Reconstructing the crime: the use of past tenses in *The Monogram Murders* and *Meurtres en Majuscules*

Bea Groenewald

Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters in General Linguistics

in the Department of General Linguistics

at

Stellenbosch University

Supervisor: Dr Kate Huddlestone

April 2019

DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Bea Groenewald

April 2019

i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank Dr Kate Huddlestone for keeping me on the right linguistic track when my brain wanted to go the literary route. Her comments and input has made my work more understandable when, even after a few drafts, it still did not make any sense to me.

Next, I would like to thank my parents, who have listened patiently to my ramblings and nodded sagely at my attempts to make linguistics sound as cool as rock and roll. They have provided me with the courage and *oomph* to finish this thesis on time and to feel proud of what I've written.

I would like to thank the examiners for their terrific insight, constructive criticism, and unbelievably amazing commentary. I shall take your input to heart in the continuation of my studies to make you proud too.

Lastly, to Albie: thank you for waiting for me to reach one of my goals. I hope I can make up for the time we've lost. *Mi ĉiam amos vin*.

ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a literary-linguistic study which focuses on detective fiction and its use of past tenses in both English and French. Two novels are analysed, Sophie Hannah's *The Monogram Murders* and its French translation, *Meurtres en Majuscules.* These novels provide the framework for the application of theory discussed in this study. Both novels are analysed in relation to the use of past tense and perspective within a narrative. Reichenbach's (1947) timeline of tenses, with specific focus on past tenses, Fleischman's (1990) classification of narrative past tenses, as well as Todorov's (1977) explanation of *fabula* and *syuzhet* provide the theoretical framework which underlies the analysis undertaken in this study.

The outcome of this study is the reconstruction of the crime which occurs before the start of Hannah's novels through the analysis of the investigation within the novels. This is achieved by analysing the use of particular past tenses in both English and French to establish the true story (or *fabula*) of the crime which the narrative's storyline (or *syuzhet*) has provided to the reader. This study therefore attempts to separate two interlinked stories (*fabulas*) through the analysis of one overall plot (*syuzhet*).

This study aims to pave the way for future research in both the linguistic and literary fields. By analysing the use of past tenses, this study can be applied to other tenses, as well as different literary genres. In the next chapter, the layout of this thesis is presented, in conjunction with the research questions that are answered in this analysis.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie thesis bied 'n literêre-linguistieke studie aan waarby die fokus op speurfiksie en sy gebruik van die verlede tyd is, in beide Engels en Frans. Twee verhale word geanaliseer, Sophie Hannah se *The Monogram Murders* en sy Franse vertaling, *Meurtres en Majuscules*. Hierdie verhale bied die raamwerk aan waarop die teorië in hoofstuk 2 and 3 gebaseer is. Beide verhale word geanaliseer met betrekking tot hul verledetydsgebruik en perspektief binne die narratief. Reichenbach (1947) se tydlyn van tye, Fleischman (1990) se klassifisering van verledetydsgebruik in narratief, sowel as Todorov (1977) se verduideliking van *fabula* (storie) en *syuzhet* (storielyn), is die teoretiese raamwerk wat as fondasie dien vir die analise in hierdie studie.

Die uitkoms van hierdie studie is die herkonstrucksie van die misdaad wat plaasvind voor die begin van Hannah se speurverhale, deur gebruik te maak van die ondersoek binne die narratief. Dit word bereik deur die analiseering van spesifieke verledetydsgebruik in beide Engels en Frans om die storie (of *fabula*) van die misdaad te herstruktureer. Hierdie word bereik deur gebruik te maak van die narratief se storielyn (of *syuzhet*) wat aan die leser gebied word. Hierdie studie wil dus twee verbinde stories (*fabulas*) skei deur die analise van die storielyn (*syuzhet*).

Hierdie studie streef om die pad oop te maak vir toekomstige studies in beide die linguistieke, sowel as die literêre studievelde. Deur die analiseering van die verlede tyd, kan studies toegepas word met die fokus op ander tydsvorme, asook verskillende literêre genres. In die volgende hoofstuk word die uitlegging van hierdie tesis voorgesit in verbinding met die navorsingsvrae was in hierdie analise beantwoord word.

CONTENTS

List of Tables and Figures

List of abbreviations

3Vics	the three murder victims
C	Edward Catchpool (investigator and narrator)
Cond.	*Conditionnel* (the "conditional")
Cuffs	three monogrammed cufflinks
G	guest (referring to G1=guest 1, G2=guest 2, G3=guest 3)
Gér	*gérondif* (the "past progressive" or "gerund")
HN	Henry Negus (Richard Negus's brother)
HS	Harriet Sippel (one of the deceased)
iden	identical
IG	Ida Gransbury (one of the deceased)
Imp	*imparfait* (the "imperfect")
Impér	*impératif* (the "imperative")
Imper	imperative
J/JH	Jennie Hobbs
JG	John Goode (Bloxham Hotel staff member)
K	Killer
L	Luca Lazzari
LW	Louisa Wallace
Modal	modal auxiliary
ND	Nancy Ducane (artist)
NPres	narrative present
P	Hercule Poirot (investigator)
PastProg	past progressive
PH	*présent historique* (the "historical present")
PluP	pluperfect
PP	Present perfect
PqP	*Plus-que-parfait* (the "pluperfect")
PR	*passé récent* (the "recent past")
PS	*passé simple* (the near-equivalent of the simple past)
RN	Richard Negus (one of the deceased)
SK	Samuel Kidd (boiler-maker)
SP	simple past

St	staff members of the Bloxham Hotel
Subj.	*subjonctif* (the "subjunctive")
T	trees
TB	Thomas Brignell (Bloxham Hotel staff member)
W	window

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1.   Statement of the problem

Think of assembling a large puzzle but you only have a fraction of the box's image to aid you at the beginning. As you progress with the puzzle, the box's image is revealed slowly to you, bit by bit, which enables you to see more clearly what the puzzle is supposed to look like. Naturally, as one continues with a problem as this, you keep assembling the puzzle at the parts you can see now for the first time, but at some point, as the original fractions of the image gets clearer and clearer, you return to the previous parts to complete them. At the end, you have a completed puzzle which looks exactly like the box's image, now revealed fully. This is an analogy of how detective fiction often works. One is presented with a fraction of the story of the crime through narration, where one follows the life and inner thoughts of a detective. As the narration of this type of novel progresses, one is given more and more details, mostly through dialogue, of the crime that had been committed, which is the main plot of the novel.

This thesis is a literary-linguistic study of an example of the detective fiction genre described above. Within this genre, the reader is presented with an investigative story which seeks to reconstruct a crime. Detective fiction therefore presents the effect of a crime in order to establish the cause, resulting in the apprehension of the culprit. Deception plays an important role in detective fiction, because the overall story (which forms part of the investigation) contains all the necessary indices and clues to enable the reader to reconstruct the crime. The element of deception therefore prevents the reader from recreating the entirety of the crime story before the novel reaches its conclusion; this form of mystery and suspense is a vital element in detective fiction.

The use of tense in detective fiction, as in all fiction, is profoundly important, because verbs, and their tenses, are the building blocks with which a story is built. Furthermore, particular past tenses become vital in establishing a timeline, as all narratives, whether futuristic or vintage, are classified as retrospective experiences (Fleischman 1990: 23). The reason for the necessity of the use of past tenses in an already past event (such as a narrative) is to create a coherent

1

sequence of events in a chronological order by utilising the given information in the narrative to do so.

This study provides an analysis of *The Monogram Murders*, written by Sophie Hannah, as well as its French translation, *Meurtres en Majuscules*. This novel forms part of the detective fiction genre and can be seen as a classic example of this genre in terms of their structure, storyline, and use of past tenses.

1.2.   Research questions

This study shall be focusing on answering the following research questions:

1.   How do the use of English and French past tenses aid the reader in recreating the crime *fabula* (story) in a particular detective novel?
2.   What is the significance of perspective in relation to the use of past tense in an event presented in a particular detective novel?

1.3.   Layout of this thesis

The thesis is divided into five chapters, an introductory chapter, two chapters presenting the theoretical frameworks underlying the analysis and discussing literature relevant to the topic, an analysis chapter and a concluding chapter.

Chapter 2, which presents the primary theoretical framework of this thesis, presents the main linguistic theories needed for a coherent discussion and answering of the research questions. In this chapter, Reichenbach's (1947) study of the timeline of tenses is presented. This thesis will focus on his classification of tenses on a timeline, as well as his principles on sentences containing complex time allocations. A discussion of Fleischman's (1990) study of narrative tenses follows, which focuses on past tense usage in narratives. Other theoretical concepts proposed by Fleischman which will be discussed include the classification of the present tense in narrative, grounding, and markedness. Chapter 2 ends with a comprehensive explanation of the past tenses that will be used in the analysis of Hannah's novels in chapter 4. This explanation examines real world use, as well as narrative use, of common past tenses in English

and French. The functionalities of these past tenses will aid in understanding why they are used in the description of an event to provide a particular semantic meaning.

Chapter 3 presents the literary theories relevant to this thesis. Narrator types are briefly summarised in relation to the analysed novels and how the narrator type changes the perspective of the narrative as a whole. Currie's (2009) study on the extended use of narrative past tenses supplements Fleischman's study, discussed in chapter 2, and provides an explanation for how narrative experience is always illustrated in the form of retrospection. Following this, chapter 3 focuses on a broad description of detective fiction, with reference to Perry (1979), Coetzee (2010), Hühn (1987) and Todorov (1977). A brief explanation of detective fiction, as well as the elements that form part of this genre, is given. Following this brief summary of the classification of detective fiction, the notions of prospective time and perspective is discussed. Dahl's prospective time (cited in Fleischman (1990)) is introduced as a supplement to Reichenbach's (1947) timeline of tenses; as a result, Dahl's study is the link between the linguistic and literary theory prevalent in chapters 2 and 3. Perspective (analysed by Caenepeel (1989)) will be introduced with practical examples from Hannah's novels. This chapter therefore provides an explanation of perspective and the reason for the particular use of one past tense over another with regards to tense functionality and semantic significance.

Examples from two famous novels (Camus' *L'Étranger* and Hemmingway's *The Killers*) aid the presentation of literary theory in relation to tense usage and how readers process narrative information based on perspective. Chapter 3 concludes with a discussion of Todorov (1977) which forms part of the theoretical framework used in the analysis in chapter 4. Todorov not only distinguishes between the *fabula* (story) and *syuzhet* (plot) of a detective novel, but claims that detective novels contain two stories that link with each other.

Chapter 4 contains the analysis of Hannah novel and its French translation, *The Monogram Murders* and *Meurtres en Majuscules*. Numerous examples from the novels are analysed in relation to the theory already discussed. The aim of chapter 4 is to establish two timelines, using Reichenbach's (1947) timeline of tenses and Todorov's (1977) *fabula* and *syuzhet*. The first timeline is the investigation timeline, which consists of the physical events that occur in the novels. The second timeline is the crime that occurred before the start of the novel. Chapter 4 therefore aims to provide an analysis of the past tenses present in the examples which form

3

part of the first timeline (investigation) to reconstruct the second timeline (crime). In so doing, the chapter provides two parallel stories constructed from one plot.

Chapter 2

Theory of timelines in narratives

In this chapter of the thesis, the theoretical framework underlying the study will be presented. First, this chapter discusses Reichenbach's (1947) theory of tenses, with specific reference to the position of the various tenses on a timeline. This is followed by an examination of Fleischman's (1990) model of tense in narrativity, which draws extensively on Reichenbach's timeline model, and includes other literary/linguistic points as well, such as markedness, the classification of the present tense in narratives, and grounding. Finally, an explanation of the past tenses in English and French, in relation to their use in both real-world discourse and narratives, will be presented.

2.1. Reichenbach's (1947) theory of tense

Reichenbach (1947) examined the tenses of verbs and proposed a model in which the tenses of verbs for a given language can be located on a timeline. The timeline that he used, modelled on English, moves from left to right, which is the custom in which all Indo-European languages are read, thus the linear representation of the timeline is also in that direction. Furthermore, he created a matrix to illustrate how all the tenses of a given language can be categorised, using a 3x3x3 matrix model. By utilising this matrix model, along with the way in which the tenses are located on the timeline, he was able to position and group together specific tenses that have the same function. Locating a particular tense on Reichenbach's timeline enables one to identify corresponding tenses in different languages (such as English and French) that have the same durative characteristic, completeness or incompleteness, and current relevance, among other properties. This will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

2.1.1. Reichenbach's timeline of tenses

Reichenbach created a model to show the time positions that tense gives to a sentence. With this model, Reichenbach also wanted to provide a universal method, using symbolic logic, to convey the timeline allocations for each tense in a given language. He utilised specific points on the timeline, called "time points", and categorised them into three parts: point of speech, point of reference, and point of event (Reichenbach 1947:290). The point of speech (S) refers

5

to the point in time when the utterance is spoken, e.g. I state in the present moment: *John arrived yesterday*. The point of event (E) is the time that the actual action takes place, e.g. the action of John arriving. The point of reference (R) refers to a point in time that is often within the context of the utterance itself, or shown by a temporal adverbial, e.g. *yesterday, at noon, Wednesday, 17 February 1994*, etc. If a time point like E or R is positioned at a certain point on the timeline it is, relative to S, 'before', 'simultaneous', or 'after' (Reichenbach 1947:288). The following table shows the three respective time points at play:

Simple Past (e.g. *I ate*):　E,R—S ('before')

Simple Present (e.g. *I eat*):　E,R,S ('simultaneous')

Simple Future (e.g. *I will eat*):　S—E,R ('after')

Table 1: Illustration of Reichenbach's (1947) time points

In the table above, (i) the use of '—' indicates a difference in time location between the time points on either side of this symbol; this symbol therefore shows anteriority (time points E and R *before* S) or posteriority (time points E and R *after* S) (Hackmack 2007:4); and (ii) a comma ',' illustrates the relationship of *simultaneity* between the time points, which means that the time points coincide on the timeline and thus refer to the same point in time.

Verkuyl, Vet, Borillo, Bras, Le Draoulec, Molendijk, de Swart, Vetters and Vieu (2004:252) argue that the timeline model of Reichenbach's is not suited to incorporate all the tenses of any given language, especially French. As Reichenbach used English to form the basis of his model, English is the template for all hypotheses applied in the study. For instance, the various positions of S, E, and R on the timeline result in more tenses than there are grammatical tenses in English. Consequently, multiple timeline structures are then attributed to one particular tense which leads to ambiguity. Hackmack (2007), on the other hand, has a very simple explanation for the possible ambiguity that arises from the timeline model. She states that there is "no 1-to-1 mapping of a tense onto a meaning", which suggests that the ambiguous time point allocations in the model bring forth a difference in meaning in specific contexts (Hackmack 2007:4). This mapping of meaning is not limited to the tenses on the timeline, but pertains to the use of tenses in translation. There is also no 1-to-1 correlation between a tense in one language and a tense in another, as the pragmatic behaviour and perspective of the utterance

has to be taken into account before any transference of meaning can be done between languages (Anguita 2016:87). Sentences (1) and (2) in the simple future tense corroborate this refutation.

(1)   Now I shall go.
(2)   I shall go tomorrow.

(Reichenbach 1947:295)

In (1), the general timeline structure is S,R—E. The denotation of the structure is: (i) S = present moment of utterance; (ii) R = *now*; and (iii) E = the action of going. The word *now* gives R its place on the timeline, which is simultaneous with S, as the word *now* denotes the present moment. In the latter example, the word *tomorrow* gives unto R its place as simultaneous to E, which is when the going will happen. There is thus no present-time relation between E and S for R to coincide with S on the timeline. The system is flawed in this regard, as there are clear reasons and functions from the tenses themselves that denote the specific placement of S, E and R on the timeline (Molendijk , de Swart, Vetters, Borillo, Bras, Le Draoulec, Vieu, Verkuyl and Vet 2004:250).

Regardless of the flaws prevalent in Reichenbach's timeline model, it is possible to utilise it to differentiate between the time point positioning of various tenses. Using the first example in this section, let's incorporate the time points:

(3)   John arrived yesterday. = E,R—S

In sentence (3), R and E coincide because the event is in the past. Simply put, R in this example is "overt", as it is clearly visible in the sentence itself (*yesterday*); when R is merely implied through the use of a specific tense, it is "covert" (Hackmack 2007:9). Reichenbach found that only relations like S to R and E to R are necessary in order for the timelines to be accurately constructed. In (3), the temporal adverbial (*yesterday*) technically gives R its allocation on the timeline and not E (although it seems to indicate the event itself) (Reichenbach 1947:294). S is represented as being on the right-most side of the timeline, as E (and R as well, in this case) occur 'before' S, hence in the past.

Reichenbach states that the relation between S and E is irrelevant, as these two time points, apart from being in the same environment, have no relation to each other (1947:296). Comrie

7

(cited in Hackmack 2007:10), as well as Stowell (cited in Gulli 2014:8), state that R can be got rid of, as it only applies to relative tenses, e.g. simple past or *imparfait* (which will be discussed in detail in section 2.3). Prior (cited in Hackmack 2007:10), in turn, argues that many reference points must exist in order for the sentence to be temporally positioned on the timeline. For Comrie and Stowell's cases, one principle cannot apply for one group and not apply for another. If R were to be removed, it would have to apply not only to relative tenses but for absolute tenses as well. Removing R from absolute tenses leads to the aforementioned ambiguity among tenses and their respective timelines. In Prior's instance, multiple Rs on a timeline only pertain to complex, multi-temporal sentences, which are mostly the exception to the rule and not suitable for regular mono-temporal sentences.

Another example of time point positioning, differing from (1), is *John sees me*, which is in the simple present. Its representation is as follows:

(4)   John sees me = E,R,S

In sentence (4), all the time points coincide because S is uttered in the present moment, the E is set in the present moment, and R refers to the present moment as well. This present tense form of the timeline is classified by Fleischman (1990:34) as being "inherently unmarked for time" which enables a neutral time positioning among all tenses.

Reichenbach's timeline model of tense goes a step further. Not only can simple tenses be represented on the timeline; i.e. tenses that are only realized by a modal (e.g. *can, would, might,* etc.) or a bound temporal morpheme on the main verb (*-s* or *–ed* suffixes), but complex tenses as well (Hurford 2003:20). Complex tenses are those that are realized by a combination of a modal auxiliary and a main verb. Examples of these tenses include: pluperfect (*I had seen John*), present perfect (*I have seen John*), simple future (*I shall see John* / *I will see John*), future present (*I shall have seen John*), etc. (Reichenbach 1947:290).

Reichenbach shows that an absolute tense like the simple past has an E and R which are always positioned together on the timeline and is seen as "simultaneous" in relation to S (Molendijk et al. 2004:298). This is due to the simple past's role as conveying a completed past act to a listener/reader. It is a different case when analysing a sentence containing a complex tense such as the present perfect (PP) in (5) below.

(5)   I have eaten (PP). = E―R,S

Tenses like the present perfect in (5) have the R simultaneous to S, not E, unlike the simple past in (3). Although the event happens in the past, the reference is to the here-and-now of the utterance. In other words, the present perfect in (5) refers to the fact that the person is now in the state of *having eaten.* Present perfect can therefore be analysed as an aspect rather than a tense in this regard, as it refers to the resulting state of the event represented by the verb and not the event itself (Fleischman 1990:30).

A tense like the pluperfect is more complicated than other past tenses and was thus the inspiration for the creation of R in Reichenbach's timeline (Hackmack 2007:6; Reichenbach 1947:288). The reason for the complexity of the pluperfect in particular is a separation of all three time points on the timeline, for example:

(6)   I had shot the bird by noon. = E―R―S

The separate time points on the timeline in (6) are: (i) S, which refers to the present here-and-now; (ii) E as the shooting of the bird; and (iii) R denoted by the word *noon*. In this sense, a sentence in the pluperfect makes it clear that E's action occurred before R; subsequently, these two time points are not to be placed simultaneously on the timeline. Both E and R occur in the past and are placed before S.

Tense works alongside aspect to correctly convey the time and duration of an event. Aspect is defined by Comrie (cited in Hamm and Bott 2014:2) as the "different ways of viewing the internal constituency of a situation", which refers to the duration and result of an event illustrated by a verb. Aspectual features are generally categorised into two classes: "morphological (or grammatical) aspect", which refers to the "system of tenses [that are] encoded in the verb's morphology", e.g. all tenses in French, and "semantic (or lexical) aspect" (Hackmack 2007:1; Hamm and Bott 2014:2). The former of the two classes will not be overtly discussed in this thesis but shall be briefly referred to in section 2.3. Semantic aspect (the more important of the two here) pertains to "duration ... completion, repetition [and] termination", amongst other features, which can also be shown on Reichenbach's timeline model (Fleischman 1983:184). In English, the majority of aspect assignation aspect is lexically added by way of adjectives or adverbs; an example of semantic aspect. An example of an English

tense containing an embedded aspectual functionality is the past or present continuous. In French, the aspectual features are already morphologically merged with the tenses themselves and cannot be separated as in English (Fleischman 1990:19). To represent the duration of an event on the timeline, the English language utilises the verb "to be" along with a participle (past or present) to show this phenomenon; Reichenbach calls the use of these elements on the timeline "extended tenses" (Reichenbach 1947:290; Hackmack 2007:8). An example of an extended tense is given in (8) below. Reichenbach utilises the symbol '⌐' to denote a continuation of the action in E:

Pluperfect (regular)

(7)   I had kissed Mike.

        E — R — S

Pluperfect continuous (extended)

(8)   I had been kissing Mike.

        $\overline{\text{E}}$ — R — S

An extended tense, as illustrated in (8), has a second function, depending on the context, where it does not show duration of a certain event, but repetition. Moreover, where English makes use of a present/past participle to indicate the function of duration or repetition, other languages have distinct tenses to illustrate those functions (Reichenbach 1947:291). French has two tenses that belong to the simple past: *imparfait* and *passé défini* (which shall be referred to as the *passé simple* from now on). *Imparfait*, which has many functions within the French language, is often used to describe a duration or a repetition of an event at non-particular intervals in time; this tense also indicates that the event might not be over yet (Struve-Debeaux 2010:150). The *passé simple*, which is a tense exclusively used in written texts, indicates that the event happened in the past and is completed. The *imparfait* and the *passé simple* have many more functions (i.e. discourse and literary functions) which will be discussed in detail in section 2.3.

2.1.2. Reichenbach's permanence and positional principles

Reichenbach (1947:293) observed that two principles govern the timelines of complex sentences in a given grammar. Firstly, the "permanence of the reference point" accounts for the fact that when multiple clauses in a sentence have different Es, R must remain the same. This is due to the fact that all clauses require an anchor to group them together for cohesion to occur, as seen in (9):

10

(9a)

I had called the maid	when the postman came	and broke the glass.
clause 1	clause 2	clause 3

(9b)

clause 1: E_1——$\mathbf{R_1}$——S

clause 2: $E_2,\mathbf{R_2}$——S

clause 3: $E_3,\mathbf{R_3}$——S

The "permanence" principle is the special case, however. In contrast, Reichenbach's second and most common principle, the "positional use of the reference point", occurs when a time determination is added to a sentence which refers to R and not E. Time determination words such as *when*, *before* or *after* are utilised to move R around on the timeline, providing it with different time point positions. Such a repositioning of R removes it from the current time in which it occurs to accommodate the time determination attached to the sentence; by default, the "permanence" principle is no longer possible (Reichenbach 1947:294). This can be seen in (10):

(10a)

I saw him more	before he left	than I see you now.
clause 1	clause 2	clause 3

(10b)

clause 1: E_1,R_1—S

clause 2: E_2,R_2—S

clause 3:   S—R_3,E_3

In an example such as (10) in which the R moves around, the time point that stays put is S in order for cohesion of the clauses to occur. English uses the simple past to adhere to the "positional" principle. Languages generally satisfy either the permanence or the positional

11

principle, but not both (Reichenbach 1947:295). The positional principle has a significant influence on the notion of "prospective time", which will be discussed in the next section; it will also be relevant in chapters 3 and 4.

2.2.   Fleischman's (1990) narrativity model for tense usage

Suzanne Fleischman, author of *Tense and Narrativity* (1990), seeks to come up with a model in which literary tenses can be studied in as much detail as the tenses in real world discourse. Fleischman's study of Reichenbach's (1947) model enabled the analysis of narrativity in written fiction and reports. In this section, Fleischman's viewpoint on the speech time point (S) is discussed with emphasis on her own interpretation of it, which she calls the "speaker" time point, "Speaker's 'now'", or the "deictic 'zero point'" (Fleischman 1990:16). The following sub-section will briefly explain the notion of the Markedness Principle which will be important when examining the role of tenses in real-world discourse and narratives alike. Although this thesis will mainly focus on the past tense, it is necessary to add a brief discussion of the narrative present tense occurring in narratives. To end off this section, the notion of 'grounding' will be discussed, as this will have an influence on the use of specific tenses, pertaining to their function and meaning within narratives.

Fleischman's analysis of Reichenbach's model shows that the S on the timeline is no longer consistent, nor is S a reference to the author who wrote the narrative. The original definition of S is: the moment the utterance (or narrative) is produced (Reichenbach 1947:288). This definition implies that the Speaker time point, according to Fleischman, has to be the moment when the text is written down. According to Adams (cited in Fleischman 1990), this is not the case. Adams states that the author transfers this "origin" of the point of speech to that of the fictional speaker in order to create an "*embedded communicative context*" (cited in Fleischman 1990:107, author's emphasis). The fictional Speaker (S) in the narrative therefore provides the deictic anchor for all utterances therein (Fleischman 1990:112). With the speaker's "now" in mind, it is vital that tenses which work alongside this notion are analysed.

Fleischman's study of tense theory in narratives was an eye-opener for linguistics and literary theorists alike, as it incorporated these two genres of language study. Her theories and analyses of the markedness principle were praised, as they show the clear distinction between real world

12

discourse and literary narration. Although the book has linguists and literary critics alike as its audience, the first few chapters contain abstract and/or highly linguistic terminology. This type of terminology usage might be daunting for literary critics not as familiar with the terms as linguists are (Traugott 1992:504). For linguists, on the other hand, Traugott feels that the tenses are not discussed in-depth and are explained in a very abstract way, instead of proposing why the tenses behave as they do, and only giving examples (Traugott 1992:504). Traugott indicates that the study is well set out, except that the study would have had a better depth to it if non-Western languages were used as comparisons which do not "necessarily have the same tense categories but that nevertheless do have temporal linguistic resources that can be exploited for narrative purposes" (Traugott 1992:504).

2.2.1. Markedness Principle

Markedness pertains to the use of a particular tense in real world discourse and/or narrative which appears with more frequency (unmarked) or less frequency (marked) in comparison to another tense (Fleischman 1990:53). The principle of markedness, originally used in phonology, and later in syntax, semantics and other branches of linguistics, is known as the phenomenon in which one member of two opposing members in a given situation is seen to be more natural or common to use than the other (Fleischman 1990:52). This means that the more natural one is the unmarked member and the other is the marked member. Tense is generally seen as "a cluster of oppositional properties to which markedness values apply" which means that a tense, used in a specific or myriad of contexts, can have differing or similar meanings and functions (Fleischman 1990:56). Inasmuch that tenses each have specific semantic functions, these tense meanings can often be modified slightly in order for the speaker to convey another meaning towards the hearer, which veers more towards pragmatics than semantics.

In real world discourse, the regular, i.e. unmarked, tense is the present tense, because real world discourse occurs in the here-and-now, for which the present tense is best equipped. The marked tense in real world discourse is past tense, as the present and past tenses are predominantly seen as the two opposing members in a given situation. In literary narration, however, these two opposing members' markedness or unmarkedness are the inverse of real world discourse. In literary narratives, the past tense is seen as the unmarked tense because all forms of narration

can be construed as "a verbal icon of experience viewed from a retrospective vantage; the experience is by definition 'past'" (Fleischman 1990:23). Literature is seen as a story being conveyed (whether as an eyewitness report or a retrospective narrative) which always requires the past tense, whose functions will be discussed later in detail. The present tense is considered in literary narration to be the marked tense. It can sometimes be complicated to understand that the present tense is the marked tense, as it does occur in literary narration, which shall be discussed next.

2.2.2.   The all-too-marked present tense in narrative

Fleischman (1990) describes 4 types of present tense, of which only three will be briefly explained in this section. The four types are: generic, speaker, diegetic, and narrative present tense (Fleischman 1990:126-127). In this section, the speaker and diegetic present will be conflated. According to Fleischman (1990:53), the present tense generally "specifies neither past time nor present time ... nor does it deny past time ... time reference is irrelevant". Also, present tense is generally used to apply truth values to a statement, e.g. *the sun is hot*. This is seen as an enduring truth, which will be explained, with practical examples, in the analysis in chapter 4.

The 4 types of present tense can be characterised as follows: first, the generic present tense pertains to the real world use of the present, which "extends the temporal scope of the respective predicates to include all relevant time moments" and thus makes the entire situation's temporal allocation a neutral one (Fleischman 1990:126). Second, the speaker/diegetic present is utilised by the speaker or narrator of the story, in which commentary is given in the present tense in order to differentiate between commentary (present) and narration (past). The generic present tense will not be extensively discussed in this thesis, and the speaker/diegetic present tense will only be mentioned if it pertains to an event in the analysis.

