not for more than sex or phone calls at his convenience. The reader might sympathise, because she sees Chris's situation from an external point of view, like Sylvère also does in a way: "The situation was hopeless: she loved him, needed him, couldn't stand the idea of not being close to him or communicating with him" (190). Not to mention, there is something universal in feelings of love that one can sympathise with. Like Baumeister and Wotman write: "Passionate, mutual love probably does make more people feel good, and to a more intense degree, than any other natural or artificial means" (2). So, based on this, most readers can understand what Chris longs for and sympathise with her pain of not getting Dick in the way she longs for.

On the other hand, in the role of the observer of this relationship, Chris seems ridiculous and sometimes crazy to the ideal reader. Even Sylvère shares that observation and points it out to Chris: "Chris you can't send that. It makes no sense at all" (49). When describing their letters or project, he writes: "Obviously, these people are very sick" and "none of the characters are likeable" (26), referring to himself, Chris and Dick. So, if Sylvère himself does not find himself and the two others likeable, how is the implied reader supposed to do so? Sylvère also tries to fix the situation for Chris, when he thinks it gets too foolish: "The situation is now so globally embarrassing there's no choice but to phone Dick and alert him to the arrival of the fax" (50). By the look of it, by leaving Sylvère Chris gets rid of the one person who is both a source of extra contact with Dick and the most sceptical of him at times. Dick started out (and ends in a way) as "a friendly acquaintance of Sylvère's" (3), and Sylvère helps Chris maintain contact with him in the beginning. But Sylvère is also sceptical

of Dick and Chris's obsession with him, so by leaving Sylvère at the end of "Part 1" she shows another symptom of a serious hook.

The symptom of the hook Chris shows by leaving Sylvère is according to Gran: To avoid the ones that are sceptical of one's object of desire (266). Hence, by leaving Sylvère, Chris becomes more entangled in the hook, because she no longer has a brake to her emotions when they run wild. Yet, the reader is still there as an observer, finding some of her behaviour irrational.

Although leaving Sylvère might show a symptom of the hook, it might also have been what Chris needed to do independently of the hook. It might be that the hook indirectly allows her to solve a more serious problem in her life, to move on from being "no one! She's Sylvère Lotringer's wife! She's his 'Plus-One'!" (100) and being omitted from works the couple did together. "In ten years, she'd erased herself" (101) she writes, and the hook gives her the opportunity to find herself and her own voice as an artist again, since Dick is her source of inspiration and motivation to write. Even though Dick gets Chris on the hook, which is a phenomenon to avoid most of the times if one can, it is also Dick and the hook that indirectly get her off the hook and out of the role of "passive" wife. Dick and the hook give her the chance to restore her previous life as an artist with her own voice (Gran 379). Chris admits to having stopped living her own life to focus solely on Dick, but in a way that was also what she did when she was Sylvère's wife. So, maybe the hook and getting off the hook ended up restoring Chris's life to what it was before Sylvère, too.

The implied reader *I Love Dick* creates can be compared to two other novels with hooked characters (in addition to Chris M from *Now and Then*, of course): Ester Nilsson in Lena Andersson's *Egenmäktigt förfarande – en roman om kärlek* and the main character in *All min forakt. En kärlighets historie* by Berit Hedeman. In a book review of Hedeman's novel in *Dagsavisen*, Gerd Elin Stava Sandve writes that both Hedeman's and Andersson's novels make the reader yearn to shout to the main character that she must get a grip of her life and get away from the loser she is obsessed with. "Without it working, obviously", Sandve concludes. The fact that Sandve uses a character from one novel to review and exemplify a character and position of the implied reader in another, makes it clear that there are parallels in these two novels she wants to show. I would like to draw this parallel to my novels. I argue that a novel with a hooked character will make the implied reader extremely frustrated with the character on the hook.

The implied reader will wonder why the character makes a fool of him- or herself; why the character keeps on insisting and knocking on seemingly closed or unavailable doors, instead of understanding what the reader, and the other characters, understand: that the hooked and the object of desire will never get together, because they do not want the same thing from the relationship (Gran 249). Of course, the characters do all these things, because they are hooked. But then, being in a hook will almost always make the character on the hook a little crazy or unlikable. Despite there being an explanation of the character's behaviour, this literary device of provoking such feelings in the implied reader helps the phenomenon hook shine through in the text. Chris M in *Now and Then* suffers from the same fate: the implied reader gets annoyed with him at some points because of the hook, as will be shown in the next chapter. So, one may identify a hook through the form and literary devices of the novel, if the characters make the ideal reader feel this way.

Another common feature in these novels, where the hooked characters are easily identified if one knows some of the symptoms of a hook, is that main characters mistake or confuse the hook with love. The reader can be led astray too and persuaded to believe it is love too, at least in the beginning, if she is not attentive to the titles. *I Love Dick*, for instance, contains a strong suggestion of the novel being about love, and the subheadings of Andersson's and Hedeman's novels self-classify as "stories about love", when it is not love, but a hook, a hope of the possibility of true love in the end. *Now and Then* does not have a title referring directly to love, so the same does not apply directly to that novel. However, using a title with two antonyms whose connotations are in stark contrast to each other suggests a large difference between the now and then, which may not be the case when it comes to the hook.

The different pieces of documents, or evidence as they are called, that *I Love Dick* consists of, can classify the novel as an epistolary novel, or at least partly epistolary. Indirectly, it classifies itself as epistolary when Dick asks Chris how her project (referring to the letters she and Sylvère have written) is going during a dinner Chris and Sylvère attend to at his house on January 22, 1995. She answers: "Actually it's changed. It's turned into an epistolary novel, really" (99). According to the Oxford Reference, an epistolary novel is "A story written in the form of letters, or letters with journals, and usually presented by an anonymous author masquerading as 'editor'". Since *I Love Dick* contains a self-classification, letters, diary entries and has an editor and sometimes narrator the reader is not sure who is, among other fragments, I would make the claim that it is to a degree epistolary. The effect of

this epistolary form is that with the letters and diary entries it can be sensed as more realistic than if it had solely had a third-person narrator, since it imitates actions we do in real life. We write letters, and we write in our diaries. In addition, the reader gets insight in Chris's thoughts and feelings first-hand, since the letters she writes to Dick and her diary entries are reproduced in the novel, without editing from a third-person. It is kind of like reading our siblings' diaries or letters without them knowing.

Gran sums up what a hook is by stating that in a hook all one's power is used to convince oneself, the other, and possibly friends and family about how right this relationship or non-relationship is. The persuasive track becomes a straightjacket in the form of dwelling and repeating inner dialogue (286). The use of analepsis in the novel confirms Gran's theory about the hook, because through the analepses the reader understands that Chris is in a persuasive state, and it can seem like she uses the letters to Dick to write down her repeating inner dialogue, to convince both herself and Dick of her love for him: "But what I'm going through with you is real" (122), "On Saturday, April 8 we spent a perfect afternoon together" (238), "But now I had to prove my love for you was real by holding back and considering what you wanted" (238), "So far I've told "our" story twice" (195), and "On December 3, 1994 I started loving you. I still do" (188) are just some of the numerous examples.

The epistolary form used makes the phenomenon of being hooked appear clearer in the text, since it can mimic the real world more with letters and diary entries than a first-person or a third-person narrator can do alone. A hook is a real psychological condition, and Gran borrows a friend's experience to give an outline of its symptoms and distinctions. She also says that both fiction and non-fiction can give graphic descriptions of the hook, but dismisses diagnoses from specialised non-fiction literature in her analysis. She explains her dismissal by saying that her intention is not to pathologise people or relationships, but to make the hook more commonly recognised as a phenomenon, because the vast majority of us can end up in a hook (250). Accordingly, the hook is a phenomenon where psychology can gain more knowledge about different forms of it by borrowing material from other fields, like literature. Add to that, being hooked is a "complex, emotional condition", and the one hooked can be blind to his or her own condition, thinking that what one feels is real love, when it actually is just a hook on a person representing a hope of love (Gran 11). So, whereas Chris might be blind to her own condition, through her letters the reader can examine and evaluate the phenomenon of the hook. The partially epistolary form makes the hook shine through

clearly, and one can analyse different aspects of it without a third-person narrator in between in parts of “Part 2”.

