"Dialogism as Character Development:
Psychoanalysis and Play in Siri Hustvedt’s
The Summer Without Men and The Sorrows of an American”

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Abstract

This two-part thesis discusses dialogism as character development in psychoanalysis and play of Siri Hustvedt’s novels *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American*. Where dialogism or dialogical exchange in play and psychoanalysis creates a Between of narrator, characters, reader, and author. To create a dialogical exchange of Between for the main characters’ all subjective first person narrative of the novels the main characters need to gain knowledge about their Selves from another angle and only then they are able to develop their characters Self or their characters personality.

This thesis applies David Shepherd definition of dialogism as a relational constitution of two or more parties in a dialogue, and the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin and Martin Buber to analyse dialogical exchange, the Between and the entity of I-You that includes the world, nature and men into this relation in both novels. This discussion presents pieces of evidence that the I-You entity of dialogism enables character development in the main characters of the novels. The discussion includes elements of playfulness and play in and Between novels, roles in drama, and breaking the fourth wall of the novel. Moreover, it discusses roles in psychoanalysis, mirroring and the relationship between conscious and unconscious, development of personality and reconstruction in psychoanalysis.

Hustvedt’s works are defined, with assistance from Christine Marks’ and Gabriele Ripple’s works, within a post-modern and post-postmodern frame. Brian Edwards’ theory play and Sigmund Freud theory of the psychoanalysis is utilised, along with theories of Bakhtin, Buber and Winnicott’s embrace of dialogism and polyphony are included in the discussion of character development in play and psychoanalysis. Seymour Chatman theory of character is applied regarding openness and autonomy in the main characters of these novels.
Acknowledgements

“The very idea of a library for me is bound to my mother and father and includes the history of my own metamorphoses through books, fictions that are no less part of me than much of my own history” (Hustvedt 2006, 28).

These words by Siri Hustvedt resonate strongly with my own experience. Fiction is precious to me. As a little girl I loved reading and my favourite place in Bergen was the library. I remember trying to find out how many novels I could borrow at a time. Stopping at twelve I was excited to find out that I could take them all with me home.

I feel I have been given a great gift. Not only have I had the possibility to dive into and immerse myself in Siri Hustvedt’s excellent works. I have had great guidance along the way. I am sincerely grateful to Laura Saetveit Miles who has shared her knowledge wisely having me make my own discoveries beyond the clues she has laid out to help me. Additionally, I much appreciate the opinions of fellow students as well as tutors at the English Department at the University of Bergen.

Last, but not least I am thankful for the greatest gift of love: for my husband Yngve and our daughters Stella and Mia. They are the essence of my life. In the Between that we share grows love, creativity and adventure.
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Chapter 2 Dialogism as Character Development: Play in
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Siri Hustvedt, the author of *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American*, writes this in her essay “Freud’s Playground” where she reflects on the relation between people. She believed already as a child that there was “a third entity—an imaginary creature the players made between them—and that this invisible thing was so important, it deserved to be given a proper name” (Hustvedt 2013, 196). Later she borrows the term “the Between” from the German philosopher Martin Buber who in his work *I and Thou* (1970) describes this third entity as one entity of “I and You”. Buber describes that the “I-You” entity creates a dialogical exchange of the Between. Dialogic exchange in a novel includes the environment of the characters, society, and nature into the entity of I-You. Anthony Wall of Queens University suggests in his essay “Characters in Bakhtin’s Theory” that: “The novel is more than a dialogue between an author and a reader: it is an exchange amongst dialogic positions within the text itself” (Wall 1984, 42). In his discussion of Bakhtin Wall includes the many voices within a novel to the dialogism of the novel. The “exchange amongst dialogic positions” that Wall writes about here illustrates the many voices that the Russian semiotic Mikhail Bakhtin argues are incorporated in a novel. The dialogical exchange of the Between or dialogism, I would argue, is important to character development in Siri Hustvedt’s novels *The Sorrows of an American* and *The Summer Without Men*.