Lastly, the narrative present, also known as the historical present, is used in narration to change the rhythm of the narration's telling. This is done "for reporting events that are vivid... or for enhancing the dramatic effect of a story by making addressees feel as if they were present at the time of experience", which past tenses are not equipped for (Fleischman 1990:75). The

historical present in narratives brings forth the idea of urgency or immediacy. An interesting dramatic effect while using the narrative present (underlined) can be seen in (11):

> (11) <u>*Laying out the dead*</u>. The phrase forced its way into my mind ... a room I had been compelled to enter as a young child, and had been refusing to enter in my imagination ever since ... <u>*Lifeless hands, palms facing downwards. "Hold his hand, Edward."*</u> (Hannah 2014a:24-25, author's italics).

The narrative present (and its French equivalent, the *présent historique*) is an interesting tense to discuss, as it is technically not categorised as a present tense at all. It has already been established in this section that all narratives occur in the past, and narrative present does not take the narrator out of the narrative for commentary. According to Pooser (1993:373), a narrative "by its very nature ... diminishes the role of tense as a temporal marker". Therefore, it is natural to assume that the narrative present forms part of the main narrative (past) tenses. In this sense, a manner of natural backshifting occurs, which enables the narrative present to be considered as part of the past tense classification of literary tenses. Backshifting, for clarity, pertains to the change from direct speech to reported speech by shifting the tenses back into the past, thus moving the action further away from S (Matthews 2014:36). As a result, this diminishing of temporal roles removes the necessity for strict tense usage and provides the space to utilise artistic licence in order to tell the narrative as needed.

2.2.3. Grounding in literature

The narrative present can also be categorised as an important grounding mechanism. Grounding illustrates the differences in plot advancement and descriptive details of a narrative. There are two types of grounding that exist: "foregrounding" and "backgrounding". Foregrounding entails the words, verbs, and sentences that contribute to the main action or plot in the story. Backgrounding entails the less important facets of the plot, such as assisting the foregrounding material, amplifying a scene, or providing narrator commentary to the reader (Fleischman 1990:169). As such, "grounding" (to be used as the collective term for these two categories) is necessary for plot advancement, as well as setting the scene where the main action occurs. In a narrative, foregrounding consists of an ordered set of events which are, as

15

Fleischman puts it, perfective. The terms "perfective" and "imperfective" shall not be used in this thesis. Instead, the words "completed" for the former and "incomplete" for the latter term shall be used.

The perfective, or verbs that have a 'completed' aspectual feature, is what Fleischman claims are "single situations viewed *synthetically* 'from the outside' ... with well-defined ... endpoints" (Fleischman 1990:19, author's emphasis). These 'completed' verbs are in fact foregrounding material, i.e. events in a sequence that have been completed in the past that are essential for plot advancement (Fleischman 1990:169). Some examples of these types of tenses are: the simple past, pluperfect, *passé composé*, *plus-que-parfait*, and *passé simple*. These tenses all have one thing in common, besides being past tenses. All of these tenses have their R as simultaneous with E.

Imperfective, or verbs that have an 'incomplete' aspectual feature embedded in their semantic meaning, are tenses which are the most appropriate to use for backgrounding. These tenses are the present perfect and the *imparfait*. With imperfective tenses, the R is simultaneous to S on the timeline and the "endpoints are disregarded [and] excluded from view ... The emphasis is on the situation as process" (Fleischman 1990:20). In other words, these tenses create a continuum in which it can be automatically implied that the verbs' descriptions in these particular tenses continue for as long as the event is unfolding in the narration. In the following section, past tense functions will be discussed in detail with regards to their respective roles in real world discourse and narrative.

2.3.   Tense usage in discourse and narrative

Matthews (2014:403) defines "tense" as an "inflectional category whose basic role is to indicate the time of an event etc. in relation to the moment of speaking" which ties in with Reichenbach's timeline of tenses. Tense is strictly placed in one of two classes: past or non-past (Fleischman 1990:15; Hackmack 2007:1-2). In this regard, tense serves as the referential medium in which a tenseless sentence can be linked to other tenseless sentences in a sequential action.

An aspectual feature is required alongside tense to establish the durative or completed nature of an action in a sentence. Tense and aspectual features make use of their respective semantic meanings to accurately place sentences (individually or in sequence) on the real world timeline, conveying the meaning the speaker has intended in speech.

In addition to the past/non-past distinction, tenses are also generally categorised as either "absolute" or "relative". Absolute tenses are those tenses where R and S are "simultaneous" on the timeline, while relative tenses refers to tenses where R serves as a "surrogate for S, [and R] establishes itself as the anchor for the temporal location of predicated situations" (Fleischman 1990:16). In other words, sentences need a time allocation anchor to occur in a discourse and/or a narrative. Absolute tenses discussed in this section include: present perfect, *passé composé*, and *passé simple*. Relative tenses include: simple past, pluperfect, *imparfait*, and *plus-que-parfait*.

Literary tenses have their own form of markedness and unmarkedness when it comes to the tenses used in various types of genre; they have an inverse markedness of tenses compared to real world discourse. Most forms of narrative are seen as occurring in the past because "[e]xperience is by definition "past", whether it occurred in some real world or not ... Hypothetical or future experiences are also commonly narrated as if they were past" (Fleischman 1990:23-24). What Fleischman observes, and what we shall be focusing on in this section, is that "tense usage in narrative is anomalous with respect to a language's normal use of tenses — ... the relationship between time and tense in narrative are not the same as those ... in ordinary language" (Fleischman 1990:3). This idea of a dichotomy between the standard and narrative usage of tenses can be chalked up to artistic licence.

In the following subsections, the general and literary functions of selected past tenses shall be discussed. The English past tenses that will be discussed are: simple past, present perfect, and pluperfect. The French past tenses are: *passé simple*, *passé composé*, *imparfait*, and *plus-que-parfait*.

17

2.3.1. Simple past (SP)

The English simple past is the most common tense to use in real world discourse and is characterised as a relative tense, i.e. its R coincides with E. Translating sentences that contain the simple past into French depends on the type of verbs that are utilised in English in simple past at that point: namely, stative or non-stative verbs, which serve as a guideline when choosing a French tense for translation (Verkuyl et al. 2004:282).

For clarity: a stative verb denotes a state in which a person is, e.g. *He is asleep* (which is a state of *being asleep*) (Matthews 2014:380). Non-stative verbs (technically known as dynamic or active verbs) are the opposite of stative verbs, in that they denote an action or process that takes place (Matthews 2014:116). In English, the use of specific verbs, although not clear from the outset, does change the use of particular tenses in terms of their aspectual features. For example, the verbs *to smoke* and *to sit* have varying degrees of duration and habitual features already attached to the meaning of the verbs themselves. Although the difference between the types of verbs is not necessarily needed in ordinary speech in English, it is, however, important for translation into French.

This distinction between the verbs makes it possible to determine which corresponding French tense to use in translation to accurately convey whether an event is completed or not. This is because French has the aspectual features already embedded in their tense functions, thus it becomes more important when deciding on a particular tense for semantic accuracy. For a completed event, the *passé simple* (*Il mangea[1]*) or *passé composé* (*Il a mangé[2]*) is used, whereas continuing events are encoded with the *imparfait* (*Il mangeait[3]*).

Another facet of the simple past tense is that of temporal ordering. It is a vital part in distinguishing simple past from that of the *passé simple*. Temporal ordering pertains to the linear or linguistic order in which actions occur, which sometimes differ from the structural order (Matthew 2014:281). An example of a structural difference, in English and French, is that of adjective placement in a noun phrase: *a red car* (adjective is anterior) vs. *une voiture rouge* (adjective is posterior). Here, the structural order differs, although the meaning remains

---

[1] Translation: He ate.
[2] Translation: He ate.
[3] Translation: He was eating.

the same. This notion also applies to that of a sequence of events. Some languages can make use of inverse temporal ordering in which the sequence of events is not presented in a chronological manner; yet, the meaning of the sequential information is still interpreted in the correct order. The simple past tense can be seen as aspectually "transparent" in terms of temporal ordering, which means that this tense can be used in inverse temporal ordering with sequential sentences, whereas the *passé simple* cannot (Molendijk et al. 2004:286). An example of this is given in (12):

<div style="padding-left:2em;">

(12a)   Emma *fell* (SP) down the stairs. She *slipped* (SP).

(12b)   Emma *tomba* (PS) dans l'escalier. #Elle *glissa* (PS).

</div>

For native speakers of English, the notion that the slipping was the cause of falling down the stairs is contextually evident. Even though both sentences have the same timeline structure (as both have the same simple past tense as their time anchor, thus E,R — S), it is evident through context that the action of (12a)'s second sentence occurred first. In essence, temporal order in this example does not follow linguistic order (Molendijk et al. 2004:286). The anaphoric noun phrase present in (12a) as *she* and (12b) as *elle* are not sufficient to convey the relevance between each pair of sentences, thus the functions of these tenses are needed (Webber 1988:8). In (12b)'s case, the correct use of tense in the second sentence would be *Elle <u>avait glissé</u>*[4]; the use of *plus-que-parfait* in this sentence (*avait glissé*) thus moves the second sentence's action further back than the *passé simple* (*Elle tomba*) action in the first sentence.

In French, the *passé simple* is restricted in its use of inverse temporal ordering, and in some cases, it is non-existent (Molendijk et al. 2004:286). If one looks at (12b), native speakers of French would misconstrue the meaning of the two sentences, deducing that she fell down the stairs and that she slipped afterwards. This is due to the fact that both sentences in (12b) are in the *passé simple*, but this blurs the line for cohesion. It is much more common to utilise the *plus-que-parfait* for the second sentence in (12b) in order to establish, through tense, that the second sentence's action occurred first and thus caused the action of the first sentence. One way in which the *passé simple* can, in fact, make use of inverse temporal ordering in specific sentences is through the usage of causal conjunctions (Molendijk et al. 2004:286). Causal conjunctions are a mandatory requirement in order to establish the inverse (linguistic) order in

---

[4]Translation: "She <u>had slipped</u>."

which the sentences occur, and some examples of these conjunctions include: *quand* (when), *après (que)* (after), *puisque* (since), etc. (Struve-Debeaux 2010:294).

The English simple past is the tense that is most often used in English literature, as its dominant function is that of action, not description. A sequence of events that is presented in the simple past has the aspectual feature of 'completed'. In other words, the simple past is a foregrounding tense (Fleischman 1990:24). Here is an example:

(13) Poirot no longer *felt* (SP) calm and contented as he had when he'd arrived. His peaceful mood *was* (SP) shattered. (Hannah 2014a:3)

In (13), one can easily see that the sequence of events follow a linear pattern. Any deviation of this pattern requires the use of the pluperfect. A complete deviation, i.e. a descriptive deviation to the setting at hand would require more aspectually loaded tenses, such as the present perfect.

The French *passé simple* has much of the same features as the English simple past, although the *passé simple* is restricted to written content. Whereas the *passé simple* is generally seen as the more formal choice of tense in written media, it is not the case in literature; it is used as the standard. The *passé simple* is in this case the most common choice for the conveyance of sequential action, as will be discussed next.

2.3.2.   Passé simple (PS)

The *passé simple* is the most common tense to use in literature. This tense is used when the plot asks for a sequence of events to occur. A sequence of events in this regard is "constituted as a sequence [of] decisions about relevant and irrelevant consequences, and the degree to which relations of consequences should be pursued and elaborated" for which the *passé simple* is well-equipped (Walsh 2001:599). This notion of the sequencing of relevant and irrelevant consequences and events make it pertinent for *passé simple* to be used for essential plot advancement.

The *passé simple*'s structure on Reichenbach's timeline is E,R—S, which postulates that the event itself has no relevance to the here-and-now. This means that the main component to using

the *passé simple* is that the tense itself is completely stripped of any subjective feeling, and can thus be used for strictly objective sequencing in narratives (Fleischman 1990:31). It is also important to note that, with this notion of objectivity, the *passé simple* is still used with first-person narration, although according to linguists this is rare, as the *passé simple* is mostly used with the third-person pronouns (Grevisse and Goosse 2008:1095). When using the *passé simple* with a first-person narration, the actions are deemed detached from the narrator, as if it implies uninvolved narration (Fleischman 1990:31).

With this in mind, the *passé simple* can be used for statements that are enduring truths, for example proverbs. The main reason why the *passé simple* is used as the standard tense in narratives is the fact that its function complies with the norm in literature. Perry (1979:35) confirms this by stating that "material is grasped successively", which aids in understanding the sequence of events, without resorting to a multitude of deictic adverbials (Grevisse and Goosse 2008:1095). For example:

> (14a) Enfin la femme *franchit* (PS) le seuil. Elle *ferma* (PS) la porte ... Elle ne *sembla* (PS) pas remarquer les autres personnes présentes. Poirot *l'accueillit* (PS) posément par un « Bonsoir ». Elle *se tourna* (PS) un peu vers lui, mais *ne répondit pas* (PS). (Hannah 2014b:11)
>
> (14b) The woman *stepped* (SP) inside. She *closed* (SP) the door ... She *seemed* (SP) not to notice that there were other people present. Poirot *greeted* (SP) her with a quiet 'Good evening'. She *half-turned* (SP) towards him, but *made* (SP) no response. (Hannah 2014a:3)

With the above example, it is easy to notice that no deictic adverbials have been utilised in order to indicate the progression of events. In a narrative, the *passé simple* thus has no need for complex inverse temporal ordering, as its embedded function is that of sequencing events in the order as they appear if there is no other mention of a change in the course of the narrative.

2.3.3.   Passé composé (PC)

The *passé composé* is used to illustrate a sequence of events in real world discourse, much like the *passé simple* in written media. For example, the *passé composé* (underlined) is used in a

sequencing manner in *J'ai acheté* un livre (E₁) *et j'ai bu* du café[5] (E₂) (one action that follows the preceding action) (Struve-Debeaux 2010:153). It illustrates a limited duration of an event, such as *Il a passé son examen **en trois heures**[6]*, where the bold part of the sentence (which is the temporal R-point) implies that the action has a limit and it is now completed in the present moment. The *passé composé* can explain a future event as if it had already happened, and is thus always accompanied by a temporal adverbial (shown in bold), for example: *Un peu de patience: j'ai fini **dans un instant**[7]* (Grevisse and Goosse 2008:1095).

The assumption, taken from the above explanation is that the *passé composé* is much like the simple past, as both share the same functions; this assumption is erroneous. *Passé composé's* technical and Reichenbachian timeline equivalent would be the present perfect (Molendijk et al. 2004:297). Both the present perfect and the *passé composé* have the timeline structure of: E — R,S. This structure implies that the *passé composé* has the 'current relevance' function of its English equivalent (as will be discussed in the next sub-section), and this is true in written language where the *passé composé* is used to convey a resultative state. Struve-Debeaux (2010:153) explains that the *passé composé* refers more to the present consequences of a past event's action instead of the past event itself, such as (15):

(15) Il *a contracté* (PC) plusieurs emprunts et *doit* (Présent) maintenant beaucoup travailler pour payer ses dettes. (Struve-Debeaux 2010:153)
"He *took out* many loans and now *has* to work a lot to pay off his debts."

There is a main difference between the *passé composé* and the present perfect. With regards to adverb assignation, the *passé composé* fairs better than its English counterpart. Temporal adverbials (e.g. *then, now, tomorrow*) can be added to the *passé composé*'s environment, but are not allowed with the use of the present perfect (Molendijk et al. 2004:299). On the other hand, space deixis adverbials can be used in the presence of the present perfect, like *there, that, this, here*, etc. (Matthews 2014:97). The *passé composé* differs in this regard; it is not as strict in function as the present perfect in terms of temporal adverbials, as in (16):

(16) Je *l'ai trouvé* (PC) hier, mais je *l'ai* encore *perdu* (PC) il y a une heure.

---

[5] Translation: I bought a book and I drank some coffee.
[6] Translation: He did/wrote his exam **in three hours**.
[7] Translation: A little bit of patience: I'll be finished **in a moment**.

"I found (SP) it <u>yesterday</u>, but I *lost* (SP) it again <u>an hour ago</u>."

"I *found* (SP) it <u>yesterday</u>, but I *have lost* (PP) it again <u>#an hour ago</u>."

In (16), the first translation containing the simple past has a time allocation in the form of an hour ago, and is seen as a grammatical sentence. The second translation containing the present perfect is not grammatical in a semantic manner, as the present perfect has no need of a time allocation, as shall be discussed in the next sub-section. One French tense being translated into two differing English tenses can result in the *passé composé* being seen as a combination of both the simple past and the present perfect (Molendijk et al. 2004:300). From a translation point of view, this is not strange, as it is common knowledge that there is no absolute semantic relationship between a tense in one language and a tense in another.

The *passé composé* is an unusual literary tense. It is often juxtaposed with the *passé simple* in written and spoken media. The *passé composé* is used to reproduce real world speech in written media (Molendijk et al. 2004:297). By comparison, the *passé simple* is used for the sequencing of events in the given narrative. The two tenses can be seen working alongside each other in (17), with the italicised verbs in *passé composé* and the bold in *passé simple*:

(17a) "Malheureusement, c'est ce qui *est arrivé* (PC)," **reprit**-elle (PS). "Elle *a trouvé* (PC) du plaisir dans la souffrance des autres. Vous *avez remarqué* (PC) que j'en veux à Jennie ..." Nancy **éclata** (PS) en sanglots et **se couvrit** (PS) le visage de ses mains. (Hannah 2014b:253)

(17b) "Regrettably, she *did* (SP). She *found* (SP) a delight in the suffering of others ... You *observed* (SP) that I am angry with Jennie ..." Nancy **started** (SP) to cry and **covered** (SP) her face with her hands. (Hannah 2014a:236)

Even though *passé composé* is present in a narrative, it is not a good substitute for the *passé simple*. This has been established by numerous studies on Albert Camus' novel *L'Étranger*, in which the *passé composé* is mostly used as the main tense for the sequencing of events. This goes against the norm in narrative structures in French. Another reason why the *passé composé* is used in narration, with the *passé simple* often as its anchor in a given event, is what Émile Benveniste claims (Fleischman 1990:31). He states that the *passé composé* is "inseparable from subjectivity ... the autobiographical form par excellence, the tense of an eyewitness narrator" (Fleischman 1990:31). In other words, the *passé composé* seeks to move away from the formal

23

facet that the *passé simple* portrays and move the narration from the literary to everyday speech, thus blurring the distinction between narration and innermost thoughts (Fleischman 1990:31-32).

2.3.4. Present perfect (PP)

The present perfect is used when the time in the context is not known or not relevant to the situation at hand (Gulli 2014: 5). Reichenbach (1947) makes the distinction between the present perfect and the simple past by the usage of R on the timeline. The simple past has its R as simultaneous with E (thus E,R — S), whereas the present perfect has its R at the same time point as S (thus E — R,S) (Reichenbach 1947:289). This notion of R being simultaneous with S gives rise to the aspectual function of current relevance where the event, although completed, has a relevance to the present here-and-now (Gulli 2014:5-6; de Swart 2016:58). This is illustrated by the following:

> (18a) My family *have made* jam every year for more than fifty years.
>   (=Present perfect)
> (18b) My family *made* jam every year for more than fifty years. (=Simple
>   past)

Pickbourn states that the present perfect is thus called the "present indefinite" and does not specify a particular point in time in the past (Meyer-Viol & Jones 2011:226). With this definition, the examples (18a) and (18b) have very different meanings. In (18b), the use of the simple past (anchoring the event fully in the past) implies that the family made jam every year for more than fifty years but does not do so anymore. In (18a), the present tense with its embedded aspectual feature of "indefinite past time", indicates that the family has made jam for over fifty years and is still continuing to make jam to this day (Meyer-Viol & Jones 2011:226; Hackmack 2007:5; Gulli 2014:4).

The present perfect has no need of a temporal adverbial because it would make the sentence ungrammatical. It is debated that a temporal adverbial does not refer to E but to R, but this only really applies when the reference time and the event time are simultaneous, which is not the

24

case when utilising the present perfect. In other words, the present perfect is used as an "indication of some past action without an expression of past time" (Hackmack 2007:10).

In real world discourse, the present perfect combines tense and aspect (Fleischman 1990:29). This refers to the fact that the present perfect, with its temporal component on the timeline, shows that the verb's action is already completed in the present moment and/or that the action of the verb signals current relevance (Fleischman 1990:29).

Fleischman does not perceive the present perfect as a past tense at all. She claims that it should rather be categorised in the present tense system; when one looks closely at the tense's reference itself, the tense has no correlation with the past event. The present perfect thus, as a present tense subset, merely refers to the resulting state of the verb's action in the present moment, which works well for narration (Fleischman 1990:29).

In a narrative setting, the present perfect is used for descriptions and out-of-sequence reports of a scene. However, a narration (mostly) prefers to be represented in a sequential, often chronological way (Fleischman 1990:30). In this regard, the present perfect can be categorised under tenses that provide the backgrounding of a narrative, much like the *imparfait* in French. Through its aspectual functions, the present perfect, although not moving the plot along in the narrative, can provide extra information and commentary to the reader in order to make the narrative stand out and be easier to follow.

The present perfect is, as already established, not a common tense to use in narration, due to its aspectual function of relating past events to the current time. This is because the "current" time of the narration is technically that of the narrator, not the author or the reader at the present moment of reading the story (Fleischman 1990:30). The narrator, just like the story, is set in the past tense, thus there is no present tense for the present perfect's reference point to anchor itself to. As such, the present perfect tends to be rare in narration, although it is present in narrative dialogue which imitates real world discourse.

2.3.5. Imparfait (Imp)

The French *imparfait* is, simply put, a past tense. The *imparfait* is used when there is no specific time determination for the action being illustrated (Struve-Debeaux 2010:150). The use of the *imparfait* is common and will often be used in both spoken and written media. In comparison, it is used more than the *passé simple*, as the *imparfait* has a subjective function, whereas the *passé simple* does not (Anguita 2016:89; Molendijk et al. 2004:282).

The *imparfait*'s aspectual features almost span the breadth of all the English past tenses. Generally, the *imparfait* is seen as a tense that denotes the meaning of an action that started in the past and continues in the present, sometimes understood as "le présent du passé"[8] (Anguita 2016:88). If there had to be a counterpart for the *imparfait* in English, it would possibly be the past progressive, as seen in (15):

(19) Je *mangeais* (Imp) un sandwich quand le téléphone *a sonné* (PC).

"I *was eating* (PastProg) a sandwich when the telephone *rang* (SP)."

In this example, the *imparfait* shows a progression from the past that continues into the present, whereas the *passé composé* denotes a limited durative action. Thus the *imparfait*'s action continues, even though there was a *passé composé* interruption. The *imparfait* is often used in conjunction with the *passé composé*. Moreover, the speaker who uses the *imparfait* sees the action from the perspective of actually participating in the action and thus sees it as incomplete (Anguita 2016:88).

The *imparfait* has two extra general functions, as well as two secondary aspectual functions. The two general functions both entail the usage of *imparfait* for descriptions. In spoken media it is used when the description pertains to appearance, desire, landscapes, feelings, and the like, e.g. *J'avais* (Imp) *chaud après j'ai joué* (PC) *au tennis*[9]. The other general function of *imparfait* is its use for simultaneous actions, much like the *gérondif*[10] in French, as seen in (20) and (21):

---

[8] The present of the past tense.

[9] Translation: I was hot after I played tennis.

[10] English: gerund. E.g. *While watching* the opera, I ate a piece of bacon.

(20) Il a joué (PC) au tennis *en écoutant* (*gérondif*) la radio avec ses écouteurs.

"He played tennis *while listening* (PastProg) to the radio with his earphones."

(21) Il a joué (PC) au tennis et *écoutait* (Imp) la radio avec ses écouteurs.

"He played tennis *while listening* (PastProg) to the radio with his earphones."

Two additional aspectual functions that the *imparfait* possesses is that of the representation of habit or repetition. Often, if it is a sentence denoting an action occurring in someone's past and continuing every day, every year, etc., it is appropriate to use the *imparfait* to illustrate this meaning, for example in (22) and (23):

(22) Habit: Je *buvais* (Imp) du vin tous les vendredis.

"I *used to drink* (SP) wine every Friday."

(23) Repetition: Quand nous *étions* (Imp) petits, nous *visitions* (Imp) notre maman chaque jour.

"When we *were* (SP) little, we *would* (SP) visit our mother every day."

More often than not, the use of the *imparfait* (when used for habitual or repetitious behaviour), as seen in (22) and (23), also indicates that the actions do not occur anymore, thus they are completed in the past. As such, the *imparfait* always anchors itself in the past before S, and thus to a lesser extent, the *imparfait* is a more subjective retrospective tense to use in real world discourse (Anguita 2016:87).

The *imparfait* has much of the same functions in narratives as in real world discourse. The *imparfait*'s narrative function of habit comes forth in (24):

(24) D'ordinaire, il ne *buvait* (Imp) pas de café avant le dîner ni après ... (Hannah 2014b:10-11).

He would not *usually drink* (SP) a cup [of coffee] before his dinner as well as after it ... (Hannah 2014a:3).

27

Narrative *imparfait* can also show a non-repetitious action at a precise moment in the past while being accompanied by a temporal adverbial (Grevisse and Goosse 2008:1092). This function is more suited for the other past tenses that denote a sequence of events (i.e. foregrounding tenses), even though the *imparfait* is normally not classified among them.

The *imparfait* is usually described as "picturesque", denoting that it sets a scene, thus there are a few extra functions to the usage of the *imparfait* in narratives (Molendijk et al. 2014:293). The *imparfait* is used as a description tense which is mostly used for backgrounding (Fleischman 1990:169). An example can be seen in (25):

> (25)   La porte du café *s'ouvrit* (PS) en grand et *alla* (PS) claquer contre le mur ... Poirot ne *pouvait* (Imp) distinguer ses traits, juste ses cheveux blonds, car elle *regardait* (Imp) par-dessus son épaule, comme si elle *attendait* (Imp) que quelqu'un la rattrape. (Hannah 2014b:10).
> The door of the coffee shop *flew* (SP) open and *banged* (SP) against the wall ... Poirot *could* (SP) not see her face. Her head *was turned* (SP-passive) to look over her shoulder, as if she *was waiting* (PastProg) for someone to catch her up. (Hannah 2014a:2).

In (25), the *imparfait* is used to describe states, feelings, appearances and the like which don't necessarily involve plot advancement but which gives a rounded feeling to the narration at hand. The *imparfait* progresses the setting facet (the scene of the situation) of a narration in order for the other tenses, like the *passé composé*/*passé simple*, etc. to accurately sequence the events that play off in this given setting.

It is easy to find the differences between the usage of the *imparfait* and that of the *passé composé*/*passé simple*, in that one can remove the sentences containing the verbs in *imparfait*. The sequencing of events would still continue as always, albeit a bit bluntly, almost like a report. Consequently, even though the *imparfait* is not necessarily needed for plot advancement, it is still vital to enable story progression, especially in a detective novel, which will be discussed in more detail later on in the thesis.

2.3.6. Pluperfect (PluP) and *plus-que-parfait* (PqP)

The pluperfect is a tense that is used to denote that there is an action occurring even further in the past than other past events. Leech (cited in Webber 1988:8) refers to the pluperfect tense as the "past-in-the-past", because the point of view that one utilises for the pluperfect is already situated in the past. The *plus-que-parfait* in French works in a similar way. Both these tenses in their respective languages help in positioning past events in a clearer way in order for cohesion to occur. As mentioned in section 2.1.1, the pluperfect was originally the inspiration for Reichenbach to create R, as the relation between only S and E proved too ambiguous in most tenses. Reichenbach decided that an extra element would be needed in order to correctly convey the time allocations for the pluperfect's timeline structure (Hackmack 2007:6). An example of this is given in (26):

(26) Nous *avons passé* (PC) l'examen pour laquelle nous *avions étudié* (PqP) hier.

"We *wrote* (SP) the test for which we *had studied* (PluP) yesterday."

$$E_2 \text{ —— } E_1, R \text{ —— } S$$

It is easy to see in (26) that the *passé composé*/simple past is the main past tense to use as a regular past tense and is supplemented by the *plus-que-parfait*/pluperfect. The *passé composé* verb's action (E_1 = *avons passé*/*wrote*) occurs the closest to S on the timeline, whereas the PluP/PqP verb's action (E_2 = *avions étudié/had studied*) occurs further back into the past. By contrast, when looking at the timeline on which these verbs' actions occur, the PluP/PqP action technically occurs first. The idea of multiple events on a timeline brings forth the notion of "prospective time". Prospective time utilises Reichenbach's positional principle by moving the timeline forward but still keeps S in place.

In a narrative, the pluperfect and the *plus-que-parfait* denote a past event that has taken place before another past event, without regard for the amount of time passed between these two events (Grevisse and Goosse 2008:1095). These two tenses are seen as composed tenses and their aspectual features denote a "completed" function.