In the ending of *I Love Dick*, the narrator returns to third-person, closing the cycle in a way. Chris is not hooked yet in the opening of the novel, when the third-person narrator starts narrating. As the hook grows more and more serious, she takes over the narration more and more. She starts writing longer and longer letters to Dick, and there becomes fewer from Sylvère the further into “Part 1” one gets. In “Part 2”, Chris takes over the narration entirely, before the third-person narrator returns for the final chapter and Dick’s reply. His reply to her letters is what Chris has been yearning to get during the whole course of the novel. The third-person narrator even narrates: “Perhaps the only reason Dick had never written back was she’d failed to express her feelings for him forcefully?” (242) before she receives the letter. This shows an expectation, it is a sign she is still on the hook as the hope has not died yet, which must happen before one can get off the hook (Gran 357). In addition, this segment could have been an inner dialogue, so maybe Chris is not quite ready to give away all the narration to the third-person narrator yet, since she is still on the hook. In the last sentence, after reading the letter, she gets off the hook as argued above, by taking back the power over her life, and kills the hope by doing so: “She gasped and breathed under the weight of it and got out of the cab and showed her film” (245). Here, there is also a more assertive third-person narrator, so this is a clear example of how the form in literature helps the hook emerge, by letting the narration mirror its development.

The ending also shows how Dick is more concerned with restoring his haltering relationship with Sylvère, than with apologising to Chris for any bad behaviour, or misleading her. He either does not understand what he has been doing to Chris, or he uses strategies uncovered in Strauss’s *The Game* to get sex and adoration with no strings attached. A third option is that he has used his relationship with Chris to renegotiate or reshape his relationship to Sylvère. Without a doubt, what is crucial for Dick in the end is to save the relationship he has or had with Sylvère, the other man in the triangle of letters, faxes, phone calls and meetings. It seems to be chiefly because Sylvère asked him to write an answer to Chris that he finally does so: “Once again her husband, Sylvère Lotringer intervened, phoning Dick and soliciting his compassion” (242). Dick writes: “*I don’t know how our connection stands*”, that he believes friendship is “*a delicate and rare thing that’s built up over time on mutual trust, mutual respect*” and not “*demande unconditionally*” (244). He follows up with wondering about if too much damage has been done for them (Dick and Sylvère) to restore their

relationship or not. He writes: “*I still have immense respect for your work; I still enjoy your company and conversation when we meet*” (244), so he tries to salvage their friendship. This seems to be more important to him, than admitting any wrong doing towards Chris, and he denies a special connection between him and Chris.

This might be an example of Sedgwick’s theory about gender asymmetry and erotic triangles from *Between Men*. She argues that men shape their relationships with other men through relationships with women. So, if Dick, Chris and Sylvère are in an erotic triangle, Dick and Sylvère become rivals, in a way, for Chris’s love. Dick’s motivation in the start might even have been to get a closer bond with Sylvère, since: “the choice of the beloved is determined in the first place, not by qualities of the beloved, but by the beloved’s already being the choice of the person who has been chosen as a rival” (Sedgwick 21). In addition, Sedgwick adds that the closest bond in the triangle is between the two rivals, or put in other words, the homosocial relationship is put highest, and is the most intimate. Therefore, it might have been because Chris was together with Sylvère that Dick chose to flirt with her in the start, to get into this triangle with them. Consequently, becoming a rival to Sylvère, while at the same time getting a closer bond with him, and asserting his intellect or position over Sylvère, since Chris longed for Dick, not Sylvère. Maybe it was not Chris Dick was interested in at all, but Sylvère, in a non-sexual way. That can be the reason why the last letter is directed to Sylvère, to salvage that relationship, not to Chris.

However, the letter from Dick helps Chris to get off the hook. Even though it might be described as a humiliation or “Fuck You” to Chris, it is exactly what Gran wants the objects of desire to do to kill the hope and the hook. Gran wants the object to kill the relationship with one cut or chop, preferably with a sharp axe or guillotine, so no doubt is left for the one hooked (398). Dick does this in the end, after all the ambiguity, and this helps Chris to restore her life as an artist. Instead of staying in the hook and not accepting the death of hope, she kills the hope of a relationship with Dick, gets out of the cab, and shows her film. Thus, regaining power over her own life.

3 *Now and Then*

The novel *Now and Then* by William Corlett is about Christopher Metcalfe, or Chris, as he is called, at two different ages. Adult Chris is approaching the age of fifty, and his father's death prompts the discovery of a box with material from his days at the boarding school. This makes him recall a vital year for him at that school, which leads him to both an inner journey of discovery and an exterior search for people from his past to get answers. Young Chris attends Blandfords boarding school for boys and gets hooked on Stephen Walker, a two years older schoolboy he does a play with at school. The novel explores the link between cause and effect, between the past and present Chris, through his own memories and thoughts, in addition to dialogues between characters. *Now and Then* shows a different exploration of the hook from *I Love Dick*, since it arises in a relationship between two boys, and arguably lasts for decades. Still, there are similarities in how the characters get on and off the hook, which is interesting given the other differences.

Now and Then is divided into 23 chapters. It starts with a "Now" chapter, and is followed by a "Then" chapter, thus the title; *Now and Then*. It alternates like this for 22 chapters, before the last chapter called "Granada" comes. The "Granada" chapter is set in the present timeline of the story, and in addition to present action, it contains flashbacks, dialogue between characters about the past, and revelations that make the puzzle complete for the readers, and for Chris, though in unexpected ways. By dividing the novel into chapters with these descriptive titles of what timeline the characters are in at every moment, and alternating every other chapter, Corlett makes it easy for the readers to follow Chris's story, which actually becomes a plot by Rimmon-Kenan's definition, because of the causality: Both story and plot are narratives of events organised in time-sequences, but a plot has the emphasis on causality, the "therefore" or "that's why" things have become the way they are (17). This is in stark contrast to how the time and place markers function in *I Love Dick*, where it is difficult to follow the story in spite of the titles. What the form does, with this shift from now to then over and over again, is that it enhances the cause-effect of the hook. Without it, we would not be able to see the long-term causes of the hook, but with it we see how Chris remains hooked even thirty years after the initial contact.

Rimmon-Kenan states further that "Causality can either be implied by chronology or gain explicit status in its own right" (17). By setting up two timelines that alternate, the causality is implied by the chronology of the novel, because there would not be a past

timeline if it had nothing to do with the present, and one can link events of the past to why Chris reacts the way he does in the present. Therefore, it is only natural to conclude that there is an implied causality in the construction of the order of events. Consequently, it is comprehensible that Corlett chose a different name for the last chapter, as he breaks up the structure he himself has built throughout the novel, when revealing the what the readers and Chris have been waiting for.

It follows from this that form and story mirror each other, because when Chris is in his present, and in his past, the chronology and timelines are organised with a clear and firm structure; the readers know what to expect to be in each chapter and can follow Chris's development and story at two ages. But, when things escalate, and Chris is forced to meet his lover from the past, who has haunted him for decades, the form and story break out of the alteration and clear division between past and present, it moves location from England to Spain, and is further dissolved by the name change of the last chapter. No less fundamental, the process of Chris's hook is also mirrored in the form, as the past timeline explains, to a degree, how he became hooked, whereas the present timeline shows how his life is still marked by the hook, and how he has been unable to move on and put it behind him. Apparently, the "Granada" chapter forces Chris to confront his infatuation and take action, instead of continuing to be a passive victim of the hook, like he was in the "Now" and the "Then".