Dr Christine Marks of LaGuardia Community College in New York explains in her monograph “I am because you are. Relationality in the works of Siri Hustvedt” that: “Hustvedt’s work exhibits the inevitable interrelatedness of the human experience while advocating self-other relations based on dialogical intersubjectivity” (Marks 2014, 2). The
intersubjectivity is the Between of characters where they can learn about their Selves from another angle than the subjective first person narration that Hustvedt uses in both *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American*. Two perspectives in which the main characters of these novels Mia and Erik might experience “the inevitable interrelatedness” that Marks describes are psychoanalysis and play. I would argue that in play and psychoanalysis the narrators and main characters experience dialogical exchange in the Between of the I-You entity which enables them to develop their characters’ personalities. The way that Hustvedt uses the relational models of Buber and Bakhtin for the main characters search of their “Self”, in the connotation of personality, in both novels resonates with how Marks defines Hustvedt’s work within literary tradition. Marks suggests:

> While Siri Hustvedt’s writing goes beyond an exclusively postmodern framework—especially in her emphasis on identity as grounded in embodied, material existence,—she shares with the postmodernists a fascination with existential fragmentation and an emphasis on ambiguity over clear binaries and absolutes. (Marks 2014, 5)

I would agree with Marks that while there are elements within Hustvedt’s works that suit the “postmodern framework” of dubiousness with regard to limitations of dyads and confines of her novels there are other elements connected to subjectivity of the main characters and the “existential fragmentation” that exceeds the framework of postmodernism.

I will discuss dialogism as character development in Hustvedt’s novels and analyse her use of play and psychoanalysis. For theory of play I will incorporate a definition of play and elements from *Theories of Play and Postmodern Fiction* by Dr Brian Edwards, a former professor in Literary Studies at Deakin University. In *Theories of Play and Postmodern Fiction* Edwards draws upon developments in critical theory and postmodernist fiction. For psychoanalytical theory I will incorporate theory of psychoanalysis by Dr Sigmund Freud. In this thesis my aim is to analyse how in play, drama or playfulness, as well as in psychoanalysis the dialogic exchange is essential to create a Between of the I-You entity which again lays the foundation for character development as a development of the Self. In
the Between of narrator and reader, and author and reader, I will argue, there are other examples of dialogism. Additionally, there are examples of character development in Hustvedt’s novels when the author gradually reveals the character to the reader and the two aspects of character development are both part of my discussion of *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American*. In these novels the main characters experience life crises due to loss: Mia has lost her husband to another woman and Erik’s father has died. The narrators and main characters relate differently to their losses and they need to reconstruct their “Selves”, the personality of their characters, in order to incorporate their loss. The main characters experience psychoanalysis, Mia only as patient and Erik as both analyst and patient. Their roles create possibility for dialogical exchange that enable them to see their Selves from another perspective. Hustvedt’s playfulness in her writing as well as her incorporation of elements of play gives her novels a Between in which dialogical exchange takes place.

“A sudden feeling of reluctance came over me, a sense that we were encroaching on something that might wheel around and slap us” (*Sorrows* 54). Erik Davidsen, the narrator and main character in *The Sorrows of an American*, recognises the fear he has for the unknown secret of his deceased father. Afraid to embark on the journey following the traces laid open to him and his sister Inga in letters his father had left in his study, the siblings are convinced that their father desired for them to find his letters and nonetheless they feel a responsibility in pursuing the traces laid out to them.

Eric is surprised at his own hesitation and he seems to have expected differently from himself, educated a physician, trained and experienced as he is in psychoanalysis.

I was aware that it was odd for me—who had listened to so many confessions of betrayal, misery, and cruelty—to shy away from the story hidden behind a few sheets of paper in a hall of records, but the analyst as a person who can hear anything is made possible because of the role played, the position occupied in the room. Outside the room, I occupy another territory: brother, son, friend. (*Sorrows* 54)
Erik communicates in this dialogue with his sister Inga that his reactions and emotional involvement are depending on the role he plays. When he is “inside the room” of the doctor’s office he has the role of physician. In this role Erik inhabits a professional distance, made possible by “the role played”. In this role he is an analyst and he makes use of the analytical tools of psychoanalysis: “the analyst as a person who can hear anything”. He hears his patients’ narratives, stories that may be hard not to become emotionally touched by. However, Erik meets these narratives in his conversations with his patients and he addresses the adversities in them directly. In contrasting, when Erik is “outside the room” his own feelings are engaged, he lacks the professional distance and he seems to feel some obligations in his other more personal roles of “brother, son, friend”. Now in “another territory”, he occupies the areas of his other roles that involve his whole person, his personal Self. Areas in which Erik has roles which he is just as taken aback by and involved in his emotions as anybody else. His uncertainty in what secret they will reveal, “the story hidden”, and Erik’s reluctance comes across in the way he describes the implied size of the site, in “a hall of records” where he expects to find the answer to his father’s secret.