There is a difference to the real world discourse and narrative versions of these tenses. The pluperfect is a common tense in narration and is often used alongside the simple past in order to give a slight anachrony to the sequence of events, instead of moving the events along with the simple past in a linear development. A good example of the sequence of events using the pluperfect or *plus-que-parfait* can be seen in (27):

> (27) "J'*avais* déjà *vu* (PqP) la clef de Richard Negus, celle que Poirot *avait découverte* (PqP) derrière le carreau descellé ... Je *sentis* (PS) comme un creux dans l'estomac ... Je *frissonnai* (PS)." (Hannah 2014b:102)
>
> "I *had seen* (PluP) Richard Negus's key, the one that Poirot *had found* (PluP) behind the loose fireplace tile ... I *felt* (SP) a hollow space open up in my stomach ... I *shivered* (SP)." (Hannah 2014a:91)

2.4.   Conclusion

Reichenbach's immensely vital timeline of tenses in general discourse have been explained in detail with supplementary information from Fleischman to link his timeline to narratives as well. Fleischman's markedness principle and grounding methods give insight into narrative norms and how the sequencing of events changes the way in which a reader differentiates between the plot and descriptive phenomena. Tense use in both real world discourse and narratives were also discussed; these tense functions will have a significant influence on the analysis of Hannah's two novels. In the next chapter, detective fiction as a genre and narrative methodology will be discussed to merge with the theory already discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 3

Narrative theories, detective fiction and time

In this chapter, several narrative theories will be discussed that link with the linguistic theory already covered in the previous chapter. First, the different narrator types shall be explained briefly with regards to the discussion chapter and the analysis of the novels. Second, detective fiction as a genre will be discussed, with regards to its place in crime fiction as a whole, and Todorov's (1977) detective fiction typology shall set it out. Section 3.1 will also introduce the notion of two stories in one novel, which will be analysed in detail in chapter 4. Third, prospective time and narrative perspective in English and French will be compared and contrasted with their tense usage and how perspective influences narration. Narrative perspective will also be discussed in detail in relation to the misleading information it provides to the reader in the absence of an omniscient narrator, with examples from Camus (section 3.3.1) and Hemingway (sub-section 3.3.2). This chapter ends with a discussion of *fabula* (story) and *syuzhet* (plot) in sub-section 3.4, concepts which encompass narrative and the manner in which a narrative is presented in relation to time references and chronology, and how tense usage is influenced by these context-dependent notions.

3.1. Discourse and narration; narrator types

The word "narrative" or "narration" is defined as "the act or process of telling a story, especially in a novel [or] a description of events" (Wehmeier 2006:974). There are three types of narration that are the most common which contain either: (i) an invisible/unknown/omniscient narrator; (ii) a visible narrator who is a physical character in the narration; or (iii) a retrospective narrator, whether visible or not. In this study a visible retrospective narrator will be of importance in the form of Edward Catchpool. He is the narrator that recounts his experience of solving three murders with the famous Hercule Poirot in *The Monogram Murders* and *Meurtres en Majuscules*.

Currie (2009: 353,356) states that a narrative generally takes the form of retrospection and explains that an unmarked past tense used in a narrative is decoded as a form of 'present', and embeds all tenses accordingly within the understanding of that narrative. The Reichenbachian timeline in relation to narratives thus moves one position backwards in its entirety to

31

accommodate this notion of 'past-as-present'. This idea is useful when attempting to exploit the use of past tense to reconstruct two stories in the analysis in chapter 4.

3.2.   Understanding detective fiction

Agatha Christie novels form part of the "golden age" of crime fiction which consist of clue puzzle mysteries in which all the facts are given to the reader (Coetzee 2010:105). The mystery within these puzzles occur when all the facts and clues are given in the manner in which the narrator receives them, not in the manner in which the event has occurred. Although the analysed novels in this thesis were not written by Agatha Christie herself, Sophie Hannah bases her writing style on Christie's in order to write under the famous author's pen name. In the most well-known detective novels of this type, it is not the famous detective that narrates the story but a bystander who knows the detective well. Classic examples of this sort of duo are: Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson, Dalziel and Pascoe, Father Brown and Flambeau, etc. This bystander narrator is often of a lesser intelligence (according to the detective) and serves as an oral soundboard for the detective's thoughts and deductions. It is ultimately through the detective's explanations to his side-kick where readers obtain the most information about the case that needs to be solved (Coetzee 2010:88).

Coetzee (2010:70) provides the following definition of detective fiction, describing it as a "fictional work in which a crime is committed, a violation of the law takes place, and in which the plot centres on the investigation of the crime". Currie (2009:360) in turn highlights an important aspect of detective fiction, namely the phenomenon known as the "double time of detective fiction, which proceeds forwards in order to narrate backwards" which largely influences this thesis' attempt at reconstructing two stories from one. Detective fiction makes use of analepses (flashbacks) and prolepses (flash forwards) that aid and/or confuse the reader by presenting all the necessary information needed to solve the mystery/murder in an achronological manner. The use of tense aids this phenomenon by positioning the information in a sequence of events in order to have a coherent understanding of the narrative as a whole.

The use of past tense facilitates the analepses of the crime that was committed before the start of the (investigation) narrative as a form of "[retrospectively] uncovering the *first story* [of the crime]" (Hühn 1987:452, author's emphasis). Novels generally follow the principle of a text-

continuum where, like language (i.e. Indo-European languages), a text moves from left to right (Perry 1979:35). Perry notes that people who read process all the information successively, regardless of the sequencing of events in the narrative. Moreover, Perry (1979:36) states that it is not the whole of the information that is given to the reader but a selection of such, depending on the portrayal of the story, a point which will be discussed in section 3.4. It should be noted, however, that the reader is provided with all the necessary information to solve the crime being investigated.

Todorov (1977) describes three classifications in the detective genre: the whodunit, the thriller, and the suspense. The whodunit is also known as a clue-puzzle mystery; this form is the classic subgenre of detective fiction, to which Hannah's (2014) novels belong. Whodunits and thrillers generally work in inverse directions regarding cause and effect. A thriller moves from cause to effect, illustrated by scenes of violence followed by scenes with injured people and/or corpses. A whodunit works backwards: the injured people and/or corpses are found (effect) and the clues permeating the scene draws the conclusion to the cause of the event (Todorov 1977:47). Burton (Todorov 1977:44) explains that the detective fiction narrative "superimposes two temporal series: the days of the investigation which begin with the crime, and the days of the drama which lead up to it". Ultimately, two stories are present in the narrative: the "real but absent crime", and the "present but insignificant" investigation (Todorov 1977:46). The detective and narrator are confronted by clues that seemingly have no link, and it is through the usage of frames of reference of already established clues within the context of the narrative that the crime can be reconstructed and thus solved (Hühn 1987:455).

Brook (cited in Currie 2009:354) claims that readers are highly dependent on the "pastness" of an action through the care readers take to focus on the verbs in past tense, as these verbs with their various past tense functions provide the reader with the tools to restructure previously read information. As will be shown in the next chapter, the focus of this study will be on the idea that two stories contextually co-exist in the novels, namely that: (i) the narrative consists of the investigation; and (ii) the investigation contains the crime. Todorov's two-story statement is therefore well-suited for the research question postulated by this thesis, namely, how, through the use of past tense, does the narrative reconstruct the crime in detective fiction for both English and French? A notion which influences the restructuring of this invisible story (the crime) is the perspective from which it is told.

33

3.3.   Prospective time, perspective and tense

Dahl (cited in Fleischman 1990) explains how Reichenbach's timelines work in terms of a sequence of sentences, known as "prospective time", a notion which will become vital in this and the next chapter. Dahl states that with each sentence, the timeline moves forward (to the right) while still staying relative (or anterior) to S. With this in mind, it can therefore be noted that according to Dahl (cited in Fleischman 1990:128), the E of a sentence in this sequence establishes the R of the following sentence in order to form a coherent sequence of sentences/events. This notion of using a pre-existing time point to position the reference for the next sentence is contextually significant with regards to perspective in a narrative.

Caenepeel (1989) places emphasis on the perspective from which a story is narrated. Much like the importance placed on the type of narrator in section 3.1, perspective also changes the specific past tenses used. This is due to the subjectivity and/or objectivity with which the narrator perceives the sequence of events. Tenses, as already established in chapter 2, have certain functions pertaining to their subjectivity in usage. In French, it is relatively easy to discern: *passé simple* is the more objective past tense to utilise in a narrative, whereas the *passé composé* is more subjective. In English, it is not always as clear because the simple past is the default past tense to use in a narrative, whether objectively or subjectively. If a distinctly more subjective tone were needed in English narration, the narrative present would be used, although it ultimately depends on the type of narrator telling the story. In a context-dependent setting, perspective changes the way in which information can be obtained in a narrative. In a mystery novel such as Hannah's, it is vital that certain information be misconstrued to be true by the reader to hide the real story, or original *fabula* (a notion which will be discussed in detail in section 3.4).

Although it will be explained in more detail in the next chapter, it is appropriate to mention the significance of perspective in relation to the novels under investigation in this study. An example can be used of Samuel Kidd, one of the characters in *The Monogram Murders* (and *Meurtres en Majuscules*). In the part where Samuel Kidd is introduced in chapter 7 in the novels, the reader has already had enough time to start sympathising with Poirot and Catchpool to let these characters influence the reader's perspective of those characters' narrative world. In general, the reader is also aware that, although she sympathises with the characters, the narrator is not omniscient and can lead the reader on a false lead if the author sees fit. Not

34

knowing whether to trust the narrator himself adds to the mystery element in detective fiction (Caenepeel 1989:8). In (28a) below, with the French translation in (28b), the reader instantly believes Catchpool's description and Poirot's disgust of Samuel Kidd as being the most accurate (and only) description of him. All phrases in italics influence the reader into thinking Samuel Kidd is an unkempt person, quite unlike Poirot's cleanliness for which he is known for:

(28a) I introduced him—Mr Samuel Kidd, *a boiler-maker*—and watched with amusement *as Poirot recoiled from the dirt-marked shirt with the missing button, and the partly unshaven face*. Mr Kidd had nothing as ordinary as a beard or a moustache, but *he plainly had trouble using a razor*. The evidence suggested that he had started to shave, cut himself badly, and abandoned the enterprise. As a consequence, *one side of his face was smooth and hairless but wounded, while the other was injury-free and covered with dark bristles. Which side looked worse was not an easy question to settle*. (Hannah 2014a:88)

(28b) Je lui présentai: M. Samuel Kidd, *chaudronnier de son état*, et j'observai avec amusement *le mouvement de recul de Poirot*, toujours si soigné de sa personne, devant *l'aspect crasseux de son interlocuteur. Outre sa chemise tachée à laquelle manquait un bouton, M. Kidd n'était pas un as du rasoir*. Il s'était méchamment coupé, et avait dû renoncer en cours de route à finir le travail. *Résultat, il avait un côté du visage lisse, mais sanguinolent, et l'autre intact, mais hirsute. Lequel était le pire? Difficile à dire*. (Hannah 2014b:99-100)

Not only a character's description can be misleading, as seen in (28), but the portrayal of their intelligence as well. Whether the character is actually capable or clever enough to plan and execute a murder comes down to language and tense usage. The misuse of language leads the reader to believe the character to be of low education and judges accordingly. This can be seen in (29) with Samuel Kidd's description of the night of the murder, after the events of (28):

(29a) "I said to *meself*, that's strange, *that is*, her hooking it like that," Samuel Kidd mused. "And then this morning I *seen* police everywhere and I asked one of *'em* what *was* the big to-do. When I heard about these

murders, I thought to *meself*, 'That could have been a murderer that you saw, Sammy.' She looked frightful, *did* the lady—frightful!" (Hannah 2014a:90)

(29b) "J'ai trouvé *ça* bizarre," conclut Kidd d'un air songeur. "Et ce matin, j'ai vu qu'il y avait des policiers partout. J'ai demandé à l'un des agents en faction ce qui se passait. *Quand j'ai su, pour les trois meurtres*, je me suis dit, c'est peut-être une meurtrière que *t'as vu* filer, Sammy. Elle avait une mine effroyable, la dame, je vous jure, elle faisait peur!" (Hannah 2014b:101)

Temporal ordering, which has already been mentioned as one of the simple past functions, plays a role in narrative perspective as well. These two notions are important for one main reason: forward movement in narration. The usage of a particular past tense in a given context allows the reader to interpret the sequence of events as happening in tandem; however, it can happen that no forward movement occurs at all with such temporal ordering, as the information presented in this seemingly sequential order of events do not supply a forward movement but a description of the situation in context. Caenepeel (1989:17) states this idea in a different way: "The flow of situations which follow each other in time is (temporarily) suspended in favour of a description of the contemplating reflection or awareness of a subject". Tenses like the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* in French are appropriate for this temporary suspension, whereas it is more context-dependent in English.

In the following two sub-sections, two novels shall provide some practical examples to the theory discussed thus far in this section. The first novel is *L'Étranger* by Albert Camus which shall provide evidence on the importance of tense usage in narrative. The second novel is *The Killers* by Ernest Hemingway, which will exploit the significance of narrative perspective.

3.3.1.   *L'Étranger* and tense usage

L'Étranger, written by Albert Camus, has become the base of many studies regarding tense usage in narrative. It is a unique story with regards to the default tense it uses: the *passé composé*. This is a marked tense in narration but serves a particular semantic purpose in the novel. Through its markedness, the narrator in the novel, Meursault, assigns all the actions

containing the *passé composé* with a subjective feeling, instead of distancing himself from the situation through the predominant use of the *passé simple*. What subsequently occurs in the novel, however, is the reverse. Through the use of the *passé composé* in such abundance, the subjective functionality of the *passé composé* is no longer important, but a manner of staccato temporal ordering ensues. In other words, all actions, or phrase units, realised in the *passé composé* are isolated; "le verbe est rompu, brisé en deux"[11], which stops the flow of regular narration through this markedness (Balibar 1972:103).

An example from *L'Étranger* shows the markedness in tense usage; all uses of *passé composé* are in italics:

> (30) *J'ai fait* la lettre. Je *l'ai écrite* un peu au hasard, mais *je me suis appliqué* à contenter Raymond ... Puis *j'ai lu* la lettre à haute voix. *Il m'a écouté* en fumant et en hochant la tête, puis *il m'a demandé* de la relire. ... *Il m'a dit* : « Je savais bien que tu connaissais la vie. » *Je ne me suis pas aperçu* qu'il me tutoyait. (Camus 1957:50)
> I wrote the letter. I did it rather haphazardly, but I did my best to please Raymond because I had no reason not to please him. Then I read it out. He listened, smoking and nodding his head, then he asked me to read it again ... He told me, 'I could tell you were a man of the world.' I didn't notice it at first, but he was calling me by my first name. (Camus 2010:22)

By using the *passé composé*, the narration does not flow from one event to another in an inclusive manner. The narration through these sentences is seemingly isolated. Put differently, the only common point between the sentences in (30) is S, in the form of the narrator. Having S as the common denominator among the sentences in Camus' novel satisfies Reichenbach's positional use of the reference point, as each sentence seemingly creates its own R within the context. This example shows how the tense usage of the narrator can influence the portrayal of the story itself to the reader.

---

[11]   Translation: The verb is broken, shattered in two.

3.3.2. *The Killers* **and how information gets processed**

Perry (1979) conducted a brief analysis on *The Killers* by Ernest Hemingway to supplement his analysis of Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily*. His analysis of Hemingway's novel is appropriate for the discussion in this chapter, as it shows the importance of narrative perspective in context. In *The Killers*, two men walk into a bar and start taunting the bartender and another customer. It is implied in the context who the narrator is, although not fully explained to the reader. In (31), it is through the context-dependent usage of character pointers that the reader interprets the origin of the narrator (shown in italics):

(31) "What's yours?" George [the bartender] asked them.

"I don't know," *one of the men* said. "What do you want to eat, *Al*?"

"I don't know," said *Al*. "I don't known what I want to eat." ... "I'll take

the ham and eggs," *the man called Al* said. (Hemingway 2007:1-2)

Brook's notion (mentioned in section 3.2) that newly obtained information restructures previously obtained information is illustrated in (31). The implied narrators here in (31) are George and Nick in the short story because they are instantly named. However, the two men who walk into the bar are only predominantly referred to as *the first man*, *the other man*, and eventually *Al*, but only after one of the men acknowledges this as the name of the other man he is with. Perry (1979:39) states that generally, a narrator has no need to use the same pointers to refer to a character, but it does aid in the context to refer to a character with more precise labels (e.g. their names) than any other reference. The main reason different pointers might be used for a character is to hide certain characteristics (e.g. her identity or lead-producing evidence) in order to create suspense and mystery. This is where the notions of *fabula* and *syuzhet* find resonance: the *fabula* is provided but the *syuzhet* blurs the distinction between facts and false leads of characters and situations, which will be discussed next.

3.4. *Fabula* **and** *syuzhet*

This section explores the theory which states that a detective fiction narrative comprises of two stories in one. This notion was further realised by Russian formalists in terms of "*fabula*" and "*syuzhet*" or, put differently, by Todorov (1977:45), "story" and "plot". *Fabula* (story) is the

occurrence of events as they happened, and *syuzhet* (plot) is how the author presents those events to the reader, whether chronologically or not (Todorov 1977:45). These terms have a significant influence on this thesis with regards to the usage of tenses to illustrate temporal movement in narration. While a narrative's events occur in an *abcd* progression, the *syuzhet* can present the narrative in forms of progression such as: *dcba*, *adcb*, *abdc*, etc., any manner which is appropriate to the narrative (Herman 1998:74). The use of temporal anchors makes this phenomenon possible in a narrative.

The *fabula* of the story is the story itself, which the *syuzhet* can manipulate. The event, with verb phrases as integral units within the sentences, can be subjected to positioning on the sequential timeline (Walsh 2001:595). *Syuzhet* takes the material from *fabula* by "carving up [the *fabula*] into constructs of experience" (Fleischman 1990:95). Walsh (2001:593) explains that the *fabula* and *syuzhet* are thus two sides of the same coin, as the one cannot exist without the other. In other words, the *fabula* cannot present itself under a suitable medium (the *syuzhet*); likewise, the *syuzhet* cannot exist on its own as there is nothing to present. In this regard, the *syuzhet* limits the extent to which *fabula* can be presented in order for a narrative to be created (Walsh 2001:593).

Objectivity and subjectivity are ideas that influence *fabula* and *syuzhet*, and in turn change the way in which the events are presented in a narrative. Sometimes, an event can be perceived 'externally', which means that the narrative temporality only moves from one event to the next (Walsh 2001:595). Tenses in this 'external' perspective would be those that have the "completed" aspectual feature, such as the simple past in English and the *passé simple* in French. These tenses are objective in terms of speaker association to the event. In contrast, as Walsh (2001:595) puts it, if one "locates narrative within the event in the transformation it marks between before and after", more subjective tenses would have to be used, e.g. the French *imparfait*.

Anachrony (non-chronology of events) and analepses (flashbacks) are used in the *syuzhet* to blur the full *fabula* because the "temporal order inherent in narrative has been amply exploited to ... the result that discordance ... is the rule, not the exception" (Nelles and Williams 2018:135-136). A practical example of discordance in temporal order of the *syuzhet* comes from Currie's (2009) analysis of Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go*, in which one

paragraph consists of various past tense events which are linked in a complex manner, yet a reader would still be able to find the natural order of the narrative (or thus, the original *fabula*):

> (32) Tommy and I *discussed* (SP) the tokens controversy a few years ago, and we *couldn't* (SP) at first agree when it *had happened* (PluP). I *said* (SP) *we'd been* (PluP) ten at the time; he *thought* (SP) it *was* (SP) later, but in the end *came* (SP) round to agreeing with me. *I'm pretty* (NPres) sure I *got* (SP) it right: **we *were* (SP) in Junior 4** – a while after that incident with Madame, but still three years before our talk by the pond (cited in Currie 2009:357).

With the abundance of the simple past in (32), it might be misconstrued that anachrony will prevail and that the reader will not come to the conclusion that *we were in Junior 4* in fact occurred first. In English, as mentioned in section 2.3.1, native speakers of English are naturally able to infer from context which action occurred first. In French, on the other hand, this is not the case, as a larger variety of past tenses are necessary to adequately portray the sequence of events. In (33), this can be seen clearly:

> (33) Pendant que je *me rasais* (Imp), je *me suis demandé* (PC) ce que *j'allais faire* (Imp) et j'*ai décidé* (PC) d'aller me baigner. J'*ai pris* (PC) le tram pour aller à l'établissement de bains du port ... Il y *avait* (Imp) beaucoup de jeunes gens. J'*ai retrouvé* (PC) dans l'eau Marie Cardona, une ancienne dactylo de mon bureau dont j'*avais eu* (PqP) envie à l'époque. Elle aussi, je *crois* (NPres). Mais elle *est partie* (PC) peu après et nous *n'avons pas eu* (PC) le temps. (Camus 1957:30-31)
> While shaving, I *wondered* (SP) how to spend the morning, and *decided* (SP) that a swim would do me good. So I *caught* (SP) the streetcar that goes down to the harbor... a lot of young people *were* (SP) in the swimming pool, amongst them Marie Cardona, who *used to be* (SP) a typist at the office. I *was* (SP) rather keen on her in those days, and I *fancy* (NPres) she *liked* (SP) me, too. But she *was* (SP) with us so short a time that nothing *came* (SP) of it. (Camus 2010:14)

In (33), it is important to note that aspectual functions, time determination words, as well as grounding are needed in order to correctly establish the flow and sequence of the narrative. In the French text, the *imparfait* is also vital within the context, because it provides additional information that does not move the narrative forward but which are still necessary to create the overall setting of the event. In the English translation, however, time determination words do not seem to be relevant to the narrative because temporal ordering conveys to the reader the correct sequence of events. Whether the events move the narrative forward, or whether events in the far past are described, both are treated equally in English past tenses.

3.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, an outline of narrator types was discussed, as it is important to note which narrator type is presented in a novel in general. This is because it leads to the understanding that narrator types influence the truth value of character and scene descriptions, especially in detective fiction. This genre was described in detail with regards to the fact that the novels analysed in the next chapter belong to the 'whodunit' category of detective fiction. Whodunits change the direction in which a narrative flows because the whodunit seeks the first (invisible crime) story through the usage of the second visible investigation, as illustrated in more detail through the terms "*fabula*" (story) and "*syuzhet*" (plot). The manipulation of the tenses used by the *syuzhet* aids the reader to collect all the clues at the same instance as Catchpool and Poirot, without uncovering the original *fabula* (the crime committed prior to the novel's start). It is with these narrative tools that Hannah's two novels will be analysed to answer this thesis' research questions regarding the detective fiction's use of interlinked *fabulas* to reconstruct the crime.

Chapter 4

Analysis of past tense use in *The Monogram Murders* and *Meurtres en Majuscules*

This chapter presents the analysis of the use of past tense in Hannah's novels, *The Monogram Murders* (hereinafter abbreviated to *TMM*) and *Meurtres en Majuscules* (hereinafter abbreviated to *MeM*). The original novel was written in English, so it will be the dominant text, whereas the French translation will provide a similar and/or contrasting analysis to that of the English novel. The aim is to establish how particular English and French past tenses in detective fiction are used in order for two *fabulas* (the investigation *fabula* and crime *fabula*) to be portrayed using one *syuzhet*, the inference being that one *fabula* reconstructs the other.

In the first section of this chapter, a brief synopsis of the novels is presented. The following section proposes and explains the formula used to analyse the use of tense in the novels, as well as providing a graph to represent the event analysis of the novels. The third section presents the overall R-point of the novels, which provides the reader with supplemental information relevant to the timeline of the crime. Section 4.4 is devoted to an analysis of a number of events in the novel which will be discussed in detail in relation to the theories presented in chapters 2 and 3. Every sub-section of section 4.4 is accompanied by a modified graph to enable the reader to visualise the analysis. It should be noted that only parts of the novels relevant to the analysis are presented in example format, as the novels are substantial and the murders themselves do not encompass the entirety of them. Parts of the novels which are relevant to the investigation or the crime, but not the analysis proper, are briefly summarised to prevent confusion and achieve cohesion in the narrative. The next section (section 4.5) is the literary result obtained from the analysis in section 4.4. This section provides the final explanation of the timeline reconstruction and also supplies the solution to the investigation which occurs in the novels, accompanied by a graph. Lastly, section 4.6 gives a summary of the links which are found between the theory discussed in chapters 2 and 3, and the analysis in section 4.4.

Formatting conventions present in the original novels are changed for consistency and to facilitate the reading of the examples given in this chapter. In this chapter, dialogue is indicated by double quotation marks to show the distinction between dialogue and narration. Ellipses indicate gaps where parts of the original text, not central to the analysis of the example in question, are omitted.

All relevant verbs are italicised and are accompanied by an abbreviation of the tense of the verb (see the list of abbreviations at the start of the thesis, and sections 2.2 to 2.3). Only analysed verbs are presented in italics; quotative verbs, as in *he said* or *I asked*, are only italicised if their analysis adds to the discussion of the extract. Author's emphases, given in italics in the original texts, are omitted. Reasons for emphasising particular phrases by presenting them in bold and/or underline will be explained in the analysis.

4.1.   Synopsis and temporal positioning of the novels

The analysed novels follow Edward Catchpool, a Scotland Yard detective, who is the narrator, and Hercule Poirot, the famous Belgian detective, who lives in the same establishment as Catchpool. The novel starts with a woman called Jennie who finds Poirot in Pleasant's Coffee House. She announces to him that she might be murdered. Before Poirot can divulge this information to Catchpool, the latter informs him of three murders that took place in the Bloxham Hotel on the same evening. Normally, murders are straightforward, but this crime is different: all three victims were killed in their own rooms on three separate floors at seemingly the same time. Poirot and Catchpool investigate this crime and seek to reconstruct it in order to apprehend the culprit. The aim of this thesis is therefore to analyse the past tense use for their functionality and semantic meaning. The information that is obtained through the analysis serves to aid the investigation in the novels to reconstruct the crime which occurred at the Bloxham Hotel.

The narrative consists of the investigation *fabula* and the crime *fabula*, although both *fabulas* are interlinked in one *syuzhet*. For the sake of clarity, the *syuzhet* is the plot which constitutes the manner in which the narrative is told, i.e. by using specific past tenses and achronological storytelling. Chapter 22 up until the Epilogue of *TMM* and *MeM* provide the answer to the reconstruction of the crime, therefore they are not analysed, as they already contain the entirety of the chronological projection of events. Moreover, an in-depth examination of the motive of the murders will not be addressed in its entirety, as this encompasses most of the novels and is also, for the most part, irrelevant to the physical crime that took place. As such, a graph of the timeline of these novels is needed to visually represent the sequence of events where the one *fabula* (with the help of the overall *syuzhet*) reconstructs the other *fabula*.

43

4.2. Methodology: Formula and graph

The methodology used in this thesis is based on the fact that the *fabula* (i.e. the story in the narrative) is split in two: (i) the crime; and (ii) the investigation. As such, the *syuzhet* (i.e. the way in which the story is told) in the narrative uses various past tenses to differentiate between the investigation and the crime. Consequently, a formula is proposed, based on Reichenbach's (1947) timeline of tenses and Dahl's (1985) prospective time theory in literature (as discussed in sections 2.1 and 3.3), given below in (A). This formula facilitates the detailed explanations to come in this chapter.

(A) $X_{nC/I} \rightarrow X_{nC/I}$

The formula consists of: (i) X, which refers to either E or R in a given situation, where E can refer to another event's R or simply another E; (ii) n, which refers to a specific E or R in a given situation, e.g. E_1, E_2, etc.; (iii) C, which refers to the crime *fabula* of the narrative; and (iv) I, which refers to the investigation *fabula* of the narrative.

Let's use a simple example: Mary murders John. When John's body is found, the detective discovers candy wrappers next to the body. Therefore, the body was found first, and the candy wrappers' discovery follows. Mary confesses and states that she murdered John because he stole her candy. In this regard, the theft of the candy precedes the murder, even though the narrative (the detective's discoveries) are out of chronological order. In a formula, it can be shown as follows:

Theft: $E_{1C} \rightarrow E_{2I}$ (first occurrence in crime, second in investigation)
Murder: $E_{2C} \rightarrow E_{1I}$ (first occurrence in investigation, second in crime)

In this chapter, the formula in (A) provides the chronology of smaller events within the larger ones. This chronology of events is supported by the notion, postulated by Dahl (cited in Fleischman 1990:128), that an E serves as the R for the following E. And sometimes, an E might be replaced by another E due to new clues.