Just like in *I Love Dick*, the initial pursuit is not made by the one who gets hooked, Chris, but by the object of desire, Stephen. They are acting together in a school production of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and this first characterisation we get of Stephen (through Chris) is this: "I like him. He's more civilised than most of the others and he doesn't abuse his power. But I don't know much about him" (25). Here, Chris is rather indifferent to Stephen on an emotional level, even though he likes him better than the other older boys. In the play, Chris plays Nora and Stephen plays Krogstad, so they "have several difficult scenes together" (25). The first contact is thus made by Stephen with the excuse of the play: "come to my study, will you? I want to go over those lines in Act One" (25). Chris is a little cold in the beginning, as he thinks: "I'm not particularly looking forward to going over the lines" (28). When Chris gets to the study, there is a fine line between what they are acting and what is "real": "We stare at each other. I wait for him to speak. I can't remember what happens next. He is still leaning towards me, looking into my eyes" (31). Stephen makes the first move: "he puts his hand on my knee" (32), "Now what should we do?" Walker asks me and, as he speaks, he

slowly moves his hand up my leg until it is resting in the warm crease between thigh and the crotch” (33). Chris is nervous: “My heart is beating too fast and it makes my voice unsteady” (32) and makes excuses to Stephen’s insisting: “We mustn’t”, “We would be expelled if we were caught”, “Someone could come in” (33). He uses societal norms of what he thinks he is right as an excuse to reject Stephen’s advances, even though his nerves expose that he may unconsciously want something too: “Why am I so nervous, I wonder? I couldn’t eat a biscuit. It’d stick to my throat” (32).

Stephen keeps on insisting, despite Chris’s rejections, so at least in the start Stephen shows more signs of wanting Chris than the other way around: “But, you want to – don’t you?” (33). Chris seems to be afraid, and lets societal norms, morals, religion and what other people may think hold him back: “I don’t know. No, not if it means ruining both our lives” (33). Chris goes out of Stephen’s study, but soon returns, because he does not want to be “responsible for making him suffer” (35). In addition, Chris thinks:

If I have to do it with anyone, then Walker is a pretty good choice. He’s about the most handsome chap in the house and quite a few of the younger boys have crushes on him. In fact, it’s rather flattering that he should have chosen me. Or is it just because I am playing Nora? Is he getting fact and fantasy confused? I don’t know. (35)

This illustrates that Chris’s initial motivation is not genuine feelings, but a mix of being flattered by being Stephen’s choice, and wanting someone many of the other boys want. If one draws a parallel to Sedgwick’s erotic triangle here, one misses out on the gender component as there are only young males involved, but I would argue one can use it because the motivation of rivalry can be present. If Chris is at one corner, Stephen at one and the other boys at the third corner, Chris can assert his power over the “rivals” by being Stephen’s choice since “sexuality functions as a signifier for power relations” (Sedgwick 7).

Stephen thanks Chris for coming back, they kiss, and Stephen takes the lead by moving his groin, undressing Chris, and Chris copies Stephen’s moves. An observation Chris makes is: “Low down, by the waist, he has hair growing. I explore this new discovery” (36). This, among other comments made by Chris, illustrates how unexperienced and clueless he is to this sexual part of life, and that in a way Stephen opens that door for him. Chris’s teacher says: “Boys like a boy who’s a boy. You understand my drift?” (27) at a rehearsal. Chris thinks: “I don’t. I haven’t the vaguest idea what he’s talking about” (27). So, indirectly this characterises Chris as naïve and clueless about sexual life, and maybe even the emotional one, before Stephen. Since Stephen is the “teacher” of this world, it might make sense that Chris eventually develops a hook on him. Chris’s history of attachment has most likely been rather

uneventful. He comes from a family that shows little emotion to each other, and are physically distant, even though his mother seems to adore him. Hence, maybe Chris is not used to show or reflect on his own feelings, nor being physically close to anyone. When someone shows him a “warmer” way to express feelings, he is predisposed to act the way he does, and indeed fall in love with Stephen. Like Gran states: our personal attachment history is key to understanding why some people are more likely than others to get hooked (289).

The hook probably starts developing the first time Chris and Stephen look each at each other in the eyes after the sex in Stephen’s study. “I smile at him”, “But he frowns and walks away” (62). Chris interprets this as “a horrible rebuff. I don’t deserve it. I don’t know why he’s done it” (62), here starting to interpret and read extra meaning into what Stephen does. From this moment, more classical patterns of the hook are established. Stephen’s cold behaviour in this scene is replaced by a hot action in the shower the next morning, where they almost have sex again and Chris notices that his “cock is in a dangerous mood” (65). The classical push-pull mechanism of the hook starts, as Stephen pushes Chris away at some points, and pulls him closer at others. However, Chris also pushes a little back, because of his fear of being caught and it ruining his life, and makes Stephen do some of the hunting even after the hook has started to develop: “Leave me alone. I don’t want all this complication”, “The fear and the tension have overwhelmed me” (96). Stephen’s response is that he loves Chris and will look after him: “I am in love with you. I’m sorry. I can’t help it. I’ve tried to. I can’t stop it” (97), “I’ll look after you, I promise you. But I can’t let it end” (96). This shows that in the start Stephen is probably as infatuated by Chris as the other way around, but the fire dies out for Stephen and he is unable to keep his promises. This possibly happens either when he leaves for college and experiences a new life, or when Chris stops pushing back and it is not a hunt for Stephen anymore. Either way, the false promises (this is one of the first he makes) are part of establishing the hook.

The fact that Stephen pursues Chris for quite a long time makes Chris M’s hook different from Chris K’s, as Chris K became almost instantly infatuated by Dick, and hooked on him. The power balance also takes much longer to change in Chris M and Stephen’s relationship, than in Chris K and Dick’s. Chris M holds a sexual and emotional power over Stephen for longer than Chris K feels like she has a power over Dick. In the start of *Now and Then*, it is Chris that holds the cards in his hand and rejects Stephen at some points. For example, when Stephen has made his first move and Chris leaves him in his room. Chris thinks that Stephen: “seems much more ill at ease about it all than I have been” (34). Another

example of their power balance before it changes, and Stephen gets the upper hand, is this: “No, Walker,’ I say, fighting free of his embrace and pushing back from him” (96). This tests the definition of the classical hook theory, of how emotional involved the object of desire of the hooked can be before it is no longer a hook. I argue it still this is still a hook, because of all the other markers, and the fact that a hook is not a one-way infatuation like other kinds of unrequited love. Notwithstanding, this is why it is so interesting to use literature and fictional realities to investigate a psychological phenomenon. When literature can challenge the theory a little, it shows that reality can differ from the theory and illustrates how literature can contribute to the field of psychology, by giving more examples of how the hook can work itself out in specific cases.

The narrator in *Now and Then* is Chris himself, which makes him a homodiegetic narrator. As it is a first-person narrative, and Chris is both a character, the protagonist, and the narrator, the narration must always be taken into account, as homodiegetic narratives are always subjective. There is no given knowledge of innermost thoughts or feelings of other characters than Chris, since Chris is the narrator and does not have the powers a heterodiegetic narrator may have. Instead, the reader must read between the lines and deduce feelings and thoughts from speech and action. In addition, Chris guesses feelings and moods by using verbs like “seemed” here: “Mother seemed hardly to listen” (11). He makes assumptions based on physical appearance: “She was no longer tearful” (11), and on tone of voice in addition to appearance: “But she was still cross. ‘Where were you?’ she asked, glaring balefully” (11). Trying to decode each other’s messages and feelings is something we all do every day. So, by not using an omniscient narrator, but having an imitation of a real person telling us something, Corlett’s fictional universe seems more like reality than if Chris had claimed to have knowledge of everything everyone was feeling all the time. The narrator thus has a similar function as the epistolary form of in *I Love Dick* has in making the stories more realistic.