Erik’s psychoanalytical training helps him reflect on the roles he juggles and enables him to observe how they affect him. Psychoanalysis seems vital to his character, both to Hustvedt’s character development of him by gradually revealing his character to the reader and to Erik’s own understanding and development of his personality in the novel. Psychoanalysis creates a space for dialogism in which Erik develops his character in *The Sorrows of an American* as it creates the Between necessary for character development in Mia in *The Summer Without men*. Therefore I will discuss psychoanalysis as a driver of character development and as a structural element in Hustvedt’s novels as one of two main parts in this thesis.
Hustvedt is an author who engages in psychoanalysis, philosophy and neuroscience. Her research for her writing incorporates knowledge from all these fields. This knowledge has led her to be invited to and engaged in speeches across subjects. Hustvedt’s vast knowledge and interest in different perspectives when writing makes the analyses of her works interesting to many fields of academia and we see evidence of this in the collected essays volume *Zones of Focused Ambiguity in Siri Hustvedt's Works: Interdisciplinary Essays* edited by Johanna Hartmann and Hubert Zapf (De Gruyter 2016) which include essays organised under the headings: Literary Creation and Communication, Psychoanalysis and Philosophy, Medicine and Narrative, Vision, Perception, and Power, Trauma, Memory, and the Ambiguities of Self, and Interview with Siri Hustvedt. Despite the limited number of scholarly critiques of her work, it includes, like Hustvedt’s work, a number of academic disciplines.

Without knowing any of this at the time, Hustvedt’s novels caught my attention in the library in the autumn of 2013. Interestingly Hustvedt’s works opens up for the possibility for me to make use of my interests in psychology, literature and history and incorporate this in my thesis with the analysis of two of her novels *The Sorrows of an American* and *The Summer Without Men*.

Whereas Erik Davidsen in *The Sorrows of an American* carries both the role of physician or analyst and patient, Mia Fredricksen in *The Summer Without Men* only experiences psychoanalysis from the point of view of a patient. The main character and narrator Mia gains insights into her Self through the dialogic exchange of psychoanalysis. A psychological treatment of conversation process includes the extra linguistic elements of the Between of analyst and patient, or physician and patient as Freud names the roles of the two parties involved in psychoanalysis. We have already encountered Erik’s observations on how his different roles influence his emotional reactions and how he reflects on his own character,
his Self. However, this double role is not present in *The Summer Without Men* where Mia only experience psychoanalysis from the point of view of the patient.

Mia Fredrickson suffers a mental breakdown when her husband of thirty years leaves her for another woman. Her breakdown forces her to realise that some of the roles that have defined her character before are lost, and she starts a psychoanalytical process of reconstruction of her character. In this reconstruction process where Mia develops her character’s personality, as opposed to revealing her character gradually, Mia goes through the personality development stages as defined by Sigmund Freud.

Mia and Erik narrate their stories in the first person narrative. This is a literary choice of Hustvedt and resembles the form of I narrative in psychoanalysis. The story of the “I”, the subjective all knowing perspective, needs confirmation from another person mirroring the I. The psychoanalyst of Dr. S. takes on this role for Mia and Dr. S’s confirmation is crucial to Mia’s reconstruction. However, Mia seems to test the waters of her new Self in conversations with other characters. In the Between Mia and other characters in *The Summer Without Men* a gradual reconstruction, however not linear, takes place in Mia’s character. She sees this new Self when she is mirrored by Dr. S. and other central characters like: her mother, her daughter Daisy, her husband Boris, her sister Beatrice, the poetry group that she teaches, her neighbour Flora and her family, the Swans who are her mother’s friends and especially Abigail who shares her secret with Mia. The reader learns more about Mia through the dialogues between these characters just mentioned. Dialogism in these dialogues confirms or questions Mia’s narrative.