The formula in (A) is supplemented by a graph, given in Figure 1 (overleaf), which provides a full event analysis of the novels. The two sides, marked by "crime" and "investigation"

respectively, correspond to the two *fabulas* on which the information from the analysis is placed.
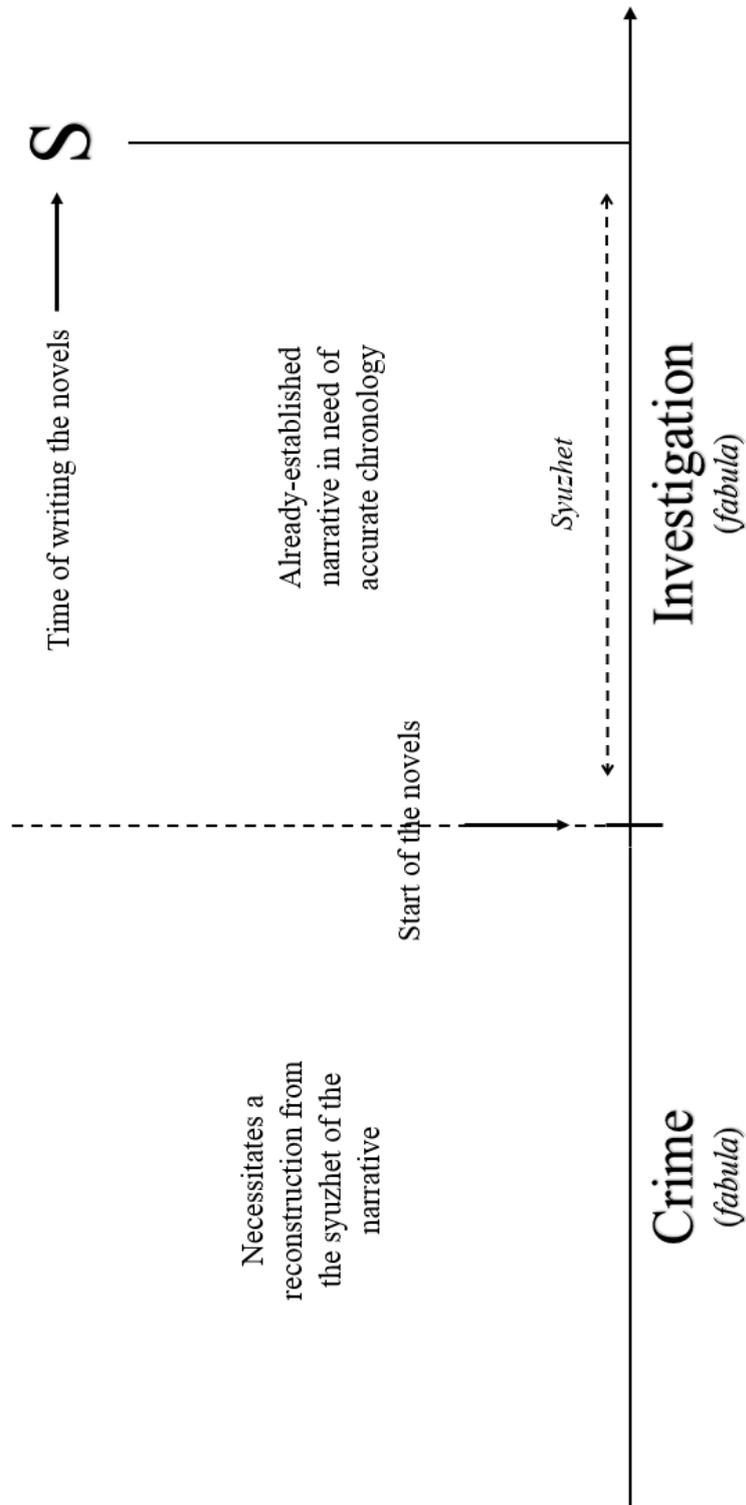
Figure 1: Skeleton graph of the two *fabulas*

This graph will be filled in as the discussion in this chapter progresses. The overall discussion of extracts will be done in the chronological way in which they occur in the narrative, i.e. from left to right in the novels. In turn, the formula will place the event of the crime that has been unlocked by the narrative onto the graph. These events are unlocked in the narrative in the form of either: (i) questions postulated by Catchpool and Poirot; (ii) narrative events, such as finding a clue; or (iii) interrogating various suspects.

Emphasis is placed on the context in which a particular extract is situated within the narrative, because this might change the outcome of the situation or even the crime *fabula* in the graph. In other words, a past tense that is used in a particular situation might be linguistically erroneous, however, within the set context, it is more appropriate to use this specific tense, as it has a particular function that is needed within that context. For example:

> (34) "I would prefer to be shown the three rooms in which murders *have taken place* (PP)," Poirot told [Lazzari]. (Hannah 2014a:35)

From a purely linguistic point of view, the use of the present perfect (PP) in (34) is erroneous. This is because the function of the present perfect is to denote a situation having current relevance in the present, as explained in section 2.3.4. This function of the present perfect implies that the murders are continuing to take place. From a literary perspective, however, the use of the present perfect fits the context in which it is presented. The context preceding the example in (34) is when Poirot and Catchpool arrive at the Bloxham Hotel, and Luca Lazzari (the hotel manager) boasts about the beauty of the hotel, but does not focus on the atrocity that has occurred there. Therefore, Poirot has used the present perfect in this particular context for semantic reasons: he wishes to see nothing else of the hotel, other than the crime scenes, or if other murders have occurred within the hotel without their prior notice, they would like to see those rooms too.

4.3.   Overall temporal R-point of novels

The novel explicitly provides the reader with the first R-point of most of the entire narrative in relation to which all events are placed at the start of chapter 2. This leaves chapter 1 of *TMM*

46

and *MeM* free to build the suspense that will permeate the rest of the narrative. The start of chapter 2 of the novels, with its R-point, is given in (35) [12]:

(35a) That was how it started, on the evening of Thursday, 7 February 1929, with Hercule Poirot, Jennie... Or, should I say, that was how it appeared to start. I'm not convinced that stories from real life have beginnings and ends, as a matter of fact. Approach them from any vantage point and you'll see that they stretch endlessly back into the past and spread inexorably forward into the future. (Hannah 2014a:17)

(35b) Ce fut ainsi que l'histoire commença, au soir de ce jeudi 7 février 1929, avec Hercule Poirot, Jennie... Ou plutôt, elle sembla débuter ainsi. Je ne suis pas persuadé que les histoires vraies aient un début et une fin. Quel que soit l'angle sous lequel on les aborde, force est de constater qu'elles remontent indéfiniment dans le passé et s'étirent inexorablement vers le futur. (Hannah 2014b:26)

When Catchpool states, in (35a), that one can perceive a story "from any vantage point and you'll see that they stretch endlessly back into the past" (Hannah 2014a:17), he is referring to the notion that the *fabula* in itself has no beginning or end. It is thus through the *syuzhet* that this R-point becomes the first and overall time reference, and all subsequent events in the novels are placed on the timeline in relation to this point.

4.4. Analysis of The Monogram Murders and Meurtres en Majuscules

This section contains extracts from *TMM* and *MeM* which are analysed in terms of their past tense use, as well as the tenses' contextual significance in a given situation. In each subsection, the analysed extracts provide contextual information which is placed on the accompanying graph. Note that each sub-section has its own graph, given in Figures 2 – 7, and each graph follows from the previous graph in terms of content.

---

[12] This is the representation of the extracts. Let's use the number (42) as an example: "extract (42a)" refers to an extract from *The Mongram Murders*; "extract (42b)" refers to an extract from *Meurtres en Majuscules*; and "extract (42)" is the collective indication to both extracts (42a) and (42b). When used collectively, this term shall use the singular, because it denotes one collection of two elements.

4.4.1.   Poirot's meeting with Jennie

In chapter 1 of *TMM* and *MeM*, the main protagonist is presented to the reader: Poirot. Poirot's tradition of always dining in Pleasant's Coffee House at 19:30 every Thursday (which becomes R$_{narr1}$ on the graph in Figure 2), serves as an appropriate opportunity for the rising action to occur.

(37a) The door of the coffee shop *flew* (SP) open and *banged* (SP) against the wall. A woman wearing a pale brown coat and a darker brown hat *stood* (SP) in the doorway. She *had* (SP) fair hair. Poirot *could* (SP) not see her face. Her head *was turned* (SP) to look over her shoulder, as if she *was waiting* (PastProg) for someone to catch her up. ... The woman *stepped* (SP) inside. She *closed* (SP) the door, but *did* (SP) not apologize for having left it open so long. Her jagged breathing *could be heard* (Modal + PP) across the room. She *seemed* (SP) not to notice there *were* (SP) other people present. ... Her eyes *were* (SP) wide with alarm of an uncommon kind... (Hannah 2014a:2-3)

(37b) La porte du café *s'ouvrit* (PS) en grand et *alla* claquer (PS) contre le mur. Une femme en manteau marron clair et chapeau marron foncé *apparut* (PS) sur le seuil. Poirot ne *pouvait* (Imp) distinguer ses traits, juste ses cheveux blonds, car elle *regardait* (Imp) par-dessus son épaule, comme si elle *attendait* (Imp) que quelqu'un la ratrappe. ... Enfin la femme *franchit* (PS) la seuil. Elle *ferma* (PS) la porte, sans s'excuser de l'avoir laissée ouverte aussi longtemps. Sa respiration haletante *s'entendait* (Imp) jusqu'à l'autre bout de la salle. ... Ses yeux agrandis *exprimaient* (Imp) une indicible angoisse... (Hannah 2014b:10-11)

In (37), a rapid succession of events is presented to the reader in the form of the simple past and *passé simple* respectively. In (37b), descriptions of Jennie are done in the *imparfait* (which are underlined in the extract), but this tense serves two purposes here. Not only does it present a description of Jennie, but also indexes the continuation function of the *imparfait*. This continuation function is shown by the simple past and the past progressive in *TMM* (which is

underlined in the extract). In both examples, the past progressive and *imparfait* serve as backgrounding to provide extra information to the reader. The underlined parts in (37) do not necessarily move the narrative forward, but the information creates suspense. The extract in (38a) and (38b) occurs after Jennie announces to Poirot that she will be killed.

(38a) "*Promise* (Imper) me this: if *I'm found* (NPres-passive) dead, you'll tell your friend the policeman not to look for my killer." She pressed her eyes shut and clasped her hands together. "Oh, please *let* (Imper) no one open their mouths! This crime *must* never *be solved* (NPres)." (Hannah 2014a:10)

(38b) "*Promettez*-moi (Impér) que si l'on me *retrouve* (PH) morte, vous persuaderez votre ami policier de ne pas rechercher mon assassin. Oh, je vous en prie," implora-t-elle en fermant les yeux, les mains jointes. "Que personne ne leur *ouvre* (Impér) la bouche! Ce crime ne *doit* jamais (PH) être résolu." (Hannah 2014b:18)

In (38), Jennie uses the imperative and narrative present as her way of showing the immediacy of the situation; this extract is therefore marked. Fleischman (1990: 53) explains that present tense use allows for the narrative to have a minimum reference to time. In other words, Jennie's use of the narrative present results in an emphasis on what she says, not to what time or past event she is referring to. In the next part, the underlined sentences in (38) will be discussed in relation to an assumption that Poirot might have on her use of the singular.

In the extract above, it is evident that the extract provides a clue for Poirot (which is underlined). This is due to one (apparent) grammatical error. Jennie speaks perfect English/French throughout the conversation with the exception of the underlined sentence in (38). In English, it is necessary to use the singular possessive pronoun *his/her* with "no one" when the two elements are co-referential, e.g. "let no one$_i$ open his/her$_i$ mouth". It is possible to use the singular "their", but this would still necessitate the use of singular "mouth" and not "mouths", e.g. *let no one$_i$ open their$_i$ mouth*. In French, the appropriate phrase would be *que personne$_i$ n'ouvre la$_i$ bouche*, because the singular possessive pronoun is necessary if it is to be co-referential with "personne". As Jennie has used the possessive pronoun "their" with the plural "mouths" in apparent co-reference with "no one", it can be considered ungrammatical.

49

Poirot arrives home and finds Catchpool there as well. They have the following conversation about their respective unsettling events of that evening:

(39a) "Looking?" [Catchpool] asked.

"Oui. For a woman, Jennie, whom I very much hope *is* (NPres) still alive and not murdered."

"Murdered? ... What *does* (NPres) she look like, this Jennie?" I asked.

"Describe her. I *might have seen* (Modal + PP) her. ... *I've seen* (PP) two murdered women tonight, actually, and one man ... Each of the victims *had* (SP) something in his or her mouth ... [t]hree cufflinks, solid gold from the look of them. Monogrammed. Same initials on all three: PIJ." [Catchpool said to Poirot]

"Mon Dieu!" [Poirot] *had risen* (PluP) to his feet and *begun* (PluP) to pace around the room. "You *do* not *see* (NPres) what this means, mon ami. No, you do not see it at all, because you *have* not *heard* (PP) the story of my encounter with Mademoiselle Jennie." (Hannah 2014a:22, 25)

(39b) "Que *cherchiez*-vous (Imp)?"

"Une femme, Jennie, que *j'espère* (PH) encore en vie, et non victime d'un meurtre."

"Un meurtre? ... À quoi *ressemble*-t-elle (PH), cette Jennie?" demandai-je. "Décrivez-la-moi. Je *l'ai* peut-être *vue* (PC) ... Car *j'ai vu* (PC) deux femmes assassinées ce soir, plus un homme ... Chacune des victimes *avait* (Imp) quelque chose dans la bouche ... [t]rois objets distincts, mais identiques ... . Trois boutons de manchette en or massif, à première vue. Gravés d'un monogramme. Les mêmes initiales sur les trois: PIJ." [dit Catchpool à Poirot]

[Poirot] *s'était levé* (PqP) et *arpentait* (Imp) la pièce.

"Mon Dieu! Vous ne *voyez* (PH) donc pas ce que cela signifie, mon ami? Non, vous ne le voyez pas, parce que vous *n'avez pas entendu* (PC) l'histoire de ma rencontre ..." [dit Poirot] (Hannah 2014b:31, 34)

In (39) above, the rising action is introduced to the reader: the three murders. Without this part in the narrative, Poirot would never have taken Jennie's underlined words in (38) as a possible clue. Catchpool does not see the relevance of a seemingly harmless grammatical error and suggests that "in [his] experience, people who are stricken with terror tend not to fuss about grammar" ("D'après [son] expérience, les gens en proie à la terreur ne s'embarrassent pas de scrupules grammaticaux") (Hannah 2014a:29; Hannah 2014b:38).

Todorov's (1977) classification of whodunits, discussed in section 3.2, becomes clearer when analysing (38) and (39). He explains that whodunits (a category that *TMM* and *MeM* belong to) work backwards in terms of cause and effect. Jennie's meeting with Poirot and her grammatical error become the effects of the crime, whereas Catchpool's murder victim discovery becomes the cause. In other words, it is only due to the murder event taking place that Jennie's grammatical error occurs.

In terms of the general past tense that both Poirot and Catchpool make use of, the narrative present / *présent historique* seem to be the marked tenses here. The extracts in (39) are marked, because both men are trying to refer to past events in the present moment to try and explain them to one another from the present perspective. The use of the underlined sentence in (39) has the mere functionality of description, as it doesn't move the narrative forward. Nevertheless, the underlined sentence provides another E to be linked to the E of Jennie's meeting with Poirot.

Both of these events (Jennie's meeting with Poirot, and Catchpool's murder victim discovery) become the first two events that are placed on the investigation *fabula* timeline in the graph (see Figure 2). The two events are on the same place on the timeline at the start of the novel because they occur at the same time. The only difference between these two events is that one is visible in the narrative (Jennie's meeting with Poirot, which becomes $E_{1.1I}$), and one is retrospectively alluded to (Catchpool's murder victim discovery, which becomes $E_{1.2I}$). Once both investigators tell each other about their respective events, the description of the cufflinks in the mouth (R_{2I}) provides a link between the two past events. In the form of the formula, the following occurs:

(41)

$$R_{1.1I} \rightarrow E_{3.1I}$$

$$R_{1.2I} \rightarrow E_{3.2I}$$

$$R_{2I}$$

In other words, the discovery of the cufflinks in the victims' mouths prompts both events to be told to the other investigator. Catchpool tells Poirot about the murders because Poirot tells Catchpool about a woman he is searching for. Once the cufflinks are mentioned by Catchpool, it is clear to Poirot that Jennie's meeting and the murders are somehow connected. The notation in (41) thus shows that wherever the murders are placed on the crime *fabula* timeline, Jennie's meeting must occur afterwards as closer to S, as she provides a clue to the murders.

Poirot's insistence of a connection between the events is illustrated by the following:

> (40a) "Oui," he said. "Three murders *have been committed* (PP-passive) that *share* (NPres) an extremely unusual feature: the monogrammed cufflink in the mouth." (Hannah 2014a:30)
> (40b) "Oui," confirma-t-il. "Les trois meurtres qui *ont été commis* (PC-passif) *ont* (PH) un point commun on ne peut plus insolite: le bouton de manchette enfoncé dans la bouche de chaque victime." (Hannah 2014b:39)

In (40), it is clear why the present perfect / *passé composé* have been used and not the simple past, even though the action in question was committed and finished entirely in the past. It is the resultative state of the murders that is of relevance in (40). The *passé composé* frames the murders as an event that has occurred and been completed in the past. The use of *passé composé* indicates that the murder being committed is not the main focus of this sentence; "the monogrammed cufflink in the mouth" / "le bouton de manchette enfoncé dans la bouche" is the main focus in this sentence. In terms of Figure 2 (overleaf), the cufflinks are placed on both *fabula* timelines. On the investigation *fabula* timeline, it is denoted as E_{2I}; on the crime *fabula* timeline, it is denoted as E_{2C}. These events are placed after the murders in both timelines, as the murders must occur first for the killer to insert the cufflinks, or for the investigation timeline, for the detective to discover them in the victims' mouths.

In Figure 2, the one *syuzhet* in the narrative is already starting to differentiate between the investigation and the crime. As the narrative progresses, certain clues are presented in order to be placed on the crime *fabula* timeline in Figure 2 below.
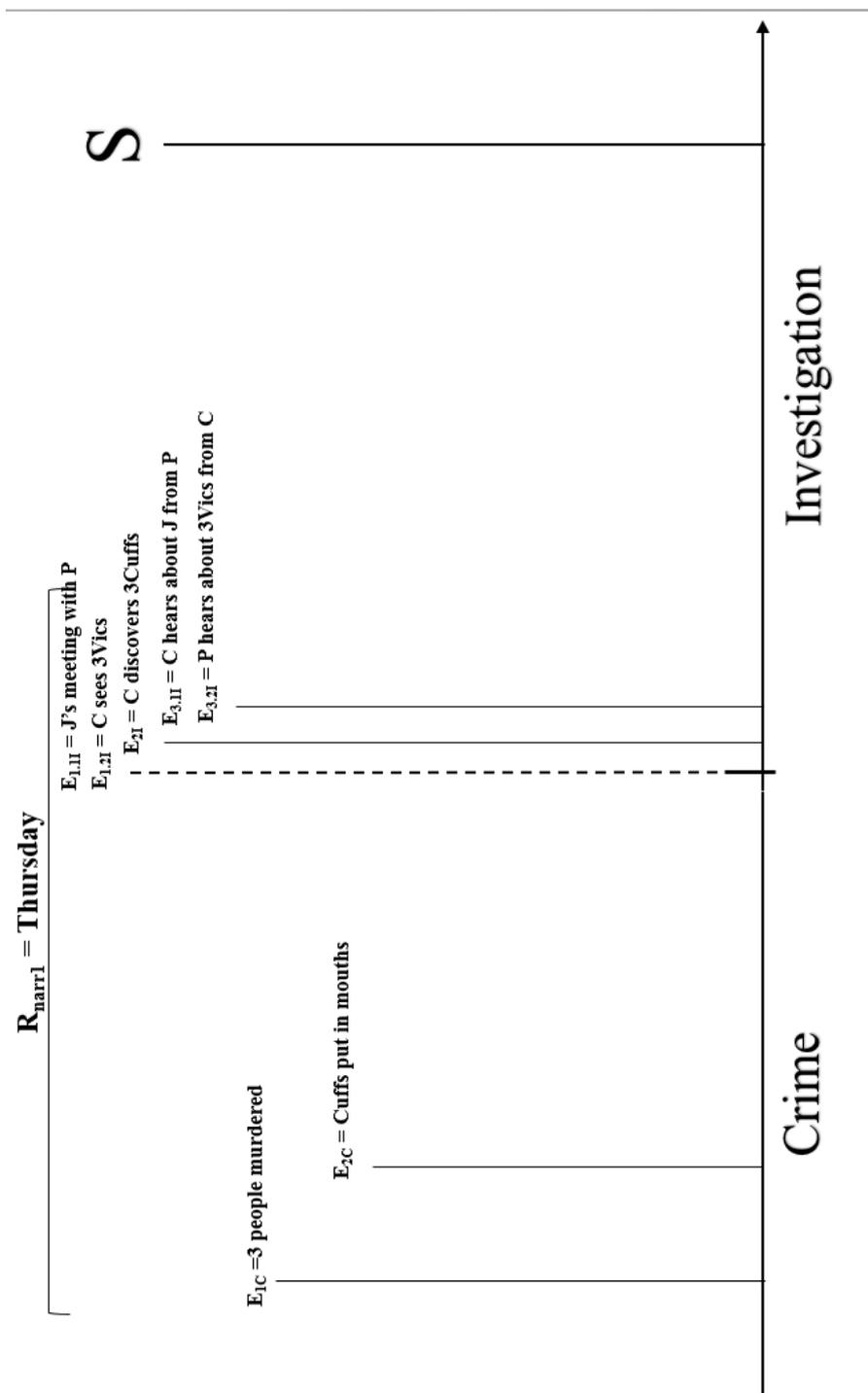
Figure 2: Graph of Poirot's meeting with Jennie

4.4.2.   The Bloxham Hotel

In chapter 3 of *TMM/MeM*, Poirot and Catchpool investigate the three murders at the Bloxham Hotel, and try to find out who the victims were and how they were murdered. Poirot is still pre-occupied with finding Jennie, as he does not know if she is still in danger or already murdered. It is clear from the specific past tense use that the investigators' visit to the Bloxham Hotel occurs the morning after the three murders took place, as illustrated in the extract in (42).

(42a) "Bad luck," I said, unsurprised by the news. I *hadn't* for a moment *imagined* (PluP) that Jennie *might revisit* (NPres) the coffee house, and I *felt* (SP) guilty. I *should* perhaps *have tried* (Modal + PP) harder to make Poirot see sense: she *had run* (PluP) away from him and from Pleasant's, having declared that confiding in him *had been* (PluP) a mistake. Why on earth *would* she *return* (NPres) <u>the following day</u> and *allow* (NPres) him to take charge of protecting her? (Hannah 2014a:34)

(42b) Je *n'avais pas imaginé* (PqP) un seul instant que Jennie *puisse* (Subj.) revenir au café, et je *m'en voulus* (PH) un peu de n'avoir pas cherché à en persuader mon ami, alors que cela *tombait* (Imp) sous le sens: elle *avait fui* (PqP) le Pleasant's et Poirot, *en regrettant* (Gér) après coup de s'être confiée à lui, estimant que *c'était* (Imp) une erreur. Dans ces conditions, pourquoi diable y *serait-t-elle retournée* (Cond.) <u>le lendemain</u> pour se mettre sous sa protection? (Hannah 2014b:43)

The underlined phrases in (42) provide the second reference to the timeframe in which the investigation occurs: Friday, thus R_{narr2}. For clarity: the word "timeframe" refers to the physical time elapse of the crime. The difficulty stems from the fact that Catchpool and Poirot are not sure whether Jennie is part of the three murders as an accomplice or as a potential victim. Her body has not yet been found with similar attributes as to the other victims, thus she is not a victim yet. Also, she might have been lying, which does not rule out the fact that she might be a suspect. According to Poirot's judgement of Jennie, it is more likely to the reader that Jennie is going to be, or has been, a victim. In (42a), the use of the pluperfect connects Jennie's meeting with Poirot ($E_{1.1I}$) in relation to the present moment in the narrative. In (42b), a larger

variety of past tenses are used, and all of these tenses are subjectively utilised by Catchpool to convey to the reader that this is narrator commentary and does not move the narrative forward.

As the commentary does not move the narrative forward, it is not added to either area on the graph. Caenepeel (1989:76) utilises the terms "horizontal" and "vertical" to differentiate between progression and description in a narrative. Horizontal development refers to actions which progress the narrative, an example of which would be the scene described in extract (37). Vertical description, which does not focus on "updat[ing] the narrative" in terms of plot development, provides information that is essential for the narrative in a number of ways; the extract in (42) is an example of vertical progression. Although extract (42) might seem irrelevant to the analysis because of its backgrounding nature (as discussed in section 2.2.3), it is important in terms of reference time assignation, in particular the assignation of R_{narr2}.

In the Bloxham Hotel, Catchpool and Poirot are guided by Luca Lazzari, the manager of the hotel. He is friendly and hyperbolises everything, whether through the use of extremes, like "always" and "never", the use of exclamation marks, and subjective statements about his staff. Lazzari claims that his staff is "the most dependable" ("le plus fiable"), "most impeccable persons working here" ("des employés irréprochables"), and Lazzari states that he "say[s] only yes to the best" ("[il] n'engage que des meilleurs") (Hannah 2014a:36; Hannah 2014b:45):

> (43a) It's funny how I *didn't* (SP) realize how well I *had come* (PluP) to know
> Poirot until that moment... If he *had written* (PluP) 'Suspect This Man
> of Murder' on a large sign and *hung* (SP) it around Mr John Goode's
> neck, he *could* not *have done* (Modal + PP) a better job of inciting Poirot
> to dislike the fellow. (Hannah 2014a:36).
>
> (43b) C'est drôle, à cet instant je *pris* (PS) conscience du fait que je
> *connaissais* (Imp) bien Poirot... *S'il avait écrit* (PqP) « SUSPECT » en
> grand sur une pancarte et *l'avait accrochée* (PqP) au cou du M. John
> Goode, il *n'aurait pas mieux réussi* (Cond.). (Hannah 2014b:45)

In the example above, it is clear that perspective plays an important part in narrative in general, as it is one of the only ways in which information is carried over in the absence of an omniscient narrator. Caenepeel (1989:5) states that the absence of an omniscient narrator restricts the authority of the known (or first-person) narrator. This means that the reader has difficulty

55

establishing which statements made by the narrator are objective (and true), and which are subjective (and possibly false).

Lazzari's attempt at ameliorating his staff's reputation for Poirot and Catchpool fail in all regards (which becomes E$_{4I}$). This biased approach to information is similar to what was seen in the extract in (28a) and (28b) in section 3.3 in which judgement from the investigators plays a large role in helping the reader see events in a certain manner. Perspectival importance stems from the notion that information obtained might omit or alter already present information, resulting in an inaccurate reconstruction of the crime *fabula* timeline.

The pluperfect / *plus-que-parfait*, as well as the modal auxiliary and present perfect / *conditionnel* in the extract in (43) provide a subjective commentary from Catchpool to serve as an alert for the reader to believe the opposite of what Lazzari tells them in the investigation. Moreover, the use of the particular past tense forms, which set the action, which are set in a timeframe before Lazzari's praising utterances, gives rise to the potential inaccuracy of all of Lazzari's information.

After the investigators establish a perspective on Lazzari and his staff members, Catchpool receives some information from the hotel staff relating to the victims and relays them to Poirot:

(44a) "The victims' names *are* (NPres) Mrs Harriet Sippel, Miss Ida Gransbury and Mr Richard Negus," I told Poirot. "All three *were* (SP) guests in the hotel and each one *was* (SP) the sole occupant of his or her room. ... All three victims *arrived* (SP) here at the hotel on Wednesday, the day before they *were murdered* (SP)."

"*Did* they *arrive* (SP) together?"

"No."

"Most definitely not," said Lazzari. "They *arrived* (SP) separately, one by one. They *checked* in (SP) one by one."

"And they *were murdered* (SP) one by one," said Poirot ... "You *are* (NPres) certain of this?" (Hannah 2014a:35-36)

(44b) "Les noms des victimes *sont* (PS) Mme Harriet Sippel, Mlle Ida Gransbury et M. Richard Negus," dis-je à Poirot. "Tous trois clients de

56

l'hôtel, et chacun seul occupant de sa chambre. Ils *sont arrivés* (PC) à

l'hôtel mercredi, <u>la veille du jour où ils *ont été tués*</u> (PC)."

"*Sont-ils arrivés* (PC) ensemble?"

"Non."

"Séparément," intervint Lazzari. "Ils *sont arrivés* (PC) séparément et *se*

sont inscrits (PC) chacun leur tour."

"Et ils *ont été tués* (PC) chacun leur tour," dit Poirot ... Vous *êtes* (PH)

bien certain?" (Hannah 2014b:44-45)

The tenses in (44) are chosen in conjunction with the main noun used in the respective sentences. The phrases "<u>are</u> victims" / "<u>sont</u> victimes", "<u>were</u> guests" and "<u>was</u> the sole occupant" in (44a) illustrate stative verb use (as discussed in section 2.3.1) which does not progress the narrative, but describes the situation. The state of the victims is portrayed through the use of either the narrative present or the simple past; in other words, the use of the tense is determined by the state in which the people are (alive or dead).

In (44b), the translator saw no need to use a past tense at all, but used the option of conveying the information in a noun phrase ("tous trois clients de l'hôtel, et chacun seul occupant de sa chambre"). In *TMM* and *MeM*, both are acceptable, as the first part of the sentence is the most important (i.e. "victims are" / "victimes sont") due to the fact that this part occurs with the names of the victims. In French, the noun phrase serves as backgrounding to the important part of the sentence. By this means, the simple past and noun phrase phrases are in fact semantically redundant, as the first assumption would be that they were, in fact, paying guests.

The underlined parts confirm the fact that the murders took place on the Thursday, as the bodies were found on the same day. This part, through its use of time determination words ("the day before" / "la veille") thus provides a reference to the third and final timeframe of the graph: Wednesday, the day the guests arrived (R_{narr3}). The guests' arrival, given the R_{narr3} timeframe, is therefore moved to the beginning of the crime *fabula* timeline, becoming the first event of the entire timeline. The repetition of "one by one" / "séparément" presents the fact that the victims do not have any prior connection with each other. This is illustrated on the graph as $E_{1.1C}$, $E_{1.2C}$ and $E_{1.3C}$ respectively. The murder itself is moved onwards to the right on the crime *fabula* timeline in relation to S as these new events are added to Figure 3.