The narrator of *Now and Then* can lead the reader astray, if she is not attentive and takes everything he narrates for granted. Rimmon-Kenan’s main sources of an unreliable narrator are as previously mentioned: “the narrator’s limited knowledge, his personal involvement, and his problematic value-scheme” (101). The two first factors are clearly present in *Now and Then*, and maybe even to some extent the third. Chris has limited knowledge and understanding in the “Then” chapters as these chapters are written in the present verb tense, thereby communicating to the reader that the narrator of these chapters is

young Chris, not adult Chris. Young narrators often have limited knowledge and understanding. As illustrated above, young Chris understands little about relationships and sexuality. The limited knowledge and understanding is made even more visible, when he meets a former schoolmate, Hobbs, again as an adult. Hobbs tells him that he had also had sex with Stephen at boarding school, but that Hobbs had actually fancied Chris, not Stephen. Chris admits he did not know or understand this at the time: "I'm sorry. I had no idea" (279), and the reader comprehends that Chris did not know when reading the "Then" chapters. Chris needed the direct approach like the one he got from Stephen to recognise that he was being hit on, so maybe Chris became hooked on Stephen not necessarily just because he developed a strong desire to be with Stephen during their relationship, but because Stephen was the only who was direct with his feelings and approaches towards Chris. The meeting with Hobbs makes adult Chris reshape his view of the past: "When Stephen came and woke me on the last night of his last term he had come from having sex with Hobbs" (249). Along with Chris's new view of his past, the reader also gets a new view of the events with the new information. It appears that if Chris had not been a young, homodiegetic narrator in the "Then" chapters, but an omniscient, heterodiegetic, reliable third-person narrator, there would be less mystery in the novel. Hence, the mode of narration is important to make the hook emerge.

Chris's narration of both the past and the present timelines can also be suspect, because of his personal involvement, the hook he is caught in, and his problematic value scheme. Gran proclaims that the hook creates an emotional and cognitive obsession that takes away much of the ability of concentration on daily tasks, work and regular activities from the one that is hooked (286). This happens to young Chris, as he eventually ends up having a breakdown because of the hook. It can also be said to apply for adult Chris, when he uses the hook as an excuse for being emotionally cold and having a somewhat problematic value scheme. Adult Chris is a deeply troubled and not an overly sympathetic individual. He is enormously self-involved, appears in some ways to be emotionally stunted and has little to "give" to his surroundings. This is especially shown through his relationship to his mother and family. He admits himself that he is "more likely to drive home to London and back for Boxing Day than stay a night" (6) at his parents' house. When driving to see his mother after his father has died, he "half expected that [he] would return to London to sleep" (6), only considering his own needs and wants, not having the ability to show any consideration or empathy for his mother, who might have needed him to stay after losing her husband. Since Chris thinks this about his father when he dies: "I don't think he liked me and I didn't

particularly like him” (5), the reader has reason to suspect his reliability when it comes to descriptions of his family and other characters.

As it happens, because of these three markers, the reader cannot trust that what Chris narrates is the absolute truth about the fictional reality of *Now and Then*, but rather Chris’s subjective interpretation of the events narrated, and what he wants to tell. But then again, when he gets new information, like in the example above, the reader can observe how he changes his views of the past, and tries to make sense of his experiences by telling stories, and now reshaping them with the new information, which, is a vital part of living (Phelan ix). This adds to the sense of Corlett’s fictional universe being something readers can relate to, which is important if the reader is supposed to feel a connection with Chris, however unsympathetic he is at some points. In the introduction, I set out to examine how we can see the phenomenon of the hook through literature, how it emerges through the form, and how literature can make us relate to this phenomenon and understand it better. Through this use of narrator, I believe the hook becomes clearer, because we get first-hand information about how the powerful feelings Gran describes in a hook appear in Chris. In addition, we can relate better to him than if it had been another type of narrator, because the point is not if he is reliable or unreliable. Ultimately, it is his feelings that are important for the communication of the hook.

On the same note, Phelan points out that Sandra Cisneros’s short story “Barbie Q” would become relatively flat, short and not very exciting or stimulating to read if one changes her unreliable narrator to a reliable, noncharacter narrator that focuses primarily on the events (6-8). It becomes clear that an unreliable narrator is not simply a bad thing, but can indeed be an integral part of a narrative’s success. I believe that is the case for *Now and Then*, too, because it is important for the communication of the hook that Chris communicates it, not an omniscient, heterodiegetic narrator. We can read in Gran’s study that the feelings one gets when trapped in a hook are so intense and overwhelming, they would probably not have become communicated to the readers in a powerful way in any other form than through Chris. The hook is a cluster of feelings, interpretations, reading of signals, and action to get a taste of the feeling of euphoria one sometimes gets with the object of desire yet again.

Even though we as readers might not understand what is so desirable about Stephen, we see that Chris tries to get to him over and over again after the initial hesitation. This despite Stephen’s hot and cold behaviour, especially after his trip to Hong Kong when his mother dies, false promises of running away together to Spain, and Stephen even raping Chris in one scene: “You’re hurting me”, I sob. ‘Get off me. You’re hurting me” (205) Chris says

several times, before narrating that “his cock penetrates into me with an explosion of pain” (206). Stephen asks him to shut up, Chris tells Stephen it hurts another time, but after the sex Stephen starts sobbing. This leads Chris to reflect over his feelings for Stephen, thinking and telling him that he loves him, because he does not want to be the cause of Stephen crying. Stephen even says: “I love you too,” he whispers, “and I will never love anyone else ...” (207). Here two elements of the hook are shown: Ambivalence and opposing emotions (Gran 261); These are feelings that can shift from euphoria to despair, and back again in seconds, like in this scene where Chris was keen on meeting Stephen and having sex with him, then wanted out desperately when Stephen “fucked” him, before he once again was hit by a feeling of wanting him.

In addition, it shows that Stephen is not a passive part in the creation of Chris’s kind of unrequited love for him, which is common to other types of unrequited love (e. g. Baumeister and Wotman). In the other types, the typical is a hunt from the infatuated one’s side without any real encouraging response from the object of desire, but in the hook there is a positive response, mixed with negative response on other occasions. This encouraging behaviour from Stephen’s side, saying he will love Chris forever, confirms my thesis that the state Chris is in is indeed a hook, as defined by Gran. It is also a part of creating the push-pull effect Gran outlines as one of the main reasons one gets hooked: Here Stephen is pulling Chris to him by giving him a false promise of love, but just an instant before this he had been so cold and distant towards Chris, pushing him away, that Chris thinks this to himself: “It still hurts to see him, but it’s different now. The love I thought I felt for him has turned into spiteful hate” (195).

Another matter to be examined regarding form and narration is *why* the narrator tells the story, and *to whom*. In other words, who is the narratee here? Contrary to *I Love Dick*, which has a homodiegetic narratee, *Now and Then* has an extradiegetic narratee, who remains unaddressed during the course of the novel, with the exception of a few postcards that have recipients within the novel as senders and recipients. Rimmon-Kenan (105) follows Chatman’s theory that the extradiegetic, heterodiegetic narratee is parallel or identical to the implied reader, thus granting reliability to this narratee. Based on my close reading, and there being no textual evidence or clues that the narrator and the narratee are the same character, I conclude that the narratee is indeed extradiegetic and heterodiegetic. If Chris was the narratee as well as the narrator, there would be no point in using the describing phrases like, “I think”, “I want”, “I almost dared to”, “I told” that are so plentiful in the course of the novel, which

hints to an outside narratee. There is of course the possibility of Chris telling his story to a therapist or a psychiatrist inside the story that we do not know about, because Gran suggests seeking professional help as a step to getting over the person of your desire if you are unable to do it yourself and/or with the help from friends (382-3). However, there are no clear clues to there being an intradiegetic narratee of this kind, and I find it very unlikely, based on the fact that the “Then” chapters are also written in the present tense, and from the point of view of young Chris, not an adult Chris looking back and retelling his story to someone else. The instant where this could be likely would be at the beginning of the last chapter, where Chris states his present situation (he is in Spain with his mother), and explains that “It started in London when ...” (299), but when he is done explaining he continues with: “That was two days ago and now here we are, Mother and I, driving ...” (304). So, it is very unlikely that any other narratee than an extradiegetic one is present in the car with him and his mother.

This leaves us with an extradiegetic, heterodiegetic narratee, identical to the implied reader, and a homodiegetic narrator with an age difference of over thirty years between the “Now” and the “Then” chapters. Consequently, the purpose in telling the story becomes to move the real reader through the implied reader, without having another character between narrator and implied reader like in *I Love Dick*. *Now and Then* tries to create a narrator (and character) to sympathise with, but adult Chris is not very sympathetic: “the thought of sharing my room with anyone, let alone one of the children, was irksome” (181). However, he develops and redeems himself a little in the end, when he goes through an internal change and actually apologises to his mother for some of his bad behaviour. In contrast to *I Love Dick*, where we are more likely to find Chris K ridiculous or tragic in her hook at some points because of the text, *Now and Then* creates sympathy for young Chris, in spite of adult Chris’s self-centredness. Like Rimmon-Kenan states: “Just as the reader participates in the production of the text’s meaning so the text shapes the reader” (118).