Through the dialogues Hustvedt lets Mia learn about her Self from another angle. Out of the Between brought about by dialogues in the novel comes new insights important for the reconstruction of Mia’s Self. Not only does the author present another angle, by introducing the Between she also adds another level of understanding on part of both characters and
reader. In her essay “Freud’s Playground” Siri Hustvedt writes: “I have been borrowing Martin Buber’s term “the Between.” For the philosopher, “the Between” was an ontological reality that could not be reduced to either person involved and was more than both” (Hustvedt 2013). Buber in his work *I and Thou* (1971) discusses the interaction between two people. Buber distinguishes the interaction to be of “I and It” or “I and You”. The I and It is an interaction which incorporates the past and where the understanding between the two is limited to the I viewing the It as an object. Very differently, the interactions Between I and You personify the You and You is a subject in the present. The Between thus becomes larger that the I and the You alone. Hustvedt explains further her understanding of Buber’s entity in “Freud’s Playground”: “It was not a relation of immersion or loss in the other person, not a schizophrenic confusion of I and you. It was a third reality” (Hustvedt 2013, 201).

The Between of the novels *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American*, I would argue, is the entity of dialogical exchange Between characters in the novel, Between the main character and narrator and the reader where communication takes place through dialogues, monologues and the narrator’s storytelling whether in drama or playfulness or in psychoanalysis. I would argue that this resembles the Between in a stage performance where dialogues are the Between of characters and audience, together with monologues and the narrator’s storytelling. I think that elements of Hustvedt’s novels resemble play, drama, in such a way. A demonstration of this dramatic quality is the stage reading of *The Summer Without Men* 3 April 2017 in New York by the Scandinavian American Theater Company and directed by Peter Langdal. The novel was adapted for stage by Karen-Maria Bille and Peter Langdal from Denmark, and it was translated from the Danish version by David Adler. Hustvedt’s incorporation of genres within genre was acted out (Bille, SATC, 2017)
There is evidence of this play with genres in *The Summer Without Men*. The main character Mia discovers interactions between the girls in her poetry group that resembles the bullying Mia experienced as a child. Mia has at this point in the novel been in a psychoanalytical process of reconstruction of personality for a while. This enables her to take a new stand, to embrace her empowered Self, take the role as director and stage a setting where the drama between the girls can unfold. Mia narrates:

> Enlightenment about Alice was not forthcoming. I smiled at the little group gathered around me and said very slowly, “It may be hard to believe, but I was young once, too, and moreover, I *remember* being young. I remember being exactly your age, in fact, and I remember *jokes*, too.” It was a cinematic moment, and I was fully conscious of it. (*Summer* 107)

Mia sets the stage and creates a frame from which she can direct the outcome by the use of literary tools of story telling taking on different perspectives, or point of views. The main character amalgamates elements from psychoanalysis where she includes elements of memory. She “remembers”, and of conscious versus unconscious parts of memory; “fully conscious” about what she is putting to play, and literature; she acts for “the little group gathered around” and describes the moment as “a cinematic moment” where she compares it to a scene in a film. In this Mia uses the skills of her new Self to deal with a situation that she recognises in her own past and that she, by using her new insight, might change the outcome of. In the quote above, I would argue, interweaves the themes of psychoanalysis and play. There is an example of the theatrical roles of Mia as both the actor and the director where resonance of drama, of play, shines through in the following when Mia says: “I beam out at you, the audience, turn again, and the door shuts with a loud Foley click behind me” (*Summer* 108). Mia compares herself to a ray of light shining and reaching out to the readers, her “audience”. This use of the imagery of the beam, the light in which she is enhanced to her readers in the novel and it makes her stand out from the other characters involved. She leaves
the stage with a sound effect, “a loud Foley click” of a quality door mechanism, which emphasises her exit from the stage and by this she creates more drama.