Following the discovery of the victims' information, the two investigators turn to the situation of the victims' rooms. Here, as illustrated in the extract in (45), it is unclear to the investigators where the keys to the rooms might be:

(45a) "Each of the victims *was found* (SP - passive) inside his or her locked bedroom," I said, feeling rather self-conscious about the 'his or her' part. "The killer *locked* (SP) all three doors and *made off* (SP) with the keys—"

"Attendez," Poirot interrupted. "You mean that the keys *are missing* (NPres). You *cannot know* (NPres) that the murderer *took* (SP) them or *has* (NPres) them now."

I took a deep breath. "We *suspect* (NPres) that the killer *took* (SP) the keys away with him. *We've done* (PP) a thorough search, and they *are* (NPres) certainly not inside the rooms, nor anywhere else in the hotel."

"My excellent staff *have checked* (PP) and *confirmed* (SP) that this *is* (NPres) true," said Lazzari. (Hannah 2014a:37)

(45b) "Chacune des victimes *a été trouvée* (PC) dans sa chambre fermée à clef. En repartant, le tueur *a* donc *fermé* (PC) les trois portes à clef et *emporté* (PC) les clefs ..."

"Attendez," m'interrompit Poirot. "Vous *avez constaté* (PC) que les clefs *avaient disparu* (PqP). Vous ne *pouvez* (PH) en déduire que le meurtrier les *a emportées* (PC) ni qu'il les *détient* (PH) actuellement."

"Nous *soupçonnons* (PH) le tueur d'avoir emporté les clefs," rectifiai-je, après voir inspiré profondément. "Nous *avons effectué* (PC) une fouille complète et elles ne *se trouvent* (PH) ni dans les chambres, ni ailleurs dans l'hôtel."

"Mon personnel *a vérifié* (PC) et *l'a confirmé* (PC)," renchérit Lazzari. (Hannah 2014b:46)

In extract (45), Catchpool and Poirot speculate on where the keys are, as all the rooms were locked. Both of these facts are put on the investigation *fabula* timeline: the missing keys ($E_{5.1I}$), and the staff that searched the hotel ($E_{5.2I}$). In terms of the latter event, Poirot, and thus the reader, does not believe this to be true. In the first utterance by Catchpool, the passive voice is used to emphasise the most important part in the sentence. It is not necessary to know who

58

found the victims, but that the victims were found in the first place. Catchpool says "Each of the victims was found" / "Chacune des victimes a été trouvée" to focus attention to the victims' discovery. Moreover in this speaking part, he uses only the simple past / *passé composé*. Both tenses predominantly serve to state events as completed. The *passé composé* imitates real speech (as discussed in section 2.3.3); this tense is more likely to be used to state events that simply happened in the past. The simple past, in turn, is used to convey facts, although Poirot does not think the use of the simple past should be used here. The information that they have received is, at this point, speculation. They do not know if the murderer has the keys or not. Poirot's insistence on keeping the timeline chronological changes Catchpool's dialogue from the simple past to the narrative present. From a perspectival point of view, Catchpool's change in tense use limits his objectivity. Catchpool provides more information:

(46a) "According to the police doctor, all three *were murdered* (SP-passive) between four o'clock in the afternoon and half past eight in the evening. <u>Luckily, *we've managed* (PP) to narrow it down further: to between a quarter past seven and ten minutes past eight</u>."

"A stroke of luck indeed!" Lazzari agreed. "Each of the... deceased guests *was* last *seen alive* (SP-passive) at fifteen minutes after seven o'clock, by three unquestionably dependable representatives of this hotel—so we *know* (NPres) it must be true! I myself *found* (SP) the deceased persons... at between fifteen and twenty minutes after eight o'clock." (Hannah 2014a:38-39)

(46b) "D'après le médecin de la police, ils *ont été tués* (PC-passif) entre 16 heures et 20h30. <u>Par chance, nous *avons réussi* (PC) à réduire ce laps de temps: entre 19h15 et 20h10</u>," [dit Catchpool à Poirot].

"Un vrai coup de chance!" acquiesça Lazzari. "Chacun des... clients décédés *a été vu* (PC) encore en vie à 19h15, par trois membres du personnel, aussi cela ne peut être contesté! *C'est* (PH) moi qui *ai constaté* (PC) des meurtres ... entre quinze et vingt minutes après 20 heures." (Hannah 2014b:47)

Here, in the extract in (46), Catchpool and Poirot have the precise timeframe for the death of the three guests, which can thus be added with clarity on the timeline in the graph. The simple past is used to refer to the precise timeframe of 16:00-20:30 (E_{6I}), but the narrowing down of

the time is conveyed in the present perfect (see the underlined sentences). This means that the fact-checking ("we've managed to narrow it down" / "nous avons réussi à réduire ce laps de temps") has a resultative state in the present, because they believe it is no longer speculation, but fact (which becomes $E_{7.2I}$ in Figure 3). In (46b), both the vague timeframe of 16:00-20:30 ("ils ont été tués"), as well as the more precise one of 19:15-20:10 ("nous avons réussi à réduire") are presented in the *passé composé*. Here, the French translation makes no distinction between both timeframes of the murders and states them both as facts in the past.

The use of the simple past / *passé composé* in the passive voice (similar to the extract in (45)) gives emphasis to the contextual information at hand. First, the sentence where it states that "all three were murdered" / "ils ont été tués" provides an objective view on the victims without providing a *by*-phrase to complete the passive sentence structure, as the agent is not yet known. Second, the sentence containing the passive "was last seen alive" / "a été vu" refers to the actions of Lazzari's staff members and not that the victims themselves were seen (R_{4I}).

Extract (46) is another appropriate example of looking at a given situation with a biased point of view. In other words, Catchpool knows a piece of information that changes his view on the information he has received from Lazzari. The new information is seen in the extract in (47).

> (47a) "But they *must have been* (Modal + PP) dead by ten past eight," [Catchpool] told Poirot. "That was when the note announcing the murders *was found* (SP-passive) on the front desk." (Hannah 2014a:39)
>
> (47b) "Mais ils *devaient étre* (Imp) morts à 20h10," ajoutai-je [Catchpool] à l'intention de Poirot. *C'est* (PH) l'heure à laquelle le mot annonçant les trois meurtres *a été trouvé* (PC-passif) sur le bureau de la réception." (Hannah 2014b:48)

Catchpool's sentence mentioning the note found on the desk (which becomes $E_{7.1I}$) uses a modal auxiliary with the present perfect to refer back to the information he received in the extract in (46). The narrowing down of the murder timeframe, given as $E_{7.2I}$ on the investigation *fabula* timeline (as mentioned in the analysis of the extract in (46)) is based on the information contained in the extract in (47), thus $E_{7.2I} \rightarrow R_{7.1I}$. The inaccuracy of the timeframe and Catchpool's use of the modal auxiliary (which is subjective) points to the fact that: (i) either

Lazzari lied; or (ii) the murders took place much earlier than when the note was left. The note says, only for context purposes: "MAY THEY NEVER REST IN PEACE. 121. 238. 317." / "PUISSENT-ILS NE JAMAIS REPOSER EN PAIX. 121. 238. 317." (Hannah 2014a:50; Hannah 2014b:59, author's capitalisation). The three numbers refer to each victim's room numbers. In this regard, it is unclear whether Lazzari's account of his staff is true, or if the note's discovery must be taken into account too. Both cannot be correct, as that would mean that Lazzari would have seen the murderer. Catchpool and Poirot debate the likelihood of the three victims being seen at the same time in the extract in (48).

(48a) "Monsieur Lazzari, it *is* (NPres) surely not possible that each of the murder victims *was* last *seen alive* (SP-Passive) by a member of hotel staff at a quarter past seven precisely?" [Poirot said] ...

"It is very, very true. All three *ordered* (SP) dinner to be brought to their rooms at a quarter past the hour, and all three deliveries *were* (SP) exceptionally prompt. [Lazzari said]

Poirot *turned* (SP) to [Catchpool]. "This is another coincidence énorme," he said. "Harriet Sippel, Ida Gransbury and Richard Negus all *arrive* (NPres) at the hotel on the same day, the day before they *are murdered* (NPres-Passive). Then on the day of the murders they all *order* (NPres) dinner to be brought to their rooms at a quarter past seven exactly? It *does* not *seem* (NPres) very likely." (Hannah 2014a:39)

(48b) "Monsieur Lazzari, il *est* (PH) impossible que chacune des trois victimes *ait été vue* (Subj.) encore en vie par un membre du personnel à 19h15 précises."

"*C'est* (PH) la vérité vraie. Tous les trois *ont demandé* (PC) qu'on leur *serve* (PH) leur dîner dans leur chambre à l'heure dite, ce qui *fut fait* (PS-Passif) avec une ponctualité exemplaire..." [dit Lazzari]

Poirot *se tourna* (PS) vers [Catchpool].

"Encore une coïncidence, et celle-ci est énorme, dit-il. "Harriet Sippel, Ida Gransbury et Richard Negus *arrivent* (PH) tous à l'hôtel le même jour, la veille de leur assassinat. Puis le jour des meurtres, ils *demandent* (PH) chacun qu'on leur *apporte* (PH) leur dîner dans leur chambre à 19h15 précises ? *C'est* (PH) invraisemblable." (Hannah 2014b:48)

The narrative present used after the underlined sentence in the extract in (48a) gives to the reader a form of out-of-sequence commentary which changes the rhythm of the narrative. The use of the narrative present / *présent historique* is an appropriate way to show that the investigators are speculating upon the facts at hand, but at this point in the investigation, they are unable to successfully use a particular past tense to construct an accurate timeline.

The use the passive voice in the extract in (48) draws attention away from one phrase of the sentence in which it occurs to emphasise another phrase through the inversion of linguistic order. For example, the sentence declaring that each victim that "was last seen alive" is not of importance in Poirot's speaking turn; instead, he is speculating on the accuracy of Lazzari's information in relation to his hotel staff's impeccable timekeeping (E_{8I}). By using the passive, Poirot draws attention to this seemingly impossible phenomenon that three staff members are on time. In (48b), an entirely different grammatical tense is used to show disbelief (which is perspectively subjective) through the use of "impossible...que". After the use of this phrase, the *subjonctif* has to be used to show a subjective (and possibly untrue) opinion toward a given situation.

From a perspectival point of view, Lazzari boasts again about his staff. He refers to them as "unquestionably dependable representatives of this hotel". Again, Lazzari's attempt at flattery goes wrong, as the more hyperboles he uses to elevate his staff, the more Poirot and Catchpool mistrust what he says and states to be true (which becomes E_{10I}). Figure 3 (overleaf) illustrates the information that has been gathered so far in this investigation, as it is placed on the timeline.

62
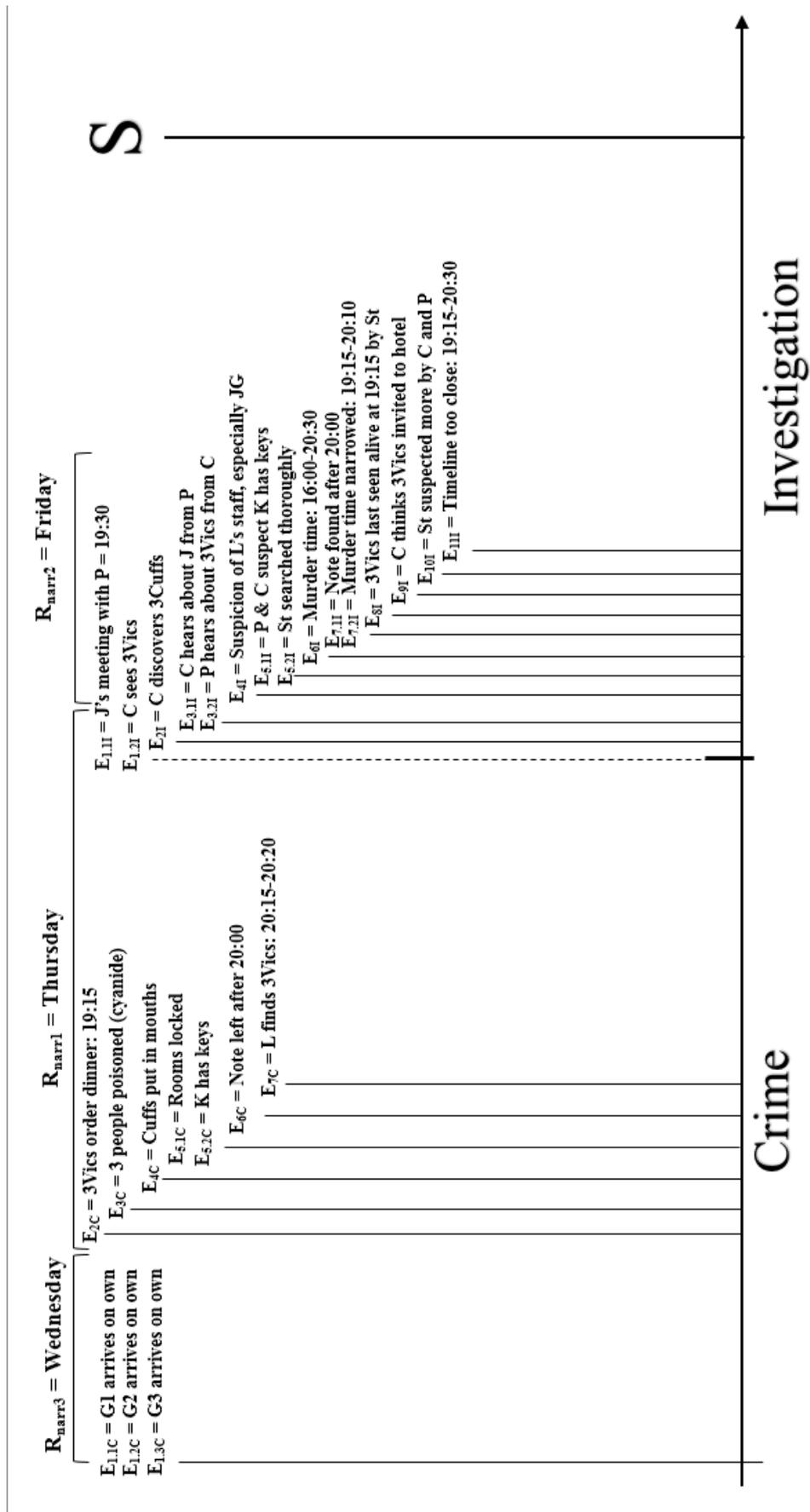
Figure 3: Graph of The Bloxham Hotel extracts

At this point in the narrative, it is still not clear whether the three victims know each other, but Poirot has a theory that he divulges to Catchpool in the following extract:

(49a) "They *were* not *selected* (SP-passive) at random from among the hotel's guests. The three *were killed* (SP) for one reason—a reason connected with the initials PIJ. It *is* (NPres) for the same reason that they all *came* (SP) to the hotel on the same day." [Poirot said]

"It's almost as if they *received* (SP) an invitation to present themselves for slaughter," [Catchpool] said in a cavalier fashion. "Invitation reads: 'Please arrive the day before, so that Thursday can be devoted entirely to your getting murdered'." (Hannah 2014a:41)

(49b) "Elles *n'ont pas été choisies* (PC-passif) au hasard parmi la clièntele. Elles *ont été tuées* (PC-passif) pour une seule et même raison, une raison en rapport avec les initiales PIJ. Et *c'est* (PH) pour cette raison qu'elles *sont* toutes trois *arrivés* (PC) à l'hôtel le même jour." [dit Poirot]

"*C'est* (PH) presque comme si elles *avaient reçu* (PqP) une invitation," [dit Catchpool] d'un ton badin. "«Veuillez arriver la veille afin que la journée de jeudi soit entièrement consacrée à votre assassinat.»" (Hannah 2014b:50)

On the timeline in the extract in (49) above, the simple past / *passé composé* serve to sequence the events as they happened, although still not in a chronological way. Both instances ("were not selected / n'ont pas été choisies" and "they all came to the hotel" / "elles sont toutes trois arrivées à l'hôtel") are linked by the speculation of the narrative present / *présent historique* ("It is for the same reason" / "c'est pour cette raison") occurring in the middle of them. To link the simple past and the *passé composé* to the narrative present / *présent historique*, the passive is used to mark it. This is to show, semantically and contextually, that their deaths were not merely done in vain, but that there might be a legitimate reason for them to be murdered specifically (E9I). Even though the cufflinks could be misconstrued (as a clue) as the murderer's signature, it seems it stands for a sign of ill rather than a signature.

While on the lookout for more clues as to who the murderer could be, and information that is given that cannot be trusted, Poirot tells Catchpool about his opinion of Lazzari, as illustrated in the extract in (50).

(50a) "Monsieur Lazzari's word *cannot be relied* (NPres) upon with regard to those working in the hotel. He *speaks* (NPres) of them as if they *are* (NPres) above suspicion, which they *cannot be* (NPres) if they *were* (SP) here yesterday when the murders *were committed* (SP-passive). The loyalty of Monsieur Lazzari *is* (NPres) commendable, but he *is* (NPres) a fool if he *believes* (NPres) that all the staff of the Bloxham Hotel *are* (NPres) des anges[13]." [Poirot said] (Hannah 2014a:40)

(50b) "Nous ne *devons* pas (PH) nous fier à ce que M. Lazzari *dit* (PH) de ses employés modèles. Il en *parle* (PH) comme s'ils *étaient* (Imp) au-dessus de tout soupçon, ce qui *est* (PH) impensable, puisqu'ils *étaient* (Imp) dans l'hôtel quand les meurtres y *ont été commis* (PC-passif). La loyauté de M. Lazzari *est* (PH) louable, mais *c'est* (PH) un idiot de croire que tous les membres du personnel de l'hôtel *sont* (PH) des anges." [dit Poirot] (Hannah 2014b:49)

Again, in this extract, the narrative present / *présent historique* is used to provide commentary to another character, and in turn, to the reader. Extract (50), in conjunction with extract (48), in which Lazzari states that his staff saw all three victims at the same time, is "very, very true" / "la vérité vraie". The use of repetition cements Poirot's opinion of Lazzari which causes the latter to say what he did in the extract in (50). This opinion of Lazzari and his staff makes Poirot even more suspicious about them and their seeming innocence (E$_{10I}$). In extract (50) above, it is very clear to see that the narrative present / *présent historique* is reserved for subjective opinions. Also, the simple past / *passé composé* provides already-established and confirmed clues, such as the murders, albeit these facts are mentioned in a supplementary manner to emphasise Poirot's opinion in the narrative present. The *imparfait* used in the extract in (50b) provides a more concrete aspectual function towards the description of Lazzari's staff to emphasise that the staff was present for the entirety of the victims' stay and their subsequent murders (i.e. "ils étaient dans l'hôtel quand...").

---

[13] Translation: "angels".

65

In Figure 3 above, the information has been placed in a chronological order. Contextually, it is not complete yet and many gaps still exist, the largest of which is the close proximity of the deaths and the discovery of the bodies. The credibility of this is emphasised by the fact that neither Lazzari nor any of his staff saw the murderer in: (i) one of the rooms after 20:00; nor (ii) at the reception, even though the victims were still seen alive at 19:15. The questions that still appear to be unanswered are:

(a)   (Context) Does the murderer have the keys?

(b)   (Timeline) How do each of the victims have their food promptly delivered at 19:15?

(c)   (Motive) Why did the guests all arrive on the Wednesday and die on Thursday?

4.4.3.   Investigation of the three rooms

After Catchpool and Poirot discover the identities of the victims, it is time to start investigating the rooms which might give them a clue as to who the culprit might be. Together, the two of them go to each room in turn, as illustrated in the extract in (51).

(51a) We *examined* (SP) the three rooms, which *were* (SP) identical in almost every respect. Each *contained* (SP) a bed, cupboards, a basin with an upturned glass sitting on one corner, several armchairs, a table, a desk, a tiled fireplace, a radiator, a larger table over by the window, a suitcase, clothes and personal effects, and a dead person. (Hannah 2014a:42)

(51b) Nous *inspectâmes* (PS) les trois chambres, qui *étaient* (Imp) identiques en tous points, ou presque. Chacune *contenait* (Imp) un lit, une penderie, un lavabo avec un verre retourné posé sur un coin, plusieurs fauteuils, une petite table, un bureau, un foyer de cheminée carrelé, un radiateur, une grande table près de la fenêtre, une valise, des vêtements, des effets personnels, et un mort. (Hannah 2014b:51)

The simple past / *passé simple* is used in the extract in (51) to state an action that simply happened; there is no subjectivity. The *imparfait* ("contenait") serves to show the reader that

the list following it is merely a description of a room and is therefore seen as simple backgrounding for the sake of the story, and not necessarily for plot advancement.

The lack of action or descriptionary verbs after the word "contained" / "contenait" in extract (51) makes another subtle suggestion. By removing almost all of the verbs, a reader tends to skim over the contents, much like Catchpool does while describing the scene. More often than not in detective fiction, a seemingly insignificant detail might have a specific function, whether to provide information or to lead the reader on a false *fabula*. As a result, this analysis will treat paragraphs such as these with high suspicion, as they may contain immensely important contextual information.

For clarity: a false *fabula* refers to a story that is created by the reader through the use of the information received by the narrative's *syuzhet*. A *syuzhet*, as Bordwell (2004:249) states it, can encourage the reader to make her own inferences, but can also "block or complicate the construction" of event sequences, and this is vital in detective fiction. The ultimate aim of a detective novel is to keep the real *fabula*, or the cause of the crime, from the reader until the end of the narrative.

Contextually, it is clear to see that Catchpool's eye for detail is not as strong as Poirot's. While Catchpool removes tense almost entirely from his description of the three rooms, Poirot undertakes to ask many unanswerable questions, on which they both start debating:

> (52a) "Aha," said Poirot. "So in [Ida's] room we *have* (NPres) two teacups and many plates. Miss Ida Gransbury *had* (SP) company for her evening meal, most certainly. Perhaps she *had* (SP) the murderer's company. But why *is* (NPres) the tray still here, when the trays *have been removed* (PP-passive) from the rooms of Harriet Sippel and Richard Negus?"
> "They *might* not *have ordered* (Modal + PP) food," I said. "Maybe they only *wanted* (SP) drinks—the tea and the sherry—and no trays *were left* (SP) in their rooms in the first place. Ida Gransbury also *brought* (SP) twice as many clothes with her as the other two... She *wanted* (SP) to be certain of looking her best, that's for sure." (Hannah 2014a:44)
> (52b) "Tiens, tiens," dit Poirot. "Dans cette chambre, nous *avons* (PH) deux tasses à thé, et plusieurs assiettes. Mlle Ida Gransbury *a eu* (PC) de la

compagnie à dîner, dirait-on. Peut-être celle du meurtrier. Mais pourquoi le plateau *est*-il (PH) encore là, alors que les plateaux *ont été débarrassés* (PC) des chambres de Harriet Sippel et de Richard Negus?"

"Peut-être *n'ont-ils pas commandé* (PC) de repas," suggérai-je. "Peut-être *désiraient*-ils (Imp) juste des boissons, le thé et le sherry, et qu'aucun plateau *n'a été laissé* (PC) dans leurs chambres, une fois les boissons servies. *Regardez* (Impératif), Ida Gransbury *a* aussi *apporté* (PC) deux fois plus d'affaires que les deux autres... Elle *voulait* (Imp) paraître à son avantage, visiblement." (Hannah 2014b:53)

Catchpool and Poirot use the simple past / *passé composé* in the extract in (52), but only to speculate, as if they were using the narrative present / *présent historique*. In these extracts, their speculation is evident by the combination of the simple past / *passé composé*, as well as the words "perhaps", "maybe", and "peut-être", which confirms Caenepeel's vertical description of an event.

One clue is given to Catchpool and Poirot, and they touch upon it by using the simple past / *passé composé* to state it as a fact: Ida Gransbury was not alone before she died, which becomes E_{12I} in Figure 4 below. The *imparfait* is used in the last sentence to provide backgrounding information: "Elle voulait paraître à son avantage", but instills upon Catchpool and Poirot that, with the subjective functionality of the *imparfait*, Ida knew the person who was in her room and possibly murdered her. This is further emphasised by the contextual information they gather: Ida Gransbury had brought an assortment of clothes with her, which means: (i) she wanted to look good for her guest, which implies she knew the killer; or (ii) she was planning on staying in the hotel for a longer period. Another R from the investigation area can be utilised to speculate on the fact that Ida was not alone: she might have been invited to the hotel by the murderer. If so, it would prove that E_{12I} is true because E_{9I} exists.

After careful investigation of all three rooms, Catchpool and Poirot establish that the murders were done intentionally. This notion works in conjunction with extract (52) above, as the circumstances under which the guests were murdered and their bodies laid out were similar (E_{14I}). In contrast, Poirot sees more detail than Catchpool, and Catchpool is left in the dark for most of Poirot's deductions which, in turn, keeps the reader in the dark as well. Subsequently,

the omission of important information that might lead to the apprehension of the culprit causes the reader to fail to see the original crime *fabula*, as the *syuzhet* of the narrative prevents it from happening, leading to more suspense.

The two investigators, on Poirot's insistence, go to Richard Negus's room for a second time. Once again, Catchpool is not privy to Poirot's thoughts as is the main characteristic of a first-person narration. In the following example, Poirot explains why they have returned to Richard Negus's room:

(53a) "Bon. This *is* (NPres) the one [room] that *is* (NarPres) most different from the others, n'est-ce pas? Ida Gransbury *has* (NPres) the tray and the additional teacup in her room, it is true, but here there *is* (NPres) the sherry glass instead of the teacup, and here we *have* (NPres) one window open to its full capacity, while in the other two rooms all the windows *are closed* (NarPres)..."

"This is how it *was* (SP) when Monsieur Lazzari *walked in* (SP) and *found* (SP) Negus dead," I said. "*Nothing's been altered* (PP) in any way." [Catchpool said]

Poirot walked over to the open window. "Here *is* (NPres) Monsieur Lazzari's wonderful view that he *offered* (SP) to show me—of the hotel's gardens. Both Harriet Sippel and Ida Gransbury *had* (SP) rooms on the other side of the hotel, with views of the 'splendid London.' Do you *see* (NPres) these trees, Catchpool?" (Hannah 2014a:45)

(53b) "Bon," commença-t-il, en se campant au milieu de la pièce. "*C'est* (PH) cette chambre qui *diffère* (PH) le plus des autres, n'est-ce pas ? Certes Ida Gransbury *a* (PH) un plateau et une tasse supplémentaire dans la sienne, mais ici, il y *a* (PH) le verre de sherry au lieu d'une tasse de thé, et une fenêtre ouverte en grand, tandis que dans les autres chambres, toutes les fenêtres *sont fermées* (PC)."

"La pièce *était* (Imp) ainsi quand M. Lazzari *est entré* (PC) et *a découvert* (PC) le corps, dis-je. Rien *n'a été changé* (PC-passif) depuis." [dit Catchpool]

Poirot *gagna* (PS) la fenêtre ouverte.

"Voici donc les magnifiques jardins de l'hôtel que M. Lazzari *voulait* (Imp) me montrer. Quant à Harriet Sippel et Ida Gransbury, leurs chambres *donnent* (PH) de l'autre côté, un point de vue absolument splendide sur Londres, dirait-il. Vous *voyez* (PH) ces arbres, Catchpool?" (Hannah 2014b:54-55)

Poirot lists the clues he sees in the present moment of the narrative, hence the use of the narrative present / *présent historique*. These are indexed for the reader as observation in real time (albeit the real time of the narrative). In the extract in (53b), Poirot also uses the phrase "tandis que" (while) which is one of many such phrases containing "que" that has no choice but to be followed with the indicative. This means that it confirms the statement he made in the *passé composé* as fact, similar to the use of the *présent historique*. The differences in Richard Negus's room (the window and trees outside) become $E_{13.1I}$ and the presence of the sherry glass becomes $E_{13.2I}$ in Figure 4 below on the investigation *fabula* timeline.

Reichenbach's positional use of tenses (discussed in section 2.1.2) is utilised to analyse the sentence in (54a), taken from the extract in (53), and is denoted on its timeline in (54b).

(54a)

This is how it was	when M. Lazzari walked in	and found Negus dead.
clause 1	clause 2	clause 3

(54b)

$$\text{clause 1} \quad E_1,R_1 \text{———— } S$$
$$\text{clause 2} \quad E_2,R_2 \text{—— } S$$
$$\text{clause 3} \quad \text{———}E_3,R_3\text{— } S$$

Reichenbach's positional principle has a significance in (54b), because it links to the following sentence in the narrative. Contextually, the following sentence, "Nothing's been altered in any way", uses a semantically-charged present perfect. The use of the present perfect in the absence of a time adverbial provides a parallel tense sequence to follow that of the aforementioned sentence in (54a). In other words, the present perfect semantically and contextually implies that

70

the room has not been changed since before Lazzari walked in (clause 1 in (54b)), and hasn't since, which is the main functionality of the present perfect: current relevance.