In a review of *Now and Then* it is written that “You can’t help but feel for the younger Chris, in all his teenage passion and willful self deception” (Anon.). This text shapes the reader into feeling sympathy for young Chris through its form and narrative, although he might also be perceived as a little naïve, and always being surprised by others. As another reviewer points out: “It took Kit decades to realize how he had been used” (Murray). The implied reader will most likely understand that Stephen’s promises of them running away together, and always loving him are false, due to the fact that they are young adults with many hormones, they are in a phase where experimenting is normal, Stephen has at least one other

relationship and they live in an artificial setting. A boys' school, where all the other people they interact with are male only is a bubble they will have to exit at some point, and things are not the same on the outside. In addition, Stephen does not respond to any of Chris's letters. Young Chris does not seem to understand any of this. When he seeks out Stephen at university, he expects everything to be the same as at Blandfords, and gets surprised once again when meeting Stephen and realising it is not: "It's ended. . . . That's what he's known while I've been waiting to hear from him. . . . Only he forgot to tell me. Forgot? Or didn't dare?" (290). The fact that Chris always becomes surprised by others might enhance his characteristic of being self-involved and not understanding societal norms and rules. Maybe growing up in the home he did has made him socially awkward in a way, and unable to play by the unwritten rules, making him predisposed to developing a hook, because he might not know any better. At the same time, Stephen not telling Chris their relationship was over, but sustaining the promises of running away and loving him forever is part of what makes the hook last longer. So, most likely a sympathy for Chris will be created in an ideal reader, because she will see what effect the hook has had on him during his life. However, she can also question the cause and effect of the hook. Is Stephen to blame for all of it, or is Chris's detached family and his character also part of the equation of why he became hooked? I have already deliberated on his attachment pattern which can be a factor. In addition, adult Chris is emotionally frozen. It seems like he blames the hook for his isolated life, but as he is so self-centred as he is, maybe he uses the fact that he is hooked as an excuse to be unsympathetic.

It is evident that Corlett makes use of the literary device "delay" with the goal of "Self-survival, or how the text 'tempts' the reader to continue reading" (Rimmon-Kenan 126). By delaying both the present and the past timelines by alternating between them, the text creates a "strong expectation" within the reader. "Coupled with a strong uncertainty as to *how* it should continue" a successful future-oriented delay is constructed according to Rimmon-Kenan (126). This is what Corlett produces with his alternating between the timelines, and the delays. Corlett also creates past-oriented delays, by giving the reader facts about what Chris's present life is like, and hints about the breakdown he has at boarding school. Then, little by little, he reveals more and more information about the past in the "Then" chapters. These delays produce questions like "what happened?", "who did what?", and "why?", and are therefore "past-oriented" (127). The readers get to know early in the text, that Chris had a breakdown, but the "why" is not revealed until later, so the delay is successful if the readers are left in suspense and keep on reading to figure out "why".

The literary device of “delay” also sheds light on a key aspect of the phenomenon of being hooked, or rather an aspect of what can happen if one is not able to get off the hook. Chris becomes so infatuated with Stephen at boarding school, that thirty years later he still has not been able to get over it. Instead, it becomes evident that he has used this infatuation and heartbreak to shape his life. He has in a way guarded himself and his heart all of his adult life by not becoming romantically involved with someone else, but still hanging on to Stephen as the love of his life. Chris has become friends with Catherine, who is safe for him to get close to, since she is a woman and not a man, and Chris is as best as one can tell from the evidence presented in the novel, gay. His mother thinks Catherine is a suitable companion for him, and Chris even admits that “Not that Catherine and I haven’t discussed it ourselves” (4). I suspect that this is a comment full of self-deception that comes from an internalised homophobia within him, and this friendship functions as a kind of defence mechanism, both to avoid getting hurt again, and not to have to get out of the closet. His internalised homophobia is probably as important as external homophobia to his lifelong self-denial and closeted life, because there is not much evidence of external homophobia in the “Now” sections of the novel. Young Chris shows a strong feeling of internalised homophobia, at least in the start: “doing it with another boy is unnatural, and there must be consequences” (34), and even though he eventually longs for Stephen, there are inner thoughts and outer dialogues suggesting he is not at ease being in love with a male. In addition, adult Chris has not stepped out of the role as a victim of the hook, nor has he killed all hope of him and Stephen having a future together, which Gran points out as important steps to get off the hook (357, 391). He still thinks about Stephen and gets in touch with him when the opportunity arises, finally traveling to meet him in Spain.

As already noted, Chris is this novel’s narrator, main character, and the one who gets hooked in Gran’s definition. He can be said to be a round, or a complex character, due to the fact that he goes through a process of change and self-reflection in the novel. The reader also gets to see more than one side of him, or multiple character traits. In a way, there are two of all the characters in the novel, one young version, and one older version. They are perceived through Chris; either through young Chris, or adult Chris, so although they are the same characters, there are thirty years between them in the story. I only do close readings of two of the characters here as well, Chris and Stephen, because it is the hook I am interested in analysing. That said, I recognise that the closer study of more characters would be beneficial in a larger project. Catherine, Jimmy Hobbs, and Chris’s mother, in particular, are also

significant characters in the novel. They help drive the plot forward, they give Chris incentives to go through a process of self-reflection, and reveal “secrets” and insights both to Chris and to the reader.

Chris and Stephen’s power balance change at a point in the “Then” timeline. It seems to be after Chris stops making excuses for not being with and having sex with Stephen, and when he starts believing in and wanting a future where they will run away to Spain together. He seems to put some of his initial fears behind him, when he starts believing and desiring Stephen’s promises of a mutual future. However, something happens, because Stephen changes, and when Stephen changes the power balance between them also changes. Stephen gets more power over Chris than he had in the beginning, as Chris is now hooked. Stephen has at least one other relationship, he is two years older than Chris, and he goes away to Cambridge. The reader does not know which of these factors that is the most significant cause of his change in attitude, nor does she know if Stephen’s promises were always false. As Gran states, it is acceptable to withdraw from a relationship and ending it. The problem is when there is an almost equal amount of withdrawal signals as there are signals of devotion (348-52). In those cases, the hooked become unsure of what to do, and since their longing is so strong, they keep on hanging on to the positive signs instead of accepting the negative ones. Either way, Stephen gets more and more power, as Chris gets more and more hooked on him. Since Stephen does not send a clear break-up signal when leaving for Cambridge, Chris does not get (or want to get) the message that it is over.

Young Chris’s breakdown happens after he visits Stephen at Cambridge. Stephen says to him: “Oh, please! You didn’t think any of that was serious, did you?” (291) about the two of them eloping to Spain, and begs him to let go: “Just let it go, Kit” (295). In a way, Chris’s visit to Cambridge, even without clear signals that he was welcome there, shows the hunting symptom of the hook, and a reversal of their roles. Stephen did the initial “hunting”, now Chris does it. It shows that the hunt for Stephen becomes Chris’s main project in life and his own life, his family, his schooling and diploma or graduation, becomes a trifle. All that matters is Stephen. This rejection creates the breakdown, and Chris promises himself not to let anyone hurt him like Stephen has, by not letting anyone steal his heart again. This shows signs of him still being hooked and the rest of the promise amplifies those signs: “In this way Kit will always be faithful to Stephen and in this way I, Christopher, will never again be hurt” (297). As we see in the story of adult Chris, this is a promise well kept. So, even though Stephen finally sends a clear message, it does not end the hook, as Chris refuses to let go.

Adult Chris is confronted with his past at boarding school, and his one and only love affair, when his father passes away, and he finds an old box with pictures and other things from his time at school at his childhood home. He is pressed by his mother to reflect on why he had his breakdown at school, he starts remembering Stephen, and tries to get in touch with him again, which he succeeds in towards the end. Adult Chris also meets a former schoolmate, Hobbs, and a teacher to gain more information about what really went on at boarding school with Stephen. It may be that it is only when Hobbs comes to his house and finds out that Chris is still hooked after all the years, that he himself realises it too: "You were suffering from a broken heart. I knew that at the time" Hobbs says to him. Then he says: "But now, Kit, all these years later?" (280). Chris tries to deny this, but is unable to do, to both Hobbs and himself, because he starts wondering what his life could have been like if he had let go of Stephen. Gran is of the view that a hook can be short-lived or go on for years (354), as it does in Chris's case. It is the hope that does not die that keeps the hook alive. Although Chris may have tried to kill that hope when he made himself the promise mentioned above, and Stephen rejected him, he retained a small hope when stating that Kit always would be faithful to Stephen. Add to that, he probably would not have tried to get in touch with Stephen again if all hope was dead.

The characterisation of Chris happens mostly by indirect presentation, which is typical of twentieth-century fiction (Rimmon-Kenan 61), and natural, as Chris himself is the narrator and does not present himself directly. In indirect presentation, Rimmon-Kenan lists action and speech together with external appearance and environment, reinforced by analogy as the main ways of characterisation. It is certainly through speech that most of the character traits shine through in most of the characters (together with their actions), since both the "Now" and the "Then" chapters have an abundance of the scenic form of dialogue. However, in Chris's case the insight the readers get through his thoughts is also important to his characterisation. As illustrated above, Chris might be perceived as a little naïve, self-centred, socially and emotionally crippled, and not overly sympathetic as adult. He shows every sign of being in love or hooked, though, with his shifting emotions and actions, and this can make the ideal reader sympathise with him in spite of his unsympathetic remarks and actions as an adult.

Early in the novel, the reader gets a hint of Chris's sexuality, given in a speech transaction between him and his sister where she says: "For all we know, you could be queer" (13). At this point in the novel it is still too early for the reader to make up her mind about Chris's sexuality, because she has not been given enough information. Since the narrator and

focaliser is Chris, who finds his sister annoying and awful, so does the ideal reader. But the ideal reader takes this piece of information with her in the reading process, which consists of “forming hypotheses, reinforcing them, developing them, modifying them, and sometimes replacing them by others or dropping them altogether” (Rimmon-Kenan 122).

In Chris’s case, his environment can also help characterise him quite a lot, especially in the “Now” chapters. Rimmon-Kenan mentions that the character’s physical surroundings and human environment “are often used as trait-connoting metonymies” (66). Chris’s home can be read as a trait-connecting metonymy. He has a hard time letting anyone in, except for Catherine. He loathes visits from anyone else, in particular his mother, so his house can be read as a symbol of his avoidance of creating bonds with other people to avoid getting hurt. The exception is Catherine, who is safe because of her gender and that she talks mostly about herself and her love life, and therefore is not a threat to Chris’s closed heart. His closed, clean and well-kept house can be seen as a parallel to his closed heart:

Why, when I contact anyone from Blandfords, do they have immediately to be ‘in the area’? It is exactly what happened when Mother was here and the ghastly Dixon took it into his head to appear on the doorstep. Now it was the Catherine and Hobbs variation. I must get rid of him, I thought, smiling a welcome. (274)

This is what he narrates when Hobbs shows up on his doorstep, and shows what he thinks of visits in general, maybe because he is afraid of what will happen if he starts to open his door – it means he may have to start opening up his heart again as well.

Stephen becomes the object of Chris’s desire after an initial hunt made by Stephen, that gets Chris on the hook. By having sex with Chris, making false promises, acting hot and cold towards him, and not being able to break up directly with Chris before Chris visits him at Cambridge, he implements the push-pull mechanism of the hook. Ultimately, Stephen is the trigger of Chris’s breakdown, when he eventually tells Chris to let go of him, and apparently admits that nothing he had said about them running away together to Spain was true (in addition to breaking his promise to contact Chris after he left Blandfords). Adult Chris uses Stephen and the hook as an excuse to live a closeted life, since he promised himself to be faithful to Stephen even after their last meeting when they were young. As Gran states, there is not necessarily evil or any strong intention to mislead the hooked from the object’s point of view. It can be as simple as that it feels nice to be desired by another person, so one lets something happen even if one knows that the other person wants more than oneself is willing to give. Sometimes the ones on the hook start taking measures and try to get free by pulling away, like Chris tries to do when he decides to forget Stephen after Stephen ignores him at

school. Then the objects of desire who may not have gone through a rough time because of the relationship, and risk nothing by reaching out to the one on the hook, often go back to the ones on the hook, because it feels nice to be desired (Gran 369). Other times, all one wants is sex, and it is easy to get it from the person on the hook, because they are always ready to read signals, and be there to get a moment with their object of desire.

So, Stephen might have used Chris for sex and fun like he says, when Chris visits him at Cambridge: “I mean, it was just fun at the time, wasn’t it? . . . A way to relieve the prison years” (294). From this, the reader can either find Stephen selfish for having used Chris the way he did. Or she can think society’s norms and conventions are partially to blame for the “impossibility” of the relationship, because they are both male. A third possibility is that Stephen thought he had made himself clear about his intentions to Chris, because as Gran states, many of the objects do think they have been clear about their intentions, even though they might not be perceived as clear. A fourth possibility is that Stephen was honest and truthful in the moment he made the first promises and confessed his love to Chris. However, it may have become too difficult to be truthful and hurt someone he had once cared about, so he tried a form of “ghosting” first. When that did not work, he opted for lying about the relationship ever having signified anything to him to get Chris out of his dorm as fast as possible. Maybe as an attempt to kill the hope and the hook of Chris, or maybe because Stephen’s emotions also shift rapidly and he was on to a new relationship already and wanted to get Chris away quickly. Since the reader only gets Chris’s point of view, she can only speculate about Stephen’s intentions, but between the lines they seem more honest than Dick’s.

Stephen can also be said to be a round character, because one can see development in young Stephen, but the traits that make Chris hooked are still the same in adult Stephen as they were in young Stephen. Chris and the reader learn more about him during the novel, but in the traits described below there seems to be no visible change from young Stephen to adult Stephen. He still makes false promises, like this one in his letter to Chris: “*Anyway, I’ll make contact when back from the land of the Kiwi*” (298), and Chris still waits for them to be fulfilled. The fact that he seems the same may be because the narrator is Chris, and the reader only sees him from Chris’s point of view, and through the one letter he writes. But the fact remains that Stephen treats Chris, and seemingly all other love interests, the same way all his life: “Oh, God! Yes! . . . I love’em all. Each of the wives” (342) he says, when Chris asks if he loved Jimmy Hobbs as well as him. Stephen becomes the one who is able to get love

interests on the hook, and he keeps making promises he is unable to fulfil. Although he says he wants things to work out with his new wife (as he had with the others): “I always do. I suppose I always live in constant hope that this time might last for ever” (344), the dialogue between him and Chris, makes the ideal reader question that: “Problem is, I might have to cut my cock off to attain it and I’m not sure I’m that brave” (345). So, it looks like Stephen lets his sex drive control him and his emotions, not really wanting to do anything to change that, despite realising it might be hurtful to others.

Needless to say, Stephen gets characterised indirectly too, through his speech and actions as shown above, but also in a way directly by a nickname Hobbs tells Chris about: “Well you know Stephen! He wasn’t nicknamed ‘The Tool’ for nothing” (279). This reshapes both Chris’s and the ideal reader’s understanding of him. Chris and the reader might have thought young Stephen was soft-hearted and very sensitive, since Stephen said things like “I’ll look after you” (96) and “I love you Kit” (97) several times, and Chris often sees him as fragile and hurt when he rejects him: “I see a look of anguish on his face” (96) and relieved when Chris comes back: “a look of surprised relief comes on to his face” (35). In contrast, a nickname of “The Tool” suggests someone well-equipped with an immense sexual appetite, who has no problems in getting what he wants sexually, when he wants it.