In the extract in (53b), the room being left as it was since a specific time is not as clear, due to the predominant use of the *passé composé* in "La pièce était ainsi quand M. Lazzari est entré et a découvert le corps". The *imparfait* aspectually serves the purpose of showing that the room was as it has been and has not changed. To emphasize the unchanged nature of the room, and to accommodate the translation, "Rien n'a été changé depuis" provides more information on Richard Negus's room. In contrast, the *passé composé* used in the latter sentence, when put contextually alongside the former, implies that nothing has been changed in general. This is due to the temporal ordering that the *passé composé* provides. Lazzari walked in ("est entré") and discovered the body ("a découvert le corps"), but "rien n'a été changé" in general does not refer to the former sentence. It is for that reason that the time determination word "depuis" (since) has to be inserted. Without "depuis", it is impossible to know what has not been changed, as the *passé composé* is semantically too vague in the latter sentence. Implicitly, the sentence, with "depuis", makes semantic sense, as it becomes: *Rien n'a été changé depuis la découverte du corps de Richard Negus*[14].

In the extract in (53), Poirot's sudden diversion from the clues at hand by the use of the simple past / *imparfait* among the narrative present / *présent historique*, and in both cases, the use of many adjectives, throws the reader off when Poirot starts using the narrative present / *présent historique* again to refer to the trees outside the hotel. It is thus not clear if Poirot is merely observing the trees outside, or if he thinks it might be a clue. In this sense, the functionality of the narrative present / *présent historique* is ambiguous. For the sake of consistency and due to the established notion that all information in a detective novel might be relevant (as discussed in the analysis of extract (51)), the open window in Richard Negus's room becomes $E_{5.3C}$ on the crime *fabula* timeline.

The following extract might be a clue as to why Poirot used the narrative present / *présent historique* for the last sentence "Do you see these trees, Catchpool?" ("Vous voyez ces arbres, Catchpool?"):

---

[14] Translation: "Nothing has been changed since the discovery of Richard Negus's body."

(55a) "Mon ami," said Poirot patiently. "Consider: these three people *did* not *drink* (SP) poison, fall out of their armchairs and quite naturally land flat on their backs with their arms at their sides and their feet pointing toward the door. It is impossible. Why *would* one not *stagger* (SP) across the room? Why *would* one not *fall* (SP) out of the chair on the other side? The killer, he *arranged* (SP) the bodies so that each one was in the same position, at an equal distance from the chair and from the little table. Eh bien, if he *cares* (NPres) so much to arrange his three murder scenes to look exactly the same, why *does* he not *wish* (NPres) to close the window that, yes, perhaps Mr. Richard Negus *has opened* (PP)—but why *does* the murderer not *close* (NPres) it in order to make it conform with the appearance of the windows in the other two rooms?" I had to think about this. Poirot *was* (SP) right: the bodies *had been laid* (PluP) out in this way deliberately. The killer *must have wanted* (Modal + PP) them all to look the same. (Hannah 2014a:47)

(55b) "Mon ami," reprit Poirot avec patience. "Réfléchissez: les trois victimes *n'ont pas bu* (PC) de poison pour ensuite tomber de leurs fauteuils et se retrouver tout naturellement allongés sur le dos, les bras le long du corps, les pieds pointés vers la porte. C'est impossible. L'un aurait pu s'effondrer au milieu de la pièce, l'autre tomber à la renverse et le troisième que sais-je encore? Non, le tueur *a disposé* (PC) les corps afin que chacun *soit* (Subj.) dans la même position, à égale distance du fauteuil et de la petite table. Eh bien, s'il *tient* (PH) tant à faire en sorte que ces trois scènes de meurtre *paraissent* (PH) rigoureusement identiques, pourquoi dans ce cas *n'a-t-il pas refermé* (PC) la fenêtre que M. Richard Negus *avait* (Imp) peut-être ouverte, je vous l'accorde? Pourquoi le meurtrier *ne l'a-t-il pas fermée* (PC), comme celles des deux autres chambres?

Cela me laissa perplexe. Poirot *avait* (Imp) raison: le meurtrier *tenait* (Imp) à ce que les corps *soient disposés* (Subj.) de cette façon, à l'identique. (Hannah 2014b:56-57)

In the first speaking part, Poirot mentions that the victims "did not drink poison" / "n'ont pas bu de poison". In the extract in (55a), the verbs in the sentence that follow this phrase are not

relevant, as they all fall under the timeline created by this phrase. In the extract in (55b), the verbs following this phrase do not have any tense denomination at all, being in infinitive form, which indicates that they, and those in the extract in (55a) as well, only serve to emphasize the timeframe of the original verb's tense. Poirot once again returns to speculation through his usage of the narrative present / *présent historique*. He provides a scenario in which he enacts, through speech, the killer's actions by using all the clues already gathered.

At this point in the narrative, one clue is still unclear to the investigators. From a perspectival point of view of the crime scene, Catchpool explains to Poirot that the killer's frame of reference might have simply been the specific location of the bodies, not necessarily the entire room. Poirot contests this and claims that the entire location (the room) would be relevant if all other cares have been taken to ensure that all three rooms were to look the same. This provides the reader with a big question: why is the window open in Richard Negus's room, but not the ladies?

From a linguistic perspective, this notion of the frame of reference is very important. Generally, it is vital to the reader to use the information from the narrative in the order in which it was received. The Reichenbachian timeline of tenses provide a platform on which to reconstruct the crime *fabula* by using its Rs, but this idea cannot work in isolation. The reader needs contextual information in order to have a semantically coherent whole of a given situation. In the extract in (56), the contextual information and the timeline of tenses platform are at odds.

> (56a) "And to each room he *is admitted* (NPres + past participle[15]) without question? In each room, he *finds* (NPres) his victim waiting with a most convenient drink for him to drop his poison into—drinks that *were delivered* (SP-passive) by hotel staff at precisely a quarter past seven? ... All these visits to rooms, all these murders and putting of cufflinks in mouths and very formal arranging of bodies in straight lines ... he *is* (NPres) able to do [that] between a quarter past seven and ten past eight? This *seems* (NPres) most unlikely, my friend." [Poirot said] (Hannah 2014a:49)

---

[15] The simple present.

(56b) "Et il *pénètre* (PH) dans chacune des chambres sans difficulté? Dans chacune, sa victime *l'attend* (PH), son verre ou sa tasse toute prête à recevoir les gouttes de poison qu'il va y verser, une consommation qui *fut servie* (PS-passif) par le personnel de l'hôtel à 19h15 précises? ... Rendre visite aux trois victimes dans chacune des trois chambres, les tuer, mettre les boutons de manchette dans leurs bouches et disposer soigneusement les corps, il *accomplit* (PH) tout cela entre 19h15 et 20h10? Cela *n'est* (PH) guère vraisemblable, mon ami." [dit Poirot] (Hannah 2014b:58)

In the extract in (56) above, Poirot uses the narrative present / *présent historique* to denote his mistrust in Lazzari's and his staff's statements of events. In this example, Poirot once again recreates the scene of the crime as he thought it might have happened and goes through the unlikelihood of certain parts of the information they have received. The inaccuracy of the timeframe of the murders become E_{11I} in Figure 4 below.

As already established, Lazzari's praise of his staff make the obtained information from him seem untrue, thus manipulating the reader into thinking that the *fabula* they have been introduced to is erroneous. Caenepeel's (1989:5) vision on narrative perspective thus plays a large role in the phenomenon of trustworthiness.

In the extract in (56), Poirot deems the timeline of events to be incorrect. The notion that the killer "was admitted without question" / "pénètre ... sans difficulté" seems to bother Poirot. The sentence which has the only past tense, in the passive voice, states that the drinks that possibly killed the three guests "were delivered" / "fut servie" to them by a member of staff at the same moment. This part of the sentence directs more attention to the staff than the delivery itself. If the timeline were in fact false and Lazzari and his staff had been lying, it would imply that it was a member of staff that might be the killer, as staff are allowed into rooms without difficulty. At this point in the narrative, there are too many clues that are still locked for Catchpool and Poirot and that is why the staff are thus their main suspects. The clues that have already been gathered are placed on the respective timelines in Figure 4 (overleaf).

The extracts in this subsection consist mostly of the narrative present / *présent historique* in relation to the contextual functionality of observation. Fleischman's (1990:34) notion of the

neutrality of the narrative present / *présent historique* puts the clues in a state of isolation in terms of time allocation (as discussed in section 2.2.2). These clues cannot be linked to a specific time, because it is not yet clear where they have to be placed on the crime *fabula* timeline. A good example of this notion of tense neutrality is Poirot's description of Richard Negus's room. He lists the clues he sees which requires contextual information to be proven relevant to the murders, which can all be seen in Figure 4 (overleaf).

R_{narr3} = Wednesday

$E_{1.1C}$ = G1 arrives on own
$E_{1.2C}$ = G2 arrives on own
$E_{1.3C}$ = G3 arrives on own

R_{narr1} = Thursday

E_{2C} = 3Vics order dinner: 19:15
$E_{3.1C}$ = IG not alone before death
$E_{3.2C}$ = 3 people poisoned; arranged
E_{4C} = Cuffs put in mouths
$E_{5.1C}$ = Rooms locked
$E_{5.2C}$ = K has keys
$E_{5.3C}$ = RN's W open, others not
E_{6C} = Note left after 20:00
E_{7C} = L finds 3Vics: 20:15–20:20

R_{narr2} = Friday

$E_{1.1I}$ = J's meeting with P = 19:30
$E_{1.2I}$ = C sees 3Vics
E_{2I} = C discovers 3Cuffs
$E_{3.1I}$ = C hears about J from P
$E_{3.2I}$ = P hears about 3Vics from C
E_{4I} = Suspicion of L's staff, especially JG
$E_{5.1I}$ = P & C suspect K has keys
$E_{5.2I}$ = St searched thoroughly
E_{6I} = Murder time: 16:00–20:30
$E_{7.1I}$ = Note found after 20:00
$E_{7.2I}$ = Murder time narrowed: 19:15–20:10
E_{8I} = 3Vics last seen alive at 19:15 by St
E_{9I} = C thinks 3Vics invited to hotel
E_{10I} = St suspected more by C and P
E_{11I} = Timeline too close: 19:15–20:30
E_{12I} = IG not alone before death; more clothes
$E_{13.1I}$ = Rooms iden, W open in RN room, Ts outside
$E_{13.2I}$ = RN room has sherry glass
E_{14I} = 3Vics arranged; deliberate

S

Crime   **Investigation**

Figure 4: Graph of the investigation of the three rooms

76

4.4.4. Poirot's re-investigation of the rooms

In chapter 4 of *TMM/MeM*, while having so many questions unanswered, Catchpool and Poirot split up to gather more evidence quicker. Poirot claims that there is still something in Richard Negus's room that bothers him. He is confused by the window being open ($E_{13.1}$) and ponders if the killer might not have used it to escape the hotel after he had committed the murders. Moreover, Poirot wonders why the killer would escape in such a way "if [afterwards] he strolled up to the front desk to leave his note announcing his three murders, he risked being seen. More than seen—he risked being caught in the act of leaving incriminating evidence" ("[après avoir échappé] il s'est approché du comptoir de la réception pour laisser un mot annonçant ses trois meurtres, le risque était bien plus grand, car il pouvait non seulement être vu, mais pris sur le fait, alors qu'il déposait un indice fort compromettant") (Hannah 2014a:53; Hannah 2014b:63). He closes the window and still feels that something is amiss in the room. It is here where Poirot's famous aversion to untidy spaces takes prominence. By broadening his frame of reference, he observes that one of the tiles on the fireplace is askew:

> (57a) His only thought as he *bent* (SP) to touch the tile was that he might straighten it [but w]hen Poirot *touched* (SP) it, the tile *fell* (SP) clean out, and something else *fell* (SP) with it: a key with a number on it: 238. "Sacre tonnerre," Poirot whispered. "So the thorough search *was* (SP) not so thorough after all." (Hannah 2014a:54)
>
> (57b) Il *s'apprêtait* (Imp) à renfoncer le carreau au niveau ... mais dès qu'il le *toucha* (PS), le carreau *tomba* (PS), et un autre objet avec lui: une clef portant le numéro 238. «Sacre bleu!» murmura Poirot *en se félicitant* (Gér) de sa maniaquerie. (Hannah 2014b:64)

The three instances of the simple past, and two instances of the *passé simple* in the extract in (57) provide a succession of events that unlock a clue for Poirot. He has found the key to Richard Negus's room inside the room itself (which becomes E_{15I}). Through Poirot's attention to the smallest of details, he has located a piece of evidence that might change the solving of the crime. Extract (57) is thus an E that serves as the R for the following conversation (as discussed in section 3.3) between Catchpool and Poirot:

77

(58a) "Do you see what this means, mon ami? <u>The open window *was not opened* (SP-passive) by Richard Negus, it *was opened* (SP-passive) after his death!</u> Having locked the door of Room 238 from the inside, the murderer *needed* (SP) to escape. He *did* (SP) so by using the tree outside Mr Negus's window, after he *had hidden* (PluP) the key behind a tile in the fireplace that *had come* (PluP) loose." [Poirot said to Catchpool] (Hannah 2014a:55)

(58b) "Comprenez-vous ce que cela signifie, mon ami? ... <u>La fenêtre *a été ouverte* (PC-passif) non par Richard Negus, mais après sa mort, par l'assassin lui-même!</u> Un fois qu'il *a verrouillé* (PC) la porte de la 238 de l'intérieur, il *a dû* (PC) trouver comment s'échapper. Il *s'est servi* (PC) des branches de l'arbre qui *se trouve* (PH) devant la fenêtre, après avoir caché la clef sous un carreau du foyer qui *s'était* un peu *descellé* (PqP)." [dit Poirot à Catchpool] (Hannah 2014b:64-65)

The use of the simple past in the passive voice and the *passé composé* in the underlined sentences in the extract in (58) serves to emphasise who had opened the window. The (marked or unusual) use of the tenses in the passive voice in the underlined sentence illustrates Catchpool and Poirot speculating why the window would stay open if it meant making the three rooms dissimilar. The instances of the simple past / *passé composé* after the underlined sentence, with the aid of time determination word "after" / "après" help in establishing the chronology of events, of which they are more certain at this instance.

The time determination words move the events and their reference points around to provide a coherent layout of events, alluding to Reichenbach's positional principle (as discussed in section 2.1.2), as well as temporal ordering (discussed in section 2.3.1). In other words, the positional principle allows the S to stay fixed in the extract in (58) to allow the smaller events within extract (58) to become chronological. Temporal ordering works in conjunction with the positional principle to facilitate the chronology among the same past tenses.

In the extract in (58b), the events follow a similar translated pattern as in the extract in (58a), but provide the reader with more past tenses to explain which phrase is a reconstruction supplement of the crime, and which phrases only supply relevant information. For example, the mention of trees in extract (58b) is formulated in the *présent historique*, as the trees were

always there, are there now, and shall forever be. This is known as an enduring truth that the *présent historique* seeks to point out (as discussed in section 2.2.2). The trees cannot be referred to in the *passé composé*, as that would mean that the trees were there in the past but are no longer there. The same would happen if the description were presented in the *imparfait*.

Figure 5 (overleaf) illustrates the events which are relevant in this section. Some new information is added, and confirms and disproves already gathered information.
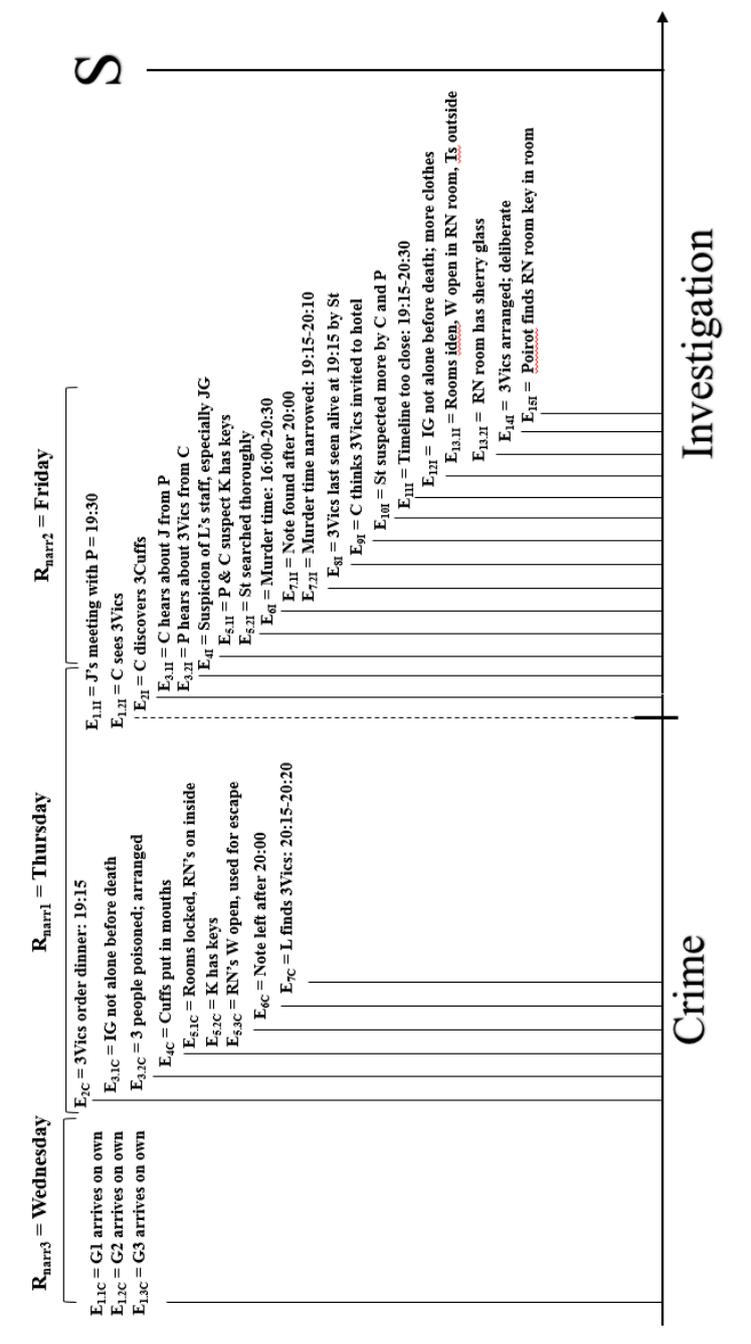
Figure 5: Graph of Poirot's re-investigation of the rooms

79

In this sub-section, it has been seen how Poirot's aversion to untidiness results in finding a clue that others have overlooked. This clue is the discovery of Richard Negus's room key behind a tile on the fireplace which becomes E_{15I} on the investigation *fabula* timeline in Figure 5 and links with other events in the investigation. First, the discovery of the key in the room proves Poirot's sentiment of $E_{5.2I}$ (that the rooms were thoroughly searched by the staff members for the keys). Poirot uses $E_{5.2I}$ as his R to refer to the error in thoroughness of the staff which, in turn, emphasises his sentiment in E_{10I}.

Secondly, some clues can now be modified in the crime *fabula* timeline, such as $E_{5.1C}$ and $E_{5.3C}$ respectively. In $E_{5.1C}$'s case, it no longer only refers to the fact that the rooms are locked, but that Richard Negus's key was found inside his room, implying that the killer murdered him last. In $E_{5.3C}$'s case, it further proves $E_{5.1C}$'s case, because it would mean that the killer climbed out of the window to escape after having murdered all three guests. In relation to $E_{5.3C}$, it thus provides a reason for $E_{13.1I}$'s existence in the narrative.

In contrast, the existence of $E_{5.3C}$ does not provide an explanation for the three victims being dead in their respective rooms at the time of their discovery, when $E_{8I} \rightarrow E_{2C}$ has occurred with multiple witnesses. The difficulty thus also lies between E_{2C} and E_{7C}, as the different locations of the murders, as well as the lack of physical trauma on the victims disproves $E_{7.2I}$.

4.4.5.   Asking the hotel staff

In chapter 4 of *TMM/MeM*, while Poirot uncovers the key from the fireplace tile, Catchpool does a preliminary investigation by questioning some of the hotel staff members. Catchpool provides the following information to Poirot:

> (59a) "Listen, *I've been talking* (progressive PP) to John Goode, the clerk–"
> [Catchpool said]
> "The most dependable clerk," Poirot amended with a twinkle in his eye.
> "Yes, well . . . dependable or not, *he's* certainly *come* (PP) up trumps
> for us on the information front. You *were* (SP) right: the three victims
> *are* (NPres) connected. *I've seen* (PP) their addresses. Harriet Sippel

and Ida Gransbury both *lived* (SP) in a place called Great Holling, in the Culver Valley."

"Bon. And Richard Negus?"

"No, he *lives* (NPres) in Devon—place called Beaworthy. But *he's* (NPres) connected too. He *booked* (SP) all three hotel rooms—Ida's, Harriet's and his own—and he *paid* (SP) for them ahead of time. ... The main puzzle being: why, if they *were* (SP) coming from the same village on the same day, *did* Harriet Sippel and Ida Gransbury not *travel* (SP) together? Why *did* they not *arrive* (SP) together? I *went* (SP) over it several times with John Goode and he *is* (NPres) adamant: Harriet *arrived* (SP) two hours before Ida on Wednesday—two full hours. ... [Richard Negus] *turned up* (SP) an hour before Harriet Sippel. He *was* (SP) the first of the three to arrive, but it *wasn't* (SP) John Goode who dealt with him. It *was* (SP) a junior clerk, a Mr. Thomas Brignell." [Catchpool said] (Hannah 2014a:55-56)

(59b) "Écoutez, *j'ai parlé* (PC) avec John Goode…"

"Le réceptionniste modèle," ajouta Poirot avec un clin d'oeil.

"Eh bien, il *s'est montré* (PC) très coopératif et *m'a fourni* (PC) de précieuses informations. Vous *aviez* raison (Imp): les trois victimes *sont liées* (PH) entre elles. *J'ai vu* (PC) leurs adresses. Harriet Sippel et Ida Gransbury *habitent* (PH) toutes les deux un village du nom de Great Holling, dans la Culver Valley."

"Bon. Et Richard Negus?"

"Lui *vit* (PH) dans le Devon, un patelin nommé Beaworthy. Mais il *est* aussi *lié* (PH) aux deux autres. C'est lui qui *a réservé* (PC) les trois chambres d'hôtel, et il les *a réglées* (PC) d'avance. ... Pourquoi, puisqu'elles *venaient* (Imp) du même village le même jour, Harriet Sippel et Ida Gransbury n'*ont*-elles pas *voyagé* (PC) ensemble pour arriver en même temps à l'hôtel ? Je *suis revenu* (PC) plusieurs fois là-dessus avec John Goode et il *est* (PH) formel: le mercredi, Harriet *est arrivée* (PC) deux bonnes heures avant Ida. ... [Richard Negus] *est arrivé* (PC) une heure avant Harriet Sippel. *C'était* (Imp) le premier des trois. Ce n'est pas John Goode qui *s'est occupé* (PC) de lui, mais un

81

assistant de la réception, un certain Thomas Brignell." [dit Catchpool]

(Hannah 2014b:65-66)

The simple past and *passé composé* evident in the extract in (59) provide a timeline of events that John Goode has conveyed to Catchpool. Time determination words ("before" / "avant") are used in conjunction with the simple past / *passé composé* to show that the arrival of all three guests are linked. Also, the use of the *imparfait* when talking about the fact that Richard Negus arrived before the women links to the *passé composé* used in the previous sentences. Let's use x as an arbitrary time to illustrate…:

(60)

sentence 1:	*Harriet arrived two hours <u>before</u> Ida*	$(x+1) +2$
sentence 2:	[Richard Negus] *turned up an hour before Harriet Sippel.*	$x+1$
sentence 3:	*He was the first of the three* [victims] *to arrive*	x

The sentences in (60) show, through the use of time determination words that influence R, that Richard Negus arrived first. These arrival times can thus be added to the graph (Figure 6), replacing G1 ($E_{1.1C}$), G2 ($E_{1.2C}$), and G3 ($E_{1.3C}$) with the names of the victims. Catchpool also provides another difference between the ladies' arrivals and Richard Negus's: he was helped by Thomas Brignell, while John Goode helped the ladies. The difference in hotel clerks sets Richard Negus's situation apart from the ladies' even more, therefore the hotel clerks are added as sub-events to each victims' arrival (illustrated as $E_{1.1.1C}$, $E_{1.2.1C}$, and $E_{1.3.1C}$ respectively). Richard Negus was also the one who arranged the rooms in the first place (which becomes E_{16I}). Another question that Catchpool and Poirot ponder on is the different times the ladies arrived at the hotel if they were in fact from the same village. This clue prompts two possibilities: (i) the ladies did not know each other that well; or (ii) the ladies did not know the other was going to a hotel in London. Notion (ii) corroborates Catchpool's suggestion of E_{9I} that the victims were invited to the hotel by the killer.

Poirot instructs Lazzari that he would like to speak with all the members of staff that were in the hotel at the time of the murders. It is still clear at this point that Poirot does not trust the staff's information at all, even though John Goode's statement does lessen this resolve. Before this happens, Poirot decides to take a bus ride with Catchpool to clear his head. Catchpool notices that Poirot is, in fact, on the lookout for Jennie, as he had not seen her since the night

of the murders. As Poirot keeps searching for her among the people getting on and off the bus, Catchpool amuses himself by looking at a clown, a tramp eating food out of a suitcase and a poodle that looks like a famous person (which becomes E_{17I}). Poirot retorts when Catchpool tries to get him to join in the observation, that Catchpool "always ... look[s] away, seeking the diversion" / "[cherche] toujours la diversion" (Hannah 2014a:64; Hannah 2014b:74).

In this part of the narrative, it is easy to see that the bus ride event is of value to Catchpool but not to Poirot, leaving the reader confused as to the significance of adding the bus ride to the narrative in the first place. Walsh (2001:599, as discussed in section 2.3.2) states that sorting through relevant and irrelevant consequences in a given sequence of events is important for plot development. Caenepeel's (1989:76) classification of the bus ride event is vertical description (as discussed in section 4.4.2) which does not progress the narrative, in contrast to Walsh's view. With both views in mind, it is thus unclear if the bus ride's event forms part of the narrative, the crime, or if it is placed in the narrative to allude to a false *fabula*.

After the seemingly uneventful bus ride, the staff members are ready to be questioned *en masse*. Before they are questioned, however, Lazzari comes to Catchpool and Poirot with some news:

(61a)   [Lazzari said] "I *have hurried* (PP) to assist you in your important work, and, in doing so, I *have put* (PP) forward a falsehood! ... I *heard* (SP) many accounts, and in my first attempt to collate them was not successful. ... I *told* (SP) you that the three deceased guests *asked* (SP) to have dinner served in their rooms at a quarter past seven yesterday evening—each separately. ... This *is* (NPres) not true! The three *were* (SP) together! They *dined* (SP) as a group! All in one room, Ida Gransbury's room, number 317. One waiter, not three, *saw* (SP) them alive and well at a quarter past seven." ...

"And who *was* (SP) this one waiter?" ...

"Rafal Bobak, sir." ...

[Rafal said] "[Richard Negus] *asked* (SP) for sandwiches ... and an assortment of cakes. And scones, sir, with jam and cream."

"And beverages?" Poirot asked.

"Tea, sir. For all three of them."

"D'accord. And the sherry for Richard Negus?"

83

Rafal Bobak shook his head. "No, sir. No sherry. Mr Negus *didn't ask* (SP) me for a sherry." (Hannah 2014a:68-69)

(61b) [Lazzari dit] "Dans ma hâte de cous aider dans votre inquête, *j'ai commis* (PC) la plus grossière des erreurs! Cela vient du fait que *j'ai voulu* (PC) rassembler trop vite les multiples informations récoltées auprès de mon personnel, et que je *me suis fourvoyé* (PC)! ... Je vous *ai dit* (PC) que les trois clients décédés *avaient demandé* (PqP) qu'on leur serve leur dîner dans leur chambre à 19h15 hier soir, chacun séparément ... Ce *n'est* (PH) pas vrai! Ils *étaient* (Imp) ensemble! Ils *ont dîné* (PC) tous les trois dans la chambre d'Ida Gransbury, la 317. Et c'est un seul serveur, et non pas trois, qui les *a vus* (PC) bien vivant à 19h15." ...

"Et qui *était* (Imp) le serveur?" ...

"Rafal Bobak, monsieur." ...

[Rafal Bobak dit] "[Richard Negus] *a commandé* (PC) des sandwiches ... ainsi qu'un assortiment de gâteaux. Et des scones, monsieur, avec de la crème et de la confiture."

"Et comme boissons?" demanda Poirot.

"Du thé, monsieur. Pour eux trois."

"Et du sherry pour Richard Negus?"

"Non, monsieur. Pas de sherry. M. Negus *n'en a pas commandé* (PC)." (Hannah 2014b:77-79)

At this point in the narrative, Poirot starts to believe the staff more, and this is illustrated through the direct questions he asks. Rafal Bobak in turn also answers the questions as directly as possible, even to the point of omitting verbs completely in order to be as concise and unambiguous as possible. When Rafal Bobak does use any verbs, the tenses are in simple past and the *passé composé*. The functionality of these two tenses serves as a neutral form of objectivity in dialogue (as discussed in section 2.3.1 and 2.3.3).

The *passé composé* is generally classified as a subjective tense, but in the extract in (61b) it is used merely to denote an event that has happened in the past and nothing more, alluding to the objective functionality of the *passé composé* in (written) speech. This is due to the fact that Rafal Bobak does not have the information that Catchpool and Poirot have accumulated. Rafal

Bobak's account of events of Thursday is therefore isolated (E_{18I}). E_{18I}'s R refers to the night in question (Thursday = R_{narr1}), but does not serve to move the narrative forward. Instead, the omission of tenses gives unto the reader the notion that E_{18I} only provides information to the investigators, because it is relevant to them and no one else.