Rimmon-Kenan also talks about analogy created by the landscape, and although it might be a little farfetched, one can read Stephen’s move to Australia as an analogy of how he is as a character. Australia was a place convicts were sent to in the nineteenth century. Based on Stephen’s treatment of Chris and other love interests, one can read Stephen as a stealer of hearts, a “criminal” with regard to other characters’ feelings, and therefore Australia is a suitable place for him to move to.

In the final chapter Chris travels to Spain with his mother to meet Stephen. The shift in form, from the strict alternation between the “Now” and “Then” chapters to a “Granada” chapter, signals development and surprise in the plot too. A reviewer writes “The ending itself carries a twist. You know that Chris has to meet Stephen again before he can finally be released from the spell” (Anon.). So, the end is what the reader and Chris have been waiting for and know must come. Compared to *I Love Dick*, where the ending is just four pages long, the ending of *Now and Then* is quite lengthy, since it consists of an entire chapter. Hence, the length of the two endings can correspond to the length of each of the Chrises’ hooks. Chris K is on the hook for a shorter amount of time than Chris M, thus the form can be said to reflect the length of their fixation. As stated before, the final “Granada” section dissolves the

otherwise rigid form Corlett has followed in the novel, where the expectation would be a “Then” chapter. Instead there is something new. The function of the shifting is both to create suspense and excitement, to keep the reader reading, and to show the extent of the phenomenon of being hooked, that it can be a long term thing. It shows that Chris has been on the hook for thirty years. The form thus mirrors the hook Chris is trapped in. As the form dissolves, so does the hook he has been trapped all of his adult life.

The reviewer calls what Chris suffers from a “spell”. Since I have dedicated my thesis to arguing that what he suffers from is a psychological phenomenon, I must make a comment about the “spell”. I find it imperative to give what Chris is trapped in a psychological definition, instead of being seen as something magical or with a hint of witchcraft, as the word spell connotes. To get out, one must actually take action and get out of the role of being a victim (Gran 391), not wait for a magic wand to say “poff” or a snap of the fingers to make it disappear in the same way one thinks a spell might be broken. Gran states that it is not bad for the ones on the hook to consider that they have played a part in the interaction which made them hooked. Although they have suffered and been caught in a serious hook, if one acknowledges one’s own part and role, one can regain power of one’s own existence (391). It might be that Chris has not wanted to acknowledge this, since it seems he has used the hook as an excuse for his internalised homophobia and lack of sexual activity as an adult. So, reading Chris’s hook as a psychological condition, not a spell, might make the whole novel more credible, too. The reviewer continues with: “I didn’t find every aspect of the story totally credible”, referring to the fact that the novel seems to claim that love can “take an attractive, articulate and affectionate young man and turn him into an emotional shell for the best part of his life” (Anon.). However, if one reads it as a hook, the novel can also help enlighten complex psychological conditions and vice versa.

There have been hints dropped here and there throughout the novel about the questionability of Stephen’s sincerity. His nickname “The Tool” is one clue. Another is Chris’s friend Nigel at boarding school trying to question Stephen’s motives, reasoning that maybe Stephen is not that into Chris as he did not send him any note when he was away, but did send one to another boy at school: “what if it’s all over for him, Chris? That’s what usually happens. These things don’t last” (174). Nigel adds: “I don’t want you to be ruined by it, Chris. That’s why I’m doing this” (175). Chris does not react well to this, tries to deny the facts, and distances himself from Nigel, a classic symptom of the hook: In the “alarm” phase one avoids the ones who are sceptical to the object of one’s desire (Gran 266).

Even though these hints and clues are all over the novel, it is not until the ending that the “real” Stephen is revealed to Chris. Up until this point in the novel, one might have excused Stephen with a little bit of goodwill, just as young Chris does. Social conventions or norms could have been blamed for his behaviour, just as much as the individual Stephen up until the ending, even though there are reasons to suspect Stephen’s behaviour. The fact that this is a homosexual love story makes one question the society more than if it had been a heterosexual love story. And one should, as fear and internalised homophobia play a large role in Chris’s life and his long process of self-denial. Homophobia and homosexual panic are endemic to this society, shown by Chris’s thoughts and Nigel’s condemning of Chris and Stephen’s secret relationship. A reviewer writes that “the gay elements are significant – in making the love that much more impossible” (Anon.). I partly disagree, based on the fact that Hobbs actually does live his life as an openly gay man in a partnership with another, who dies before the ending, and Hobbs is the same age as Chris. So, if Stephen and Chris really had wanted to, society’s norms would not have stopped them. However, I partly agree, too, because of Chris’s internalised homophobia making it difficult to fight societal norms, when he at some points early in the novel was incapable of fighting his own internalised homophobia to be with Stephen. So, what would have happened if they had eloped? The reader does not know if Chris had been able to overcome his internalised homophobia and at the same time, fight against society. So, maybe the hook actually makes Chris “safe” from having to fight against society, as he can just use it to be alone. That is, until he finally faces Stephen, and his past.

The reviewer mentioned above sees the main reason for their failed relationship being that Stephen is “ultimately incapable of commitment” (Anon.). Stephen admits this when they meet in Granada, and confesses that all the promises he makes are part of the “game”:
“You’re thinking I want space to screw around, aren’t you? . . . Probably. It’s a game and I love it” (344). And the game is, according to Gran, an easy way to get someone hooked, and what she urges us not to do (322). While initially the reader might have been led to blame societal norms for Chris’s hook and Stephen’s rejection, the end reveals that Stephen and his inability to commit is probably also to blame for the hook. It seems that Stephen did to Chris the same as he has done to everyone he has ever been involved with. So, the blame shifts from societal norms, to the individual. However, the reason he broke off with Chris might differ from the reasons with his female lovers. Here society might be to blame, but the reader and Chris do not know that for certain.

Taking action and regaining power over his own existence is a key to getting off the hook, and exactly what Chris does in the end. After meeting Stephen, maybe even opening up to the possibility of them reconnecting, as he has been keeping his heart closed for him, Chris is finally able to open up his heart again to others, getting off the hook. I believe there are at least two reasons for this. The first is that he has sex with a prostitute, who says he comes fast. Chris responds: “I actually took longer to come than you’ll ever know” (338). In this episode, he finally allows himself to be physical with another person again, and he does it with a young male, which may be a way to overcome his internalised homophobia as well as the hook. Second, he meets Stephen and his new wife, and when he talks one-on-one with Stephen, he feels sorry for his new wife, after some initial jealousy: “‘Poor Liz!’ I say and I am suddenly overwhelmed with pity for her. ‘She doesn’t stand a chance’” (344). He can finally see clearly, instead of trying to escape the facts, like he did when Nigel tried to make him realise them at school. The last thing Stephen says to him is also: “Oh, and by the way – you were fantastic sex!” which is a new attempt at the hook. Chris responds: “Fuck off, Stephen” (345) and for once finally he has the last word. Here he also regains the power in their relationship, as he is the one rejecting Stephen’s attempt to keep him on the hook. Lastly, Chris writes a letter to Jimmy Hobbs, asking him out, and the novel ends with Chris off the hook.

In this final chapter, Chris’s hope dies, he accepts the nature of Stephen’s character, he restores his former life by having sex again, and he steps out of the role of victim, and into an active role – asking Hobbs out, thus following some of the basic steps to get off the hook as described by Gran. The hook in *Now and Then* contributes to the field of psychology by exploring how a hook can last as long as Chris’s does, by showing an example of a homosexual hook, by showing a way of getting off the hook and by exploring how a character can be predisposed to get in hook and uses it to shape his adult life.

4 Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore the relationship between literature and psychology by examining the hook in Chris Kraus's *I Love Dick* and William Corlett's *Now and Then*. My analysis illustrates that fiction can be more nuanced than general psychological theories, and therefore an asset to the psychological field. As described in the introduction, fiction can be especially beneficial to the study of phenomenon with strong, complex emotions, like the hook. Feelings that are not easily simulated in laboratories can, in turn, be explored from various sides in fictional universes, like the two presented in this thesis. In addition, the thesis shows a close relationship between the two fields with the narrative analysis. In both novels, the hook is described in narrative form, and the two characters use story-telling to get off it. This illustrates how closely linked the two fields can be, since the hook also emerges more clearly through a deliberate use of literary devices.

As I have shown, both Chris K and Chris M are hooked, but they have never been studied like this before, since the hook is not (yet) a widely known phenomenon. What we can gain from this analysis is an increased understanding of how the hook can arise and develop, and how one can get out of it. My investigation shows how the hook can appear and look different from time to time. One hook is long-term, the other short-lived. One is homosexual, the other heterosexual. One emerged at a young age, the other arose at the age of 39. while in another relationship. Nevertheless, there are similarities too; like how the two got off the hook by retelling their stories, and that the initial pursuit was made by their objects, rather than the main characters themselves. There are many people who never consult a psychologist, so the fact that psychology can borrow material and investigations of phenomena from fiction creates a deeper understanding of the phenomenon one might have missed without it. It can also help psychological theories reach out to a broader public.

My examination of Chris M from *Now and Then* confirms Gran's theory that both sexes can become hooked. The heterosexual situation is different, because men have historical power over women in a way a man does not have over another man. So, whereas Dick has a "historical" power over Chris K, and can in a way establish himself above her based on this, the same cannot be said for Stephen and Chris M, since they are both male. However, there is an internalised homophobia in addition to an external one in *Now and Then*, so there are factors outside the individual that are important to consider in his situation too. Therefore, this illustrates that there are both individual and societal factors that create the hook.

The form of the two novels mirrors the course of the two hooks. In *I Love Dick*, there is the change of narrator from third-person to first-person then back to first-person again. This mirrors Chris K not being hooked yet, then being more and more absorbed by the hook and on it, before getting off the hook in the end. In *Now and Then*, it is the form dissolving from the alternating chapters “Now” and “Then” to the final “Granada” chapter that intensifies the hook’s end for Chris M, and is a reflection of the hook. The form of *I Love Dick* also demands that the reader gets hooked and searches for clues to follow the story and plot. The reader must be hooked to figure out where one is at all times, and this is what the repeated use of analepsis does. *Now and Then* is easier to follow. In this novel, delay is the device that keeps the reader reading. It becomes a question of “what happens next”. I have shown how important literary devices and form can be for an effectual account of the hook as a phenomenon.

In terms of narration, the two novels are similar. They are mainly narrated through the character that is hooked. This is a key device to make the phenomenon emerge through literature. Since the hook consists of many complex and powerful feelings, it is most successfully communicated through the individuals on the hook. A third-person narrator might have been less intense and emotional, and the hook might not have emerged like it does in these first-person narratives. There is a questionable reliability in both narratives, since both Chrises are hooked. This makes them unreliable, because they are subjective and become personally involved. However, the unreliability is a successful device for the hook, because one gets to see the emotions run wild inside the head of the characters. The downside of a first-person narrator might be that the person on the “other side” of the hook, the object, may think he or she has been clearer than he or she is perceived by the one on the hook. Stephen says he thought Chris M understood that the story of running away to Spain was not going to happen when he is confronted at the end of the novel. Dick says to Chris K that he is not interested in her, and tired of her stalking, but still sleeps with her and has long conversations on the phone at some points. Hence, they might not have been as clear as they thought, but maybe clearer than they are perceived as being. Anyhow, this does not make the feelings of the ones on the hook less “real”, so the first-person narrator is effective for the communication of the hook as a phenomenon.

In *I Love Dick*, this is written about Chris K: “She has a vague belief that writing is the only possible escape to freedom” (62). It turns out to be correct, both for Chris K and Chris M. They both free themselves from the hooks through thinking and writing about their stories.

Gran emphasizes the importance of acknowledgement of the situation that they are trapped in to get off the hook. She also suggests telling a friend or therapist about it to get off it. The two characters write or re-think their stories instead, so in a way they do what Gran suggests, but in their own way. They are both going through identity processes during the hook, that gets them out of the hook. In my main chapters, I suggest that the hook might actually aid them in getting a “better” life after the hook than they had before. Chris K finds her voice as an artist, and Chris M shakes off some of his internalised homophobia and gets out of the emotional shell he has been hiding in to avoid his own sentiments.

So, when taking a closer look at it, is a hook only negative? Maybe not, if one sees the final results for these two characters. It might be that the hook enabled Chris K to do what she needed to do, in spite of the hook. For Chris M, it is different, as it seems like he used the hook to stay in a state of few emotions and self-centredness for many years, but then he was pushed out of it when he had to confront his hook. This exemplifies a contribution from the field of literature to the field of psychology. In addition to demonstrating the destructive actions and emotions of the hook, they show beneficial results in the end. The two novels illustrate how one might overcome a hook. The novel becomes a process. The storytelling, the art, the literary form, memory are ways of moving on for Nora Skaug and for the two Chrises. The storytelling seems to become the process, a cure in itself. So, here the two disciplines intersect.

To summarise my discussion of characterisation in the two novels: Both characters on the hook, the two Chrises in the novels, are round characters, and go through more visible changes than the objects of their desires, Dick and Stephen. This fits into Gran’s statement that one has to be active oneself to get off the hook, one needs to change, and the two Chrises do. It is also natural, since we as readers see it from their point of view. One needs to acknowledge that it might have been different if the story had been written from Dick or Stephen’s point of view. Another characteristic of hooked characters that both Chrises show, and may help readers to spot them in literature, is that the reader is likely to get “annoyed” at the hooked character. Like Sandve writes about two other novels with hooked characters, and which is the case for these two Chrises, the reader wishes that the hooked character stops acting like a “fool” and understands that the object is just not interested in them.

The power balance between Chris K and Dick, and Chris M and Stephen is also parallel to the hook. Chris M and Chris K have, or feel like they have, more power in the beginning and the end, and less power while on the hook; both the power of their lives and the

ability to do daily tasks without the distraction of thinking about their objects, and power in relation to Dick and Stephen. Chris M has the upper hand over Stephen in the beginning, as Stephen is the one doing the initial pursuing. He then holds less power than Stephen while on the hook, before taking the power back when dismissing Stephen's new attempt at the hook in Granada. Chris K feels like she has the upper hand in her and Dick's first meeting, which is shown as she pays the bill and tails his car with a high sense of self-esteem. In the end, she takes the power he has had over her daily life back by not breaking down because of his letter, but moving on. In addition, both Chrises push other people close to them away to try to get nearer the objects of their desires. This shows how much power Dick and Stephen have while they have Chris K and Chris M on the hook.

The motivation of Chris K and Chris M also differ, and so does Dick's and Stephen's. Chris K is first attracted to Dick's intellect, then becomes emotionally involved. Whereas Chris M is first physically aroused (his body starts showing signs), he then becomes emotionally attached. Dick is most likely in pursuit of power, while in *Now and Then* evidence shows that Chris M may have been the one in pursuit of power, while Stephen was initially more emotionally or sexually driven. The objects' names or nicknames: Dick and "The Tool", are quite sexual, which suggests a sexual drive or motivation, rather than an emotional one. This enhances the theory that they were not after the same thing as the two Chrises.

This thesis is important because more "hooked" literature is being written, and new methods of hooking are emerging. *The Incurable Romantic* by Frank Tallis is one example of a new book with possible hooks, for instance. It mixes psychology, real-life stories and probably a dose of fiction to illustrate how love can make us crazy. The novel *Tender* by Belinda McKeon is another example of a recent book with a potential hook. Since more literature with this theme is on its way, it may illustrate that fiction can help psychology by own explorations and investigations, as I have tried to illustrate here. Also, it is important because of social media: Tinder, Happn, Grindr, Bumble, Snapchat and other new channels open up new possibilities to get people on the hook. They also open up for more ways of keeping a person on the hook through new phenomena like "benching", "ghosting" and "submarining". This demonstrates that it might be increasingly important to be aware of signs of the hook. It is quite significant that psychology and literature can borrow material from one another. In future research, it might be interesting to take a look at the hooked phenomenon from the point of view of the person doing the hooking.

All in all, my thesis shows how literature can confirm or partially confirm a theory from another field and contribute to psychology by doing an investigation of the phenomenon in a fictional universe. Analysing fictional characters can be a way of creating a deeper and more varied understanding of what it is like being hooked.

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