When Poirot and Catchpool address all the staff members in one sitting, Poirot asks them if any of the staff took "a sherry to Ricard Negus's room? Either yesterday or Wednesday, the day before" / "un sherry à celle de Richard Negus? Que ce soit hier jeudi, ou mercredi" and all of them deny having done that (Hannah 2014a:69; Hannah 2014b:80). This is a similar case to the extract in (61) above. The staff members are not fully informed of the situation and thus see this question as irrelevant. After receiving the denial, Poirot rephrases his question to eliminate the particularity of the question. It seems that by focusing on the fact that the sherry had been brought up to the room is too specific. By making the question more vague (as shown in underlining), he asks: "To be absolutely clear: not one of you gave a glass of sherry to Mr Richard Negus, either in his room or anywhere else in the hotel?" / "Tirons cela au clair: aucun de vous n'a servi de verre de sherry à M. Richard Negus dans sa chambre, ni ailleurs dans l'hôtel?" (Hannah 2014a:69; Hannah 2014b:80).

By rephrasing the question, Mr Thomas Brignell stands up and gives his statement. He is described as being "a black-haired, pale-faced young man" who seemed "eager to say something were it not for the terror-frozen expression on his face" / "un jeune homme brun ... [Catchpool remarqua] alors sa pâleur. Il avait l'air térrifié" (Hannah 2014a:72; Hannah 2014b:83). This description of Thomas Brignell by Catchpool already puts the former's statement at odds with the information he gives. Thomas Brignell gives the following statement, albeit in a manner consistent with someone who is reluctant to say so:

> (62a) "When I *met* (SP) Mr Negus last night, he *was concerned* (SP) for the two ladies as only a good friend would be," Thomas Brignell whispered at us.
> "You *met* (SP) him?" [Catchpool] said. "When? Where?"
> "Half past seven, sir." He *pointed* (SP) towards the dining room's double doors. I *noticed* (SP) that his arm was shaking. "Right outside here. I *walked out* (SP) and *saw* (SP) him going towards the lift. He

saw (SP) me and stopped, called me over. I *assumed* (SP) he *was making* (PastProg) his way back to his room.”

“What *did* he *say* (SP) to you?” Poirot asked.

“He... he *asked* (SP) me to make sure that the meal was charged to him and not to either of the ladies. He *could* (SP) afford it, he said, but Mrs Sippel and Miss Gransbury could not.” (Hannah 2014a:72-73)

(62b) “Quand *j'ai rencontré* (PC) M. Negus hier soir, *j'ai constaté* (PC) qu'il *était* (Imp) très attentioné envers ces deux dames, comme seul un ami peut l'être,” nous murmura Thomas Brignell.

“Vous *l'avez rencontré* (PC)?” [dit Catchpool]. “Où? Quand?”

“À 19h30, monsieur,” répondit-il en désignant la porte à deux battants de la salle à manger, d'un bras tramblant. “Juste là devant. Je *passais* (Imp), tandis que lui *s'approchait* (Imp) de l'ascenseur. Il *m'a vu* (PC), *s'est arrêté* (PC), *m'a appelé* (PC). *J'ai supposé* (PC) qu'il *était* (Imp) sur le point de regagner sa chambre.”

“Que vous *a-t-il dit* (PC)?” demanda Poirot.

“Il... il *m'a demandé* (PC) de faire en sorte que ce soit lui qui règle la note de la collation, et non ces dames. Il *pouvait* (Imp) se le permettre, alors que Mme Sippel et Mlle Gransbury *n'avaient pas* (Imp) de gros moyens, [Richard Negus] m'a-t-il expliqué.”(Hannah 2014b:83-84)

Contextually, when Catchpool asks where and when Thomas Brignell had met Richard Negus, Catchpool uses the information given in the extract in (59) as his R. This is because Catchpool had already heard that Thomas Brignell helped Richard Negus to sign into the hotel, whereas John Goode assisted Ida Gransbury and Harriet Sippel. However, when Thomas Brignell replies that he had met Richard Negus at 19:30 at the dining room, the R for that event becomes isolated. It no longer refers to the R of extract (59); the 19:30 meeting is inserted into the narrative as an entirely new event (E_{19I}). Catchpool's routine question to Thomas Brignell thus provides a new clue as to the mysterious whereabouts of Richard Negus after dinner.

In the underlined sentences in the extract in (62), Thomas Brignell makes use of a time determination word “when” / “quand”. The timeline in this part of the event, irrelevant of the false R it refers to contextually, is built on the given past tenses present in the extract. In the extract in (62a), the simple past tense refers to a subjective opinion from Thomas Brignell when

he says that Richard Negus "was concerned for the two women". The subjective functionality is strengthened through his use of the word "*would*" in conjunction with the simple past. In the first speaking instance of Thomas Brignell in (62b), the timeline allocations are much clearer: when Thomas Brignell met Richard Negus, which is an event of limited duration, he states it in the *passé composé* which illustrates this aspect of duration. The *imparfait* is utilised in the second part of the first speaking instance, "il était très attentionné envers ces deux dames", which promotes the backgrounding functionality of the *imparfait*. The underlined sentences are therefore not part of the event itself *per se*, but provides a continuation of feeling throughout the event sequence.

From a perspectival point of view, the statement by Thomas Brignell provides more questions than answers. These particular pieces of information perplex Poirot and Catchpool, but more so, the manner in which Thomas Brignell told them. In other words, the mention of his arm shaking and his terrified demeanour implies that he is hiding an important piece of information which he is possibly embarrassed to admit. Lazzari praises Thomas Brignell's work ethic and claims that his staff member "has an exceptional memory for faces and names" / "a une mémoire exceptionelle des noms et des visages" and although Catchpool and Poirot are wary of staff contributions to information (in relation to $E_{5.2I}$ and E_{10I}), they consider Thomas Brignell's contribution as acceptable (Hannah 2014a:327; Hannah 2014b:348).

When Catchpool and Poirot finish their interrogation of the staff members, they ponder upon the unanswered questions in light of the new information that Thomas Brignell has supplied. This conversation is held in front of the staff members:

(63a) "Ladies and gentlemen, we *have heard* (PP) that Richard Negus, Harriet Sippel and Ida Gransbury *were* (SP) friends, and that their food *was delivered* (SP-passive) to Room 317 at fifteen minutes past seven. **Yet** at half past seven, Mr Brignell *saw* (SP) Richard Negus on this floor of the hotel, walking towards the lift. ... But returning from where? His sandwiches and cakes *were delivered* (SP-passive) only fifteen minutes earlier! *Did* he *abandon* (SP) them immediately and set off somewhere? Or *did* he *eat* (SP) his share of the food in only three or four minutes before rushing off? And to where *did* he *rush* (SP)? ... Was it to ensure that the food should not end up on the bill of

87

Harriet Sippel or Ida Gransbury? He *could* not *wait* (SP) twenty or thirty minutes, or an hour, before setting off to attend to this matter? ... He *was* not *looking* (PastProg) for you [, Mr Brignell]? It *was* (SP) you who *attended* (SP) to him when he *arrived* (SP) at the hotel on Wednesday, yes?"

"That's right, sir. No, [Richard Negus] *wasn't looking* (SP) for me. ... He *chanced* (SP) upon me and thought, 'Oh, there's that chap again', if you know what I *mean* (NPres), sir." (Hannah 2014a:73-74)

(63b) "Mesdames et messieurs, nous *venons d'apprendre* (PR[16]) que Richard Negus, Harriet Sippel et Ida Gransbury *étaient* (Imp) amis, et que leur repas leur *a été servi* (PC-passif) dans la chambre 317 à 19h15. **Pourtant** à 19h30 M. Brignell *a vu* (PC) Richard Negus à cet étage de l'hôtel, se dirigeant vers l'ascenseur. ... Mais d'où revient-il? Les sandwiches et les gâteaux qu'il *a commandés* (PC) *ont été servis* (PC-passif) voilà juste un quart d'heure! Les *a-t-il laissés* (PC) en plan pour s'en aller quelque part? Ou *a-t-il mangé* (SP) sa part en trois ou quatre minutes avant de partir? Et pour s'en aller où? *... Était*-ce (Imp) pour s'assurer que la note de la collation *ne serait pas portée* (Conditionnel) sur la facture d'Harriet Sippel ou d'Ida Gransbury? Ne *pouvait*-il (Imp) attendre vingt ou trente minutes de plus, ou même une heure, avant d'aller s'acquitter de cette tâche? ... [Richard Negus] ne vous *cherchait* (Imp) pas [, M. Brignell]? *C'est* (PH) bien vous qui *l'avez reçu* (PC) quand il *est arrivé* (PC) à l'hôtel le mercredi, n'est-ce pas?"

"En effet, monsieur. Non, il *ne me cherchait pas* (Imp) ... Il *m'a croisé* (PC) pas hasard et *s'est dit* (PC) « Tiens, je connais cette tête-là », si vous *voyez* (PH) ce que je *veux* (PH) dire, monsieur." (Hannah 2014b:84-86)

In the extract in (63), it is clear that a larger variety of past tenses have to be used to create a coherent timeline. In the first part of Poirot's speaking instance, he wishes to establish a timeline by incorporating the true information they have obtained. The usage of "we have

---

[16] Le passé récent.

heard" serves as a resultative state of known facts that cannot be disproved, as there are witnesses to corroborate the following events: (i) the victims were friends; and (ii) the food was delivered at a specific time (19:15). In the extract in (63b), the use of the *passé récent*, "nous venons d'apprendre", provides the same functionality, as this tense is classified as a present tense. The *passé récent* therefore has the same use as the present perfect in that it has the current relevance functionality. Moreover, the *imparfait* ("ils étaient amis") and following *passé composé* ("leur repas leur a été servis") work in conjunction with the *passé récent* to create a clear distinction between a general statement (*imparfait*) and a past event (*passé composé*).

The confusion arises after the word "yet" / "pourtant". From this point onwards, the timeframe of the crime *fabula* timeline of the narrative is questioned. Walsh (2001:595, as discussed in section 3.3) posits that an event can be narrated externally while focusing on tenses that have the "completed" aspectual feature. In the extract in (63a), the past progressive and simple past tenses are used in the interrogative; in the extract in (63b), the *passé composé* is almost exclusively used in the interrogative. The use of the tenses in this interrogative manner questions the timeframe, because the events that Poirot talks about in extract (63) are not accurate when considering the already-established sequencing of events. In this regard, Walsh's (2001:595) assertion of external event sequencing is done by Poirot in the interrogative, as the tenses illustrates the actions that follow upon one another, but does not embed them in a specific time allocation in the past. This is because the events presented in the interrogative are still speculated upon in relation to placement (or non-placement) on the crime *fabula* timeline in Figure 6.

After all the unanswered questions are listed at this point in the narrative, Thomas Brignell visits Catchpool and Poirot in private to inform them that he had not given them the whole story. He comes forth with another clue for them:

> (64a) [Thomas Brignell said] "Once *we'd agreed* (PluP) the matter of the bill,
> Mr Negus *asked* (SP) me to fetch him a sherry. I *was* (SP) the person
> that *did* (SP) that. I *offered* (SP) to take it up to his room, but he *said*
> (SP) he was happy to wait. I *brought* (SP) it to him, and then up he *went*
> (SP) with it, in the lift."

Poirot sat forward in his chair. "Yet you *said* (SP) nothing when I *asked* (SP) if anyone in the room *had given* (PluP) Richard Negus a glass of sherry?"

Brignell *looked* (SP) confused and frustrated—as if the right answer was on the tip of his tongue, but still, somehow, eluded him. ...

"[Thomas Brignell]*'s told* (PP) us everything he knows. ... if he *is* (NPres) keeping quiet about anything, it's something that he *thinks* (NPres) is of no consequence to us and yet it*'s* (NPres) a cause of great embarrassment to him. He*'s* (NPres) a fretful, conscientious sort." [said Catchpool] ... (Hannah 2014a:81-83)

(64b) [Thomas Brignell dit] "L'histoire de la note une fois résolue, M. Negus *m'a commandé* (PC) un sherry... *C'est* (PH) moi qui le lui *ai servi* (PC). Je lui *ai proposé* (PC) de le lui monter dans la chambre, mais il *m'a dit* (PC) que cela ne le dérangeait pas d'attendre. Je le lui *ai* donc *apporté* (PC), et il *a pris* (PC) l'ascenseur, son verre à la main."

Poirot *s'avança* (PS) sur son siège. "Pourtant vous *n'avez rien dit* (PC) quand *j'ai demandé* (PC) si quelqu'un parmi l'assistance *avait servi* (PqP) à Richard Negus un verre de sherry?"

Brignell *parut* (PS) confus et, un instant, on *crut* (PS) qu'il *avait* (Imp) la réponse sur le bout de la langue, pourtant il *éluda* (PS) la question. ...

"[Thomas Brignell] nous a dit tout ce qu'il *savait* (Imp). ... D'ailleurs il *doit penser* (PH) que ce qu'il garde pour lui *est* (PH) sans conséquence pour nous, mais *peut* (PH) lui causer du tort. D'où son embarras. *C'est* (PH) un employé du genre consciencieux." [dit Catchpool] (Hannah 2014b:92-94)

In the extract in (64), the pluperfect in Thomas Brignell's first sentence links the subsequent sequence of events to extract (62), using the event presented in extract (62) as the R-point for Thomas Brignell's new information. Poirot makes use of this R-point as well when he asks Thomas Brignell why he failed to answer him in front of everyone. Poirot therefore uses the simple past to anchor his question in the past and sequences it accurately with the use of the pluperfect. When Thomas Brignell says "I <u>was</u> the person that did that" / "<u>C'est</u> moi qui le lui ai servi", he interrupts the linear sequencing of events by using the simple past / *présent historique* to place an emphasis on the fact that he had given the sherry (which becomes E_{191}).

90

In the extract in (64a), Thomas Brignell continues to use the simple past in a similar vein after the latter example, although the idea is a general statement and not part of the sequence. In this instance, temporal ordering plays a role: as established in section 2.3.1, temporal ordering is much more comprehensive in English, as native speakers automatically know which actions precede others due to contextual indicators. In *MeM*, temporal ordering cannot be relied upon, as French is limited through its tense use in this regard. In other words, a larger variety of past tenses are needed to explicitly illustrate the succession of events. In the example "C'est moi qui le lui ai servi", the use of the *présent historique* as a marked tense provides the emphasis on the sentence.

In Figure 6 (overleaf), the information obtained in this section is presented with regards to the accuracy of events already covered in the reconstruction of the crime *fabula* timeline.

S

R_{narr3}=Wednesday

- $E_{1.1C}$ = RN arrives on own
- $E_{1.1.1C}$ = Booked by TB
- $E_{1.2C}$ = HS arrives on own
- $E_{1.1.1C}$ = Booked by JG
- $E_{1.3C}$ = IG arrives on own
- $E_{1.1.1C}$ = Booked by JG

R_{narr1}=Thursday

- E_{2C} = 3Vics order dinner: 19:15, RB sees them
- $E_{3.1C}$ = RN seen outside by TB at 19:30
- $E_{3.1C}$ = RN did not look for TB
- E_{4C} = 3 people poisoned; arranged
- E_{5C} = Cuffs put in mouths
- $E_{6.1C}$ = Rooms locked, RN's on inside
- $E_{6.2C}$ = K has keys
- $E_{6.3C}$ = RN's W open, used for escape
- E_{7C} = Note left after 20:00
- E_{8C} = L finds 3Vics: 20:15-20:20

R_{narr2}=Friday

- $E_{1.1II}$ = J's meeting with P = 19:30
- $E_{1.2II}$ = C sees 3Vics
- E_{1II} = C discovers 3Cuffs
- $E_{3.1II}$ = C hears about J from P
- $E_{3.2II}$ = P hears about 3Vics from C
- E_{4I} = Suspicion of L's staff, especially JG
- $E_{5.1II}$ = P & C suspect K has keys
- $E_{5.2II}$ = St searched thoroughly
- E_{6I} = Murder time: 16:00-20:30
- $E_{7.1II}$ = Note found at 20:10
- $E_{7.2II}$ = Murder time narrowed: 19:15-20:10
- E_{8II} = 3Vics last seen alive at 19:15 by St
- E_{9I} = C thinks 3Vics invited to hotel
- E_{10I} = St suspected more by C and P
- E_{11I} = Timeline too close: 19:15-20:30
- E_{12II} = IG not alone before death; more clothes
- $E_{13.1II}$ = Rooms identical, W open in RN room, Is outside
- $E_{13.2II}$ = RN room has sherry glass
- E_{14I} = 3Vics arranged; deliberate
- E_{15I} = P finds RN room key in room
- E_{16I} = RN paid for all
- E_{17I} = Bus ride: clown; tramp with suitcase; poodle
- E_{18I} = 3Vics dined together 19:15: RB witness
- E_{19I} = RN seen by TB in reception: 19:30
- E_{20I} = TB gave RN glass of sherry

Crime

Investigation

Figure 6: Graph of asking the hotel staff

This subsection has presented and discussed the large amount of information gathered by Catchpool and Poirot from the hotel staff members which move the narrative along, as well as placed new events in the crime *fabula* timeline in Figure 6 (see previous page). The most important piece of information in section 4.4.5 is the error Lazzari corrects by stating that only one waiter (Rafal Bobak) saw the victims together in Ida Gransbury's room, and not three separate staff members. This piece of information already clarifies both E_{2C} and $E_{3.1C}$. In E_{2C}'s case, Rafal Bobak's account of events seals the time of the last witnessing in place, even though it is still questioned why Richard Negus was seen coming back in to the reception area at 19:30, as recounted by Thomas Brignell.

In $E_{3.1C}$'s case (in Figure 5), which debates the possibility of Ida Gransbury not being alone at the time of her murder, is proven correct by Rafal Bobak's account; Catchpool and Poirot originally assumed that the killer dined with her. The fact that Ida Gransbury did not in fact dine with the killer but with her fellow victims, makes $E_{3.1C}$ redundant, as it is already implied by E_{2C}. Moreover, another piece of information can be added to the E_{3C} place on the timeline: Richard Negus's entry at the reception at 19:30, even though E_{2C} occurred 15 minutes before. This event narrows the timeframe of the murders significantly, which in turn causes an inaccuracy of events.

The discovery of Richard Negus at the reception at 19:30 by Thomas Brignell can be further divided into $E_{3.1C}$ and $E_{3.2C}$ respectively. The first division becomes the discovery of Richard Negus, and the second division can be attributed to the fact that Richard Negus did not seek out Thomas Brignell, but happened to see him in order to foot the dinner bill for all three guests. In this regard, it can be implied that Richard Negus had a specific reason for leaving the hotel and returning shortly after, which makes the timeframe of the murders an inaccurate one, as he was killed mere minutes afterwards. This piece of information ($E_{3.1I}$ and $E_{3.2I}$) provided by Thomas Brignell therefore becomes one of the important questions to answer in the investigation.

4.4.6.   The missing keys and the connection

In chapter 7 of *TMM/MeM*, after the staff members have been questioned *en masse* by Catchpool and Poirot, the investigators meet up at Pleasant's Coffee House. Poirot arrives there

first to hear if the waitress working there has seen Jennie, without any result. Catchpool brings along Samuel Kidd to meet with Poirot, although Poirot initially thinks it is Henry Negus, Richard Negus's brother. Although this event has already been discussed in section 3.3 (extract (28)) for its illustration on perspective, here it shall be used for content as well:

(65a) "Bon. Mr Kidd, please sit down and tell Poirot your very interesting story."

To my astonishment, instead of sitting, Samuel Kidd *laughed* (SP) and repeated the very words Poirot *had spoken* (PluP) in an exaggerated French accent, or Belgian accent ...

Poirot *looked affronted* (SP) to have his voice mocked ... [and said] "Mr Kidd *pronounces* (NPres) my name better than you do, Catchpool." ...

Walking past the Bloxham shortly after eight o'clock the previous evening, [Samuel Kidd] *had seen* (PluP) a woman run out of the hotel, down the steps and on to the street. She *was panting* (PastProg) and *looked* (SP) frightful. He *had started* (PluP) to make his way towards her to ask if she *needed* (SP) any help, but she *was* (SP) too fast for him and *ran* (SP) away before he could get to her. As she *ran* (SP), she *dropped* (SP) something on the floor: two gold-coloured keys. Realizing she *had dropped* (PluP) them, she *turned* (SP) around and *hurried* (SP) back to retrieve them. Then, clutching them in her gloved hand, she *had disappeared* (SP) into the night. (Hannah 2014a:88-90)

(65b) "Bon, Monsieur Kidd, veuillez vous asseoir et raconter votre histoire à Poirot." [dit Poirot]

À ma stupéfaction, au lieu de s'asseoir, Samuel Kidd *se mit* (PS) à rire et *répéta* (PS) la phrase que Poirot venait de prononcer en imitant son accent français... ou belge, peu importe.

Poirot *eut* l'air *outragé* (PS) de voir qu'on le singeait ainsi ... [et Poirot dit] "M. Kidd *prononce* (PH) mon nom bien mieux que vous, Catchpool." ...

Alors qu[e Samuel Kidd] *passait* (Imp) à pied devant le Bloxham peu après 20 heures le veille au soir, il *avait vu* (PqP) une femme se précipiter hors de l'hôtel, descendre les marches du perron et

94

s'engager dans la rue. Elle *était essoufflée* (Imp) et *avait* (Imp) une mine effroyable. Il *s'était dirigé* (PqP) vers elle pour lui proposer de l'aide, mais elle *avait été* (PqP) plus rapide que lui et *s'était enfuie* (PqP) avant qu'il puisse la rejoindre. En courant, elle *avait laissé* (PqP) tomber quelque chose par terre: deux clefs dorées. Alors elle *s'en était aperçue* (PqP), *avait fait* (PqP) demi-tour et *s'était empressé* (PqP) de les récuperer. Puis, les serrant dans la main gantée, elle *avait disparu* (PqP) dans la nuit. (Hannah 2014b:100-101)

Even though Catchpool and Poirot already do not give a good description of Samuel Kidd to the reader, as discussed in section 3.3, they nonetheless appreciate the information he gives them. In the extract in (65a), there is an embedded past tense functionality that occurs: Catchpool uses the pluperfect in both the first and last sentence of extract (65a), e.g. "[Samuel Kidd] had seen a woman", and "she had disappeared into the night". With the pluperfect as the encompassing tense that packages the events in the simple past and pluperfect of the rest of the account, it thus places the event squarely at the previous evening mentioned (R_{narr1}), which anchors the account as its R. The simple past tense in the rest of the account provides background information on the event.

In the extract in (65b), the entire account in the extract in (65b) is written in the *plus-que-parfait* to be anchored, along with its R (R_{narr1}), in the past before the past. In other words, the *imparfait* which Catchpool uses, e.g. "alors qu'il passait à pied devant le Bloxham", as Samuel Kidd told it, represents the past, and the subsequent *plus-que-parfait* refers to after that moment. The *imparfait* has no need for a time allocation, but the *plus-que-parfait* needs it to be grammatical.

From a perspectival point of view, the mockery Samuel Kidd makes of Poirot's voice is seen as inappropriate, until Poirot points out that Samuel Kidd has a good ear for accents. At this point in the analysis, the reader is not certain if this is relevant to an event in the crime *fabula* timeline or not. It is mentioned here to emphasise the possibility of a false *fabula*.

Poirot is very curious as to the identity of the woman that Samuel Kidd saw, because it might be Jennie. This is due to Samuel Kidd describing the woman as follows: "she was panting and looked frightful" / "elle était essoufflée et avait une mine effroyable". Jennie was similarly described by Poirot as follows: "Her jagged breathing could be heard across the room. ... Her

95

eyes were wide with alarm" / "Sa réspiration haletante s'entendait jusqu'à l'autre bout de la salle. ... Ses yeux agrandis exprimaient une indicible angoisse", discussed in section 4.4.1 (Hannah 2014a:3; Hannah 2014b:11). Naturally, Poirot assumes both women are one and the same by these descriptions. Unfortunately, the timeline is against this being true, as Catchpool told Poirot that it takes half an hour to travel between the hotel and Pleasant's Coffee House, which means that it cannot have been Jennie. She was at Pleasant's Coffee House with Poirot at the time. Samuel Kidd informs them that he knows who the person is that ran out of the Bloxham Hotel. It was Nancy Ducane, a famous artist (this becomes E_{211}).

After having talked with Samuel Kidd, the two investigators talk with Henry Negus, Richard Negus's brother. After the latter is filled in of all that had occurred at the Bloxham Hotel, the investigators ask him some questions pertaining to his brother and a possible connection between him and the women that had died with him. Henry Negus informs them that Ida Gransbury and Richard Negus were engaged to be married when both of them lived in Great Holling, but his brother broke it off in 1913 and moved to Devon to live with Henry and his family. He does not know who Harriet Sippel is. Henry Negus uses past tenses in the extract in (66) to show an error and thus disbelief that his brother is now deceased:

(66a)   "Then in 1913 he *came* (SP) to live in Devon with me, where *he's lived* (PP) ever since. I mean... where he *lived* (SP)," he corrected himself. (Hannah 2014a:94)

(66b)   "Puis en 1913, il *est venu* (PC) vivre dans le Devon, avec moi, et il y *est resté* (PC) jusqu'à... aujourd'hui," conclut-il. (Hannah 2014b:105)

In the extract in (66), Henry Negus realises that the aspectual functionality of the present perfect ("he's lived") that pertains to a continuation in the present is no longer relevant. He corrects himself by using the simple past ("he lived"), which puts Richard Negus's life and death firmly in the past. Henry Negus cannot give them a reason why Richard Negus left his law practice, broke off his engagement with Ida Gransbury and left Great Holling, but this is more relevant to the background of the murders occurring in the first place and not the murders themselves.

Henry Negus supplies the investigators with contextual information on Richard Negus's life when he lived with him in Devon. In *TMM* and *MeM*, Richard Negus is described by Henry Negus as being "withdrawn and dour ... he shut himself away in his room and practised drinking

heavily" / "froid et renfermé ... Il vivait en reclus et s'adonnait à la boisson" (Hannah 2014a:97; 96; Hannah 2014b:108). Contextually, it seems that Richard Negus was suicidal due to a mysterious incident that occurred at Great Holling. Moreover, Henry Negus tells Catchpool and Poirot that, a few months before his murder, Richard Negus "might have been thinking about working again, before every last penny of his money ran out" / "il songe à retravailler, avant de dépenser jusqu'à son dernier penny" (Hannah 2014a:96; Hannah 2014b:107). Also, Henry Negus states that Richard Negus cheered up a few months before his death, started looking after himself and stopped drinking; this becomes E_{22I} on the investigation *fabula* timeline.

The placement of Henry Negus's information into the timeline in Figure 7 causes two contrasts to occur. The original placements on the investigation *fabula* timeline state that Richard Negus: (i) had a glass of sherry ($E_{13.2I}$); and (ii) paid for all the guests (E_{16I}). Henry Negus states, however, that Richard Negus: (i) had no money; and (ii) stopped drinking (both referred to as E_{22I}). In the case of the timeline, E_{22I} cancels out both $E_{13.2}$ and E_{16I}.

Walsh's (2001:599) statement regarding relevant and irrelevant information in a sequence of events (as discussed in section 2.3.2) works in conjunction with Caenepeel's (1989:76) vertical description of events (as discussed in section 4.4.2) with regards to Henry Negus's information. Although Henry Negus's information only describes the personality of a character and therefore, does not progress the narrative (in alignment with Caenepeel's view), the information is still deemed relevant enough to change the outcome of the sequence in the crime *fabula* timeline (in alignment with Walsh's view). As such, the reader has to question both variants of information received and must choose one variant over another. In this instance, Poirot and Catchpool take Henry Negus's description of Richard Negus into higher consideration. This is illustrated by Poirot's utterance in the extract in (67).

> (67a) "A recluse! I ask you, *does* this *sound* (NPres) like a man who *would indulge* (NPres) himself in sherry and cake, and gossip ... with two women in a fancy hotel?" (Hannah 2014a:326)
>
> (67b) "En reclus! Je vous demande un peu: *est*-ce (PH) le même homme qui *s'offre* (PH) un verre de sherry, puis des gâteaux, et échange des commérages avec deux femmes dans un grand hôtel de Londres?" (Hannah 2014b:347)

The contrastive information presented by Poirot is given in the narrative present / *présent historique* to emphasise uncertainty. Although Richard Negus has been suicidal for years, and stopped drinking months before, there is no definite durational aspect linked to the information. In this regard, the contrast between a descriptional facet of Richard Negus by his brother, and Richard Negus's actions at the hotel, exploits the idea illustrated by the timeless narrative present / *présent historique* that one of the facets is a lie.

Contextually, extract (67) is relevant to the narrative and might also be relevant to the crime *fabula* timeline Figure 7. This is due to either: (i) the false *fabula* that could be created by the given *syuzhet* (which renders the information given in extract (66) irrelevant); or (ii) it might be similar to the mention of the window in passing in extract (51). The open window was first mentioned as merely part of a description of the victims' rooms in a tenseless (therefore seemingly unimportant) paragraph. As the analysis progresses, however, the window has become prominent among the clues accrued by Catchpool and Poirot. As such, Richard Negus paying for all the guests and the sherry glass might still have relevance within the crime fabula timeline, although the clues are juxtapositional to his personality description.

Catchpool travels to Great Holling to establish what the true connection between the victims' are, as well as the reason why Richard Negus came to live with his brother. At the same time, Poirot seeks out Nancy Ducane, the woman Samuel Kidd saw leaving the hotel with two of the three victims' hotel room keys. In both instances, the three victims were connected by way of friendship (regardless of the engagement between Richard Negus and Ida Gransbury). Moreover, a clue is given to the significance of the cufflinks: the monogram refers to PJI and not PIJ as initially thought. The monogram stands for Patrick James Ive, a vicar who died in 1913 along with his wife, both due to suicide. Both Catchpool and Poirot hear from separate witnesses that the three victims were instrumental in the vicar and his wife's suicides, as they strove to, and succeeded in, turning the village against them through exaggerated rumours started by a domestic in town. The rumour consisted of Vicar Patrick James Ive soliciting money from villagers in order to communicate with the dead. Nancy Ducane also came from Great Holling and left at the same time as Richard Negus.

As the contextual facet has now been explained by multiple people in two different areas (Great Holling and London), Jennie's connection between all the victims comes to light: she is known

by Nancy Ducane, and she was also the domestic for the vicar who committed suicide in Great Holling. Poirot has still not seen Jennie, either alive or dead, therefore he is still uncertain of Jennie's role in the murders. Poirot emphasises this notion when he talks to Catchpool about assumptions and creating links between events that there might not be, thus alluding to a false *fabula* to confuse the crime area timeline:

(68a) "So according to your wisdom, we *must forget* (NPres) about the tragically deceased vicar and his wife? We *must pretend* (NPres) we do not know about this event, in case we *are led* (SPres-passive) by it to a mistaken conclusion? And we *must forget* (NPres) about Jennie for the same reason?" (Hannah 2014a:104)

(68b) "Donc, selon vous, nous *devons* (PH) oublier la fin tragique du pasteur et sa femme? ... Nous *devons* (PH) faire fi de cet évènement, au cas où il nous *conduirait* (Cond) à une fausse conclusion? En nous *devons* (PH), pour la même raison, passer à la trappe tout ce qui concerne Jennie?" (Hannah 2014b:116)

Caenepeel's (1989:5) scope of the narrator's limited view (as discussed in 4.4.2) is illustrated in the extract in (68), as the narrator determines what information is relevant to a situation or not. Poirot (as the narrator-supplement for Catchpool in this instance) still thinks Jennie is involved in the murders, but not in what capacity. The use of the narrative present / *présent historique* provides this notion of timelessness, as Jennie's case still has no definitive place on the timeline. Therefore, Jennie's meeting with Poirot stays in the investigation *fabula* timeline in the graph until otherwise alluded to.

Poirot and Catchpool not only question the relevance of events with other events, but also timeframes with other timeframes:

(69a) [Poirot said] "Your words *made* (SP) me wonder, my friend: since getting murdered is really no effort for the victim, and since no killer is so considerate of those he intends to poison, why *does* he not *kill* (NPres) the three victims on the Wednesday night?" ...

"... he *would* not *plan* (SP) the murders for the same day that he *knew* (SP) his victims would be travelling to London, in case their trains *were* (SP) delayed." [said Catchpool]

"Perhaps the killer also *had* (SP) to travel to London ..." [said Poirot] (Hannah 2014a:107-108)

(69b) [Poirot dit] "Votre remarque *m'a donné* (PC) à réfléchir, mon ami. Se faire tuer ne demande guère d'effort à la victime, et aucun tueur *n'est* (PH) aussi prévenant envers les personnes qu'il *a* (PH) l'intention d'empoisonner. Alors pourquoi notre assassin ne *tue-t-il pas* (PH) les trois victimes le mercredi soir?" ...

"... il *n'a* peut-être *pas souhaité* (PC) programmer les meurtres le jour où ses victimes *voyageaient* (Imp), au cas où leurs trains *auraient* (Conditionnel) du retard." [dit Catchpool]

"Peut-être que lui-même *devait* (Imp) faire le trajet jusqu'à Londres ..." [dit Poirot] (Hannah 2014b:119-120)

In the extract in (69), a vital piece of information is presented to the reader. It is a possibility that the killer is not a resident of London, which becomes E_{23I} and therefore the new E_{2C} on the graph. This could also imply that the killer is from Great Holling, resulting in an equal-distance travelling time as the victims themselves. These opinions are speculation at this point, which means that the opinions have to be presented in a timeless manner. This is achieved through the predominant use of the subjective "would" and the narrative present in (69a), and the *présent historique* and the *imparfait* in (69b).

A similarly important part of the R_{narr1} evening is cleared up to some extent in the extract in (70), which answers the questions posed in the previous subsections.

(70a) "The three victims *were poisoned* (SP-passive). Cyanide, as we *thought* (SP). Here's a strange puzzle, though: no recently consumed food *was found* (SP-passive) in their stomach contents. Harriet Sippel, Ida Gransbury and Richard Negus *had not eaten* (PluP) for several hours before they *were murdered* (SP). Which means we *have* (NPres) a missing afternoon tea for three to account for." [said Catchpool] (Hannah 2014a:213)

100

(70b) "Les trois victimes *ont été empoisonnées* (PC-passif). Au cyanure, comme nous le *pensions* (Imp). Mais fait étrange, on *n'a retrouvé* (PC) aucune nourriture récemment consommée dans le contenu de leurs estomacs. Harriet Sippel, Ida Gransbury et Richard Negus *n'avaient rien mangé* (PqP) depuis plusieurs heures avant d'être assassinés. *Qu'est* donc *devenue* (PC) cette copieuse collaton pour trois?" [dit Catchpool] (Hannah 2014b:230-231)

In the extract in (70), the mystery of the food is alluded to by using R_{8I} as the timeframe reference for this conversation. The food was ordered and delivered at 19:15, as stated by Rafal Bobak's account of events, and Richard Negus was seen at 19:30 returning to his room. In general instances, it would be insignificant to account for the fact that Richard Negus's stomach does not contain any food as it would contextually imply that he was not present to eat the food after it had been delivered.

The difficulty arises when neither woman has any food in their stomachs either (which becomes E_{24I}), even though they were left in the room where the food was served when Richard ran his errand. Moreover, the use of the pluperfect */ plus-que-parfait* on the timeline of this specific event provides another clue in the form of entailment: if no food was consumed, it implies that the tea and sherry were not consumed by the victims. The victims were therefore not poisoned by the beverages they received from the hotel at 19:15.

A piece of information that has relevance to the crime *fabula* timeline is the discovery of the two missing hotel room keys. They are found in Nancy Ducane's coat pocket (which becomes $E_{25.1I}$), which proves Samuel Kidd's account of events known as E_{21I}. On the other hand, Nancy Ducane has an alibi for the timeframe of the murders: she was at her friend's, Louisa Wallace's, house between 18:00 and 22:00 (which becomes $E_{25.1I}$). Nancy Ducane claims that she is being framed, as she was not near the hotel after 8 o'clock. In this regard, one of two placements on the timeline is incorrect: either (i) Samuel Kidd's account of events outside the hotel (E_{21I}); or (ii) Nancy Ducane's own alibi ($E_{25.2I}$). Figure 7 (overleaf) shows these events in order.

S

Investigation

Crime

R_{narr3}=Wednesday

$E_{1.1C}$ = RN arrives on own
$E_{1.1.1C}$ = Booked by TB
$E_{1.2C}$ = HS arrives on own
$E_{1.1.1C}$ = Booked by JG
$E_{1.3C}$ = IG arrives on own
$E_{1.1.1C}$ = Booked by JG

E_{2C} = K travels to London

R_{narr1}=Thursday

E_{3C} = 3Vics order dinner: 19:15, RB sees them
$E_{4.1C}$ = RN seen outside by TB at 19:30
$E_{4.1C}$ = RN did not look for TB
E_{5C} = 3 people poisoned; arranged
E_{6C} = Cuffs put in mouths
$E_{7.1C}$ = Rooms locked, RN's on inside
$E_{7.2C}$ = K has keys
$E_{7.3C}$ = RN's W open, used for escape
E_{8C} = Note left after 20:00
E_{9C} = SK saw K: ND after 20:00
E_{10C} = L finds 3Vics: 20:15-20:20

R_{narr2}=Friday

$E_{1.1I}$ = J's meeting with P = 19:30
$E_{1.2I}$ = C sees 3Vics
E_{2I} = C discovers 3Cuffs
$E_{3.1I}$ = C hears about J from P
$E_{3.2I}$ = P hears about 3Vics from C
E_{4I} = Suspicion of L's staff, especially JG
$E_{5.1I}$ = P & C suspect K has keys
$E_{5.2I}$ = St searched thoroughly
E_{6I} = Murder time: 16:00-20:30
$E_{7.1I}$ = Note found at 20:10
$E_{7.2I}$ = Murder time narrowed: 19:15-20:10
E_{8I} = 3Vics last seen alive at 19:15 by St
E_{9I} = C thinks 3Vics invited to hotel
E_{10I} = St suspected more by C and P
E_{11I} = Timeline too close: 19:15-20:30
E_{12I} = IG not alone before death; more clothes
$E_{13.1I}$ = Rooms identical, W open in RN room, Ts outside
$E_{13.2I}$ = RN room has sherry glass
E_{14I} = 3Vics arranged; deliberate
E_{15I} = P finds RN room key in room
E_{16I} = RN paid for all
E_{17I} = Bus ride: clown; tramp with suitcase; poodle
E_{18I} = 3Vics dined together 19:15: RB witness
E_{19I} = RN seen by TB in reception: 19:30
E_{20I} = TB gave RN glass of sherry
E_{21I} = SK saw killer ND after 20:00
E_{22I} = RN stopped drinking; no money
E_{23I} = K possibly not from London
E_{24I} = No food in 3Vics; poison confirmed
$E_{25.1I}$ = ND has keys; framed?
$E_{25.2I}$ = ND has alibi

Figure 7: Graph of the missing keys and the connection

In this subsection, Samuel Kidd's account in the investigation *fabula* places another event on the crime *fabula* timeline in Figure 7 above: the witnessing of the potential killer (which becomes E_{9C}). Contextually, Nancy Ducane's discovery by Samuel Kidd outside the hotel occurs after the note was found on the desk and before the bodies were discovered, thus the note becomes the new E_{8C}, moving one place away from S to accommodate the witnessing of the potential killer. Therefore, Lazzari's discovery of the bodies moves closer to S on the timeline, becoming E_{10C}.

Another important facet that can be analysed from the investigation area on the timeline, is the possibility that the killer did not live in London. The use of the subjective simple past, e.g. "would", *présent historique* and adverbs like "perhaps" / "peut-être" provides the possibility but not a definitive answer. This notion thus becomes E_{2C} in the R_{narr3} section of the timeline, which thus moves all subsequent numbering onwards to accommodate its placement.

The puzzle surrounding the missing food is, at this point in the narrative, still in the investigation *fabula* timeline. After Poirot is informed that the victims' stomachs contained no food, he states: "That is one mystery solved" / "Voici un mystère enfin résolu" (Hannah 2014a:213; Hannah 2014b:231). It is not clear to Catchpool and the reader to what Poirot might be referring to, as he seems not to allude to a specific R to anchor his statement in the timeline. Once again, the notion of providing information with no seeming link to the investigation *fabula* is presented here. In other words, descriptions of seemingly arbitrary events ultimately provide clues for the investigation at hand.

For example, in the case of the missing food, there is one event in the investigation *fabula* timeline that can be used as the R of Poirot's utterance: E_{17I}. This event refers to the bus ride that Catchpool and Poirot took to clear their heads and, indirectly, to search for Jennie. Not far from the hotel, Catchpool mentions to Poirot that he sees a juggling clown and a poodle with a famous face, but it is ultimately the tramp eating scones with cream out of a suitcase that becomes part of the clue. Catchpool and Poirot had already surmised that Ida Gransbury took too many clothes with her, although this analysis did not find it relevant that all her belongings could not fit into the one suitcase found in her room. The food had to be removed from the room for a specific reason, which shall be discussed below. In this instance, the timeline references to the food is: E_{3C} leads to E_{17I}, which ultimately leads to E_{24I}, resulting in the questioning of why E_{3C} occurred in the first place.

The question postulated above of E_{3C} is directly linked to E_{19I} (Richard Negus seen at 19:30), as both occur at roughly the same time; this is because of the narrow timeframe for the murders to have taken place. The food was removed from the hotel after it was served at 19:15 (E_{3C}), but before the bodies were found between 20:15-20:30 (E_{10C}). The only event that occurs which would circumstantially explain how the food disappeared would be E_{19I}. Richard Negus left the hotel shortly after the food was served and was found by Thomas Brignell coming back in. As Poirot asked of Thomas Brignell and has been agreed, Richard Negus was not downstairs to look for him, but chanced upon him while making his way back to the rooms. Moreover, Thomas Brignell refused to tell the full account of his two meetings with Richard Negus ($E_{1.1.1C}$ and $E_{4.1C}$). It has already been established by extract (61), and Lazzari's description of him that Thomas Brignell is intelligent, dutiful, and has an affinity for remembering faces. He is also the only member of staff that saw any of the victims more than once.

By refusing to answer questions pertaining to Richard Negus, as well as the descriptions the reader receives of him, Thomas Brignell can, in good conscience, say that the Richard Negus he booked into the hotel and the Richard Negus who asked him to settle the bill to his room are not the same man. This notion can be proved by two supplementary events: E_{22I} which contrasts E_{16I} and E_{20I}. If (the real) Richard Negus had stopped drinking and had little money left, both E_{16I} (paying the hotel expenses) and E_{20I} (ordering a sherry) would be erroneous, which points towards another person who did not know these to facets of Richard Negus's life. To a lesser extent, E_{20I} is also alluded to by the fact that there was no sherry in Richard Negus's stomach contents.

At this stage of the analysis, all relevant matters have been discussed pertaining to the murders themselves, as the motive for the murders is supplementary and only the driving force behind the murders occurring in the first place. In the next section, the final chronology pertaining to the crime fabula timeline is discussed.

4.5. Literary conclusion: methodology and the crime *fabula* timeline

As the investigators reach the end of their investigation, they have three suspects: Jennie Hobbs, Samuel Kidd, and Nancy Ducane. In Nancy Ducane's case, she knows all of the people involved: the three victims and Jennie Hobbs, who all come from Great Holling. She has an

alibi which consists of her being at her friend's house between 18:00 and 22:00. In Samuel Kidd's case, he finds Catchpool outside of the Bloxham Hotel to tell him that he might have seen the killer running out of the hotel. He also provides the clue that Nancy Ducane, whom he saw running away, had two hotel keys with her. No alibi was given for Samuel Kidd's whereabouts, as Catchpool and Poirot saw no connection between him and any of the victims. It has already been noted that the accounts of Samuel Kidd and Nancy Ducane are juxtapositional. If Samuel Kidd's account of Nancy Ducane is true (E_{20I}), it entails a falsehood of $E_{25.1I}$, and vice versa. Moreover, if Samuel Kidd's account is false, it implies that Samuel Kidd has a direct involvement in the murders.

In Jennie's case, it is necessary to note that she, of all three suspects, has an alibi that can be corroborated by Poirot himself. At the time of the murders, as established between E_{3C} and E_{10C}, Jennie was at Pleasant's Coffee House with Poirot. The reason for her suspicion is the grammatical error in the extract in (38) which implies that she has first-hand knowledge of the murders. This means that the murders had to have occurred before she arrived at the restaurant to talk to Poirot.

The inaccuracy of the time of Jennie's meeting with Poirot and the fact that the murders had to have happened at least 30 minutes before (as it takes no less than 30 minutes to travel between the hotel and the restaurant) implies that the entire timeframe set out by $E_{7.2I}$ is erroneous. The original creation of the timeframe was due to circumstantial evidence: the note announcing the victims' deaths. If no note had been left, the original timeframe would have been 16:00-20:30, as established by the police doctor (E_{6I}). This modification of the timeline can also be proven if the reader takes into account that the victims did not eat the afternoon tea delivered at 19:15 (E_{3C}). The delivery of the food in the first place was not for the sake of ordering food, but to have a reliable eye-witness.

In addition to the event of E_{3C}, the three victims are seen by Rafal Bobak, but he is one of the staff members that saw them only once, alluding to the fact that the man and two women he saw in the room might not have been the victims. This presents a conundrum as to who the people were. This is because a large amount of evidence points to the notion that the victims were killed before the food arrived. Thomas Brignell, who is the only member of staff to have seen one of the victims twice, has already refused to give a full account of his two meetings with Richard Negus, as he doubts that he spoke to the same man twice. The man who thus had

a direct involvement in the murders was Samuel Kidd, who impersonated Richard Negus in order to confuse the staff members into thinking the victims' murders were committed later than they were. He and Nancy Ducane impersonated Richard Negus and Harriet Sippel respectively, along with an already-deceased Ida Gransbury, to trick Rafal Bobak into believing that the three people before him are the three victims that will be found after 20:00 by Lazzari.

If the abovementioned case is true, it would mean that the majority of evidence and events gathered and analysed were in fact done after the murders occurred. In this regard, the murders are no longer arbitrarily placed in the middle of the crime area timeline after witnesses saw the victims alive; it is, in fact, the first event that occurs on Thursday (R_{narr1}) which has relevance to the crime scene in its entirety. In Figure 7, above, the course of events are thus placed in the order in which they really occurred. For the most part, some events that are time-specific tend to stay in place, whereas timeless or contextual-specific events are placed in relation to logical chronology. An example of context-specific events are the murders and the cufflinks. It is not possible to insert the cufflinks into the mouths of the victims, and then murder them. Therefore, some events, like the cufflinks and the murders themselves follow a logical sequence, albeit changed due to the earlier modification to the murder timeframe.

Jennie had arranged for the victims to stay at the hotel and had killed them one by one. As accomplices, Samuel Kidd and Nancy Ducane sought to produce an alibi for Jennie by manipulating the timeframe in which the murders were committed, thereby putting her far away from the hotel and under the eyes of Poirot himself. It is thus through the usage of contextually-based past tenses on a timeline that has provided the answer for Catchpool and Poirot. A modified graph (Figure 8, overleaf) provides the final layout of the crime *fabula* timeline.

106

$R_{narr3} = E_{1c}$ tripartite
(Victims arrive at hotel)

$R_{narr1} = E_{5c}$ 16:00-19:15
(Victims killed by JH, poisoned)

$R_{narr3} = E_{3c}$ 19:15
(Food ordered: SK, ND and IG present)

$R_{narr3} = E_{6c}$
(Cufflinks inserted; bodies arranged)

$R_{narr3} = E_{8c}$
(Note left at desk announcing deaths)

$R_{narr3} = E_{9c}$ after 20:00
(SK tries to frame ND, thus has alibi (unconnected))

$R_{narr1} = E_{4.1c}$ and $E_{4.2c}$ 19:30
(SK disposes of food; asks TB for sherry)

$R_{narr1} = E_{1.1i}$ 19:00
(JH's meeting with P at Pleasant's = alibi)

$R_{narr3} = E_2$
(Killers arrive in London)

$R_{narr3} = E_{7.1c}$ and $E_{7.3}$
(RN's room locked from inside; SK uses W
to escape)

$R_{narr3} = E_{9c}$ after 20:00
(ND leaves hotel, has alibi with LW)

$R_{narr3} = E_{10c}$ 20:15-20:30
(L finds each victim)

Start of
novels

Figure 8: Final graph of the crime *fabula* timeline

107

4.6. Conclusion

At the end of the analysis in section 4.4, all events that were deemed relevant to the reconstruction of the crime has been inserted. The methodology explained in section 4.2 was used to analyse smaller events in terms of their past tense use and were placed within the context of larger events, using Reichenbach's timeline of tenses as the foundation of the two *fabula* timelines. The *syuzhet* that has been analysed in the form of relevant examples provided the tools to create two distinct *fabulas* that influenced each other; the visible investigation was created by the crime that was committed, and the act of reconstructing the crime, in turn, created the investigation.

The importance of perspective has been shown in the analysis of the novels. It is through the scope, or frame of reference, that a first person narrator (such as Catchpool) narrates the events in which he finds himself. The linear (or sequential) events in the narrative, albeit achronologically, has provided the reader with enough supplemental information. This information has been, through the analysis of past tenses on a timeline, sorted to differentiate between contextual and/or relevant clues on the one hand, and irrelevant and/or false *fabula* components on the other.

The next chapter is the concluding chapter for this thesis. In this chapter, the links between the theory and literary-linguistic analysis are summarised, as well as possible future research that can stem from the results obtained in the analysis.

Chapter 5
Conclusion

This thesis aimed to illustrate that two stories could be constructed from one story by analysing the detective fiction novels written by Sophie Hannah, *The Monogram Murders* and *Meurtres en Majuscules*. In other words, the contextual elements of the one story was used to recreate the other. One of these contextual elements referred to the use of particular past tenses in English and French. The other element pertained to the significance of the narrative context, as well as the perspective from which a narrative is told.

Once the first chapter had introduced the study, the second chapter, the theoretical framework, introduced the linguistic theory that was necessary to have a coherent understanding of the analysis presented in chapter 4. In this chapter, Reichenbach's (1947) timeline of tenses was used as the foundation for the subsequent timelines presented in chapter 4. These timelines consisted of smaller timelines on which particular past tenses could be placed. Fleischman's (1990) model of narrative past tenses supplemented Reichenbach's study by placing the smaller timelines into larger event sequences, while still keeping the narrative anterior to S, according to Dahl's (1985) premise of "prospective time" with regards to narrative (cited in Fleischman 1990:128).

Chapter 2 also presented a discussion of the use of English and French past tenses in relation to their function in real world discourse, as well as their aspectual features. These past tenses were also examined according to their narrative functions, and how this differs from their real world discourse counterparts. The difference in functionality was explored in both mediums (spoken and written discourse) to understand how significant artistic licence and perspective are to the analysis of past tenses in narratives.

Chapter 3 supplemented chapter 2 by providing the literary theory needed for the analysis presented in chapter 4. The literary theory consisted of Fleischman's (1990) description of different types of narrators. Furthermore, Todorov's (1977) classification of the whodunit in the detective fiction genre, as well as *fabula* (story) and *syuzhet* (plot) were explained and subsequently used in the analysis to differentiate between the two stories that exist in the novels. Coetzee (2010) and Caenepeel (1989) provided the explanations for perspective in a narrative which linked with the narrator types explicated by Fleischman.

The notion of perspective in narrative enabled the analysis in chapter 4 to distinguish between inner monologues, active plot development, and descriptions of event landscapes. The reason for the significance of perspective in narratives, apart from the latter points, was to establish what contextual information the use of particular past tenses within events gave, in order to reconstruct the crime *fabula*. The role that past tenses in both English and French play in terms of perspective was supplemented by the contextual information that the narratives provided.

The contextual landscape of events were used in order to better place and move the smaller events around on the timeline. Context was illustrated as being a necessity when linking and grouping events together to form a coherent whole. In the analysis, context, as well as the past tense functionality in the narrative determined the outcome of the reconstructed timeline (the crime *fabula*). The result of the analysis of the novels thus provides a valid and accurate construction of Todorov's (1977:46) notion of the "real but absent crime", and the "present but insignificant" investigation.

5.1.   Research questions answered

In this thesis, the theory and analysis has provided the necessary information in order to answer the specific research questions in section 1.2. The first question pertained to the use of English and French past tenses and how they helped the reader in recreating the crime story in a particular detective novel, e.g. Hannah's novels. The literary-linguistic theory in chapters 2 and 3, in conjunction with the practical examples in chapter 4, provided the answer to this question. This analysis showed that the semantic properties and functions of past tenses (in English and French) supply the narrative with contextual information on a sentence level. This answer ties in with the second research question and will be discussed further there.

The second question in section 1.2 pertained to the significance of perspective in relation to past tense use in a particular detective novel, e.g. Hannah's novels. As mentioned above, past tense functions have a vital semantic function on a sentence level. Not only is this accurate, but can be applied to the paragraph level, as well as the narrative level in its entirety. This is how perspective comes into play: the narrator changes the relevance (or semantic importance) of events by his (Catchpool's) use of past tenses in order to link particular events together on a

chronological timeline. It is only then that a story could be recreated by analysing the semantic clues provided by the past tenses.

The following section provides a brief summary of the possibility of future research that could stem from this analysis.

5.2.   Future research

This study provides an amalgamation of linguistic and literary theory, with linguistics as the main field of research. As such, future research can be conducted in either field mentioned, or both. Examples of future research ideas in the linguistic field can be the focus on the similarities and/or differences between real world use and narrative use of past/present tenses in different media. The literary field can continue with the analysis of past tense functions in other literary genres, e.g. romance novels or thriller novels, in conjunction with the particular literary elements that are used to classify the genre.

As a final idea, another linguistic-literary study can be made with larger novels (or series of novels) with multiple timeline stories, which can provide a form of a "time tree" (a multi-layered linear timeline) through its use of past tenses to establish the chronological order.

References

Anguita, L.A. 2016. Le verb français: les temps du passé. *Synergies Espagne* 9:83-93.

Balibar, R. 1972. Le passé composé fictif dans *l'Etranger* d'Albert Camus. *Litérature* 7:102-119.

Bordwell, D. 2005. Principles of narration. Film Theory – Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies. Online: http://www.wordsinspace.net/course_material/mrm/mrmreadings/bordwell.pdf (22 October 2018).

Caenepeel, M. 1989. Aspect, Temporal Ordering and Perspective. PhD Dissertation, University of Edinburgh.

Camus, A. 1957 (1942). *L'Étranger*. France: L'édition Gallimard.

Camus, A. 2010 (1942). *The Stranger*. Translated by Joseph Laredo. London: Penguin Books.

Coetzee, L. 2010. Detecting dominant discourses in selected detective fiction by Enid Blyton and Agatha Christie. PhD Dissertation, University of Pretoria.

Currie, M. 2009. The expansion of tense. *Narrative* 17(3):353-367.

Fleischman, S. 1983. From pragmatics to grammar: diachronic reflections on complex pasts and futures in Romance. *Lingua* 60:183-214.

Fleischman, S. 1990. *Tense and Narrativity*. Texas: University of Texas Press.

Grevisse, M. and A. Goosse. 2008. *Le bon usage grammaire française, 14ème édition*. Bruxelles: De Boeck & Larcier s.a.

Gulli, N. 2014. The simple past puzzle: a study of some aspects of the syntax and semantics of tense. *Linguistik Online* 65(1):3-23.

Hackmack, S. 2007. Reichenbach's Theory of Tense and its Application to English. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/48c7/6e4c1f5810dd52f406911b90a03c32e936ac.pdf (9 April 2018)

Hamm F. and O. Bott. 2014. Tense and aspect. Online: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/tense-aspect/ (27 June 2018)

Hannah, S. 2014a. *The Monogram Murders*. London: Harper Collins Publishers.

Hannah, S. 2014b. *Meurtres en Majuscles*. Translated by Valérie Rosier. France: Editions de Masque.

Hemingway, E. 2007 (6 March). The Killers. Online: http://www.geocities.com/cyber_explorer99/hemingwaykillers.html (4 July 2018).

Herman, D. 1998. Limits of Order: Toward a Theory of Polychronic Narration. *Narrative* 6(1):72-95.

Hühn, P. 1987. The detective as reader: narrativity and reading concepts in detective fiction. *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 33(3):451-466.

Hurford, J.R. 2003. *Grammar: a student's guide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Matthews, P.H. 2014. *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics, third edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Meyer-Viol, W.P.M. & H.S. Jones. 2011. Reference time and the English past tenses. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 34(3).

Molendijk A., H. de Swart, C. Vetters, A. Borillo, M. Bras, A. Le Draoulec, L. Vieu, H. Verkuyl and C. Vet. 2004. Meaning and use of past tenses in discourse. In F. Corblin and H. de Swart (eds.). 2004. *The Handbook of French Semantics*. Stanford: CSLI Publications. pp. 271-308.

Nelles, W. and L. Williams. 2018. Narrative order in the first-person novel. *Poetics Today* 39(1):131-158.

Perry, M. 1979. Literary dynamics: how the order of a text creates its meaning [with an analysis of Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily"]. *Poetics Today* 1(1):35-61.

Pooser, C. 1993. Review of Fleischman 1990. *The French Review* 67(2):373-374.

Reichenbach, H. 1947. *Elements of Symbolic Logic*. London: Macmillan.

Struve-Debeaux, A. 2010. *Maîtriser la grammaire française Niveau B1-C1*. Editions Belin.

Todorov, T. 1977. *The poetics of prose*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Traugott, E.C. 1992. Review of Fleischman 1990. *Style* 26(3):501-505.

Verkuyl, H., C. Vet, A. Borillo, M. Bras, A. Le Draoulec, A. Molendijk, H. de Swart, C. Vetters and L. Vieu. 2004. Tense and aspect in sentences. In F. Corblin and H. de Swart (eds.). 2004. *The Handbook of French Semantics*. Stanford: CSLI Publications. pp. 233-270.

Walsh, R. 2001. Fabula and Fictionality in Narrative Theory. *Style* 35(4):592-606.

Webber, B.L. 1988. Tense as discourse anaphor. http://repository.upenn.edu/cis_reports/441 (1 June 2018).

Wehmeier, S. (ed.). 2006. Oxford advanced learner's dictionary, seventh edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.