However, the connotation of play is important to Hustvedt in more than one fashion. She comments on the act of playing in her essay “Playing, Wild Thoughts, and Novel’s Underground”: “Making a work of fiction is playing, playing is deadly earnest, perhaps, but playing nevertheless” (Hustvedt 2013, 38). “Making” is “playing” to Hustvedt and the process of writing fiction seems to be a playful one. Is the author playing in the novels with the characters and the reader alike in content and form of her novels or is it perhaps a mode of being in play? In the same essay Hustvedt shares some of the British paediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott’s arguments on play: “that play is universal, part of every human being’s creativity and the source of a meaningful life. Making art is a form of play” (Hustvedt 2013, 38). Hustvedt in this essay incorporates Winnicott’s psychoanalytical perspectives of play and braids them into her own reflections of play as an essential part of the creation of art in all respects.

Winnicott again reflects on playing in psychoanalysis in his article for the International Journal of Psychoanalysis from 1968 where he writes: “Psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the patient and that of the therapist. Psychotherapy has to do with two people playing together” (Winnicott 1968, 49). Winnicott describes the area where psychotherapy takes place, in playing, as the overlapping personal spaces of the patient and the analyst. I would argue this could be interpreted to resonate with how Hustvedt uses the term the Between which she borrows from Buber. The play, or playful state, in the patient is essential for psychotherapy or psychoanalysis to take place Winnicott explains: “The corollary of this is that where playing is not possible then the work done by the therapist is directed towards bringing the patient from a state of not being able to play into a state of being able to play” (Winnicott 1968, 49). Thus the therapist’s responsibility is to
bring the patient into this state of being able to play. In the role of the physician or analyst lies the responsibility to create the right setting.

I suggest that Hustvedt uses psychoanalysis to create play between patient and analyst in order to bring her characters Mia in *The Summer Without Men* and Erik in *The Sorrows of an American* into a state of play where the characters become able to reconstruct a new Self, develop their personalities, through the narrative process of psychoanalysis. Hustvedt incorporates playfulness into her novels where she creates play between narrator and reader where the author gradually reveals the characters. I suggest that Hustvedt cleverly incorporates the two different understandings of character development, revealing of character and development of the character’s personality, simultaneously in both novels and that by doing so the author creates a depth in her character development which makes her characters translate to the reader much as real persons.

Siri Hustvedt’s works *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American* use first person narration to express her position of all viewpoints being subjective. The first persons of the novels, Mia and Erik, capture the overall subjectivity of the world and can only learn about their Selves by dialogues or interactions with others. Only in the dialogical interaction between the subject and other persons can the characters learn about their Selves from another angle. This is a two-part thesis with discussions of dialogism in play and psychoanalysis as two perspectives where the characters can learn about their Selves.

A Survey of the Field

Hustvedt’s works have reached academic interest and are discussed by critics such as Dr. Christine Marks who received her PhD with a dissertation project on relational identity constellations in the works of Siri Hustvedt that she consequently developed into the
monograph “I am because you are”. Relationality in the Works of Siri Hustvedt, published in 2014. Marks recently co-edited the volume Zones of Focused Ambiguity in Siri Hustvedt's Works: Interdisciplinary Essays with Joanne Hartmann and Hubert Zapf (De Gruyter 2016). I am in this thesis taking up what Christine Marks and these other critics have argued. I am aiming at nuancing it by bringing in new angles to the analysis. One subject that Marks does not fully include in her analysis is play; however, she and other critics in Interdisciplinary Essays discuss psychoanalysis with regard to Hustvedt’s works. Yet my analysis of play and psychoanalysis will build on their work as well as add something slightly different than what these other critics argue.

Marks analyses several of Hustvedt’s works in “I am because you are” Relationality in the Works of Siri Hustvedt. In the chapter “The Other as Complementation of the Self” Marks describes the foundation for Siri Hustvedt’s works: “To Hustvedt, dialogical exchange is the basic condition of human existence” (Marks 2014, 33). Marks relates in this passage dialogical exchange to be at the very core of “human existence” for Hustvedt and at the very core of being a human being. In Hustvedt’s works dialogical exchange or dialogism is essential to character development in which she is influenced by philosophers such as Martin Buber and Mikhail Bakhtin. I will investigate their approaches to dialogical exchange or dialogism and how they might apply to Hustvedt’s works.

However, turning back to Marks, she comments on the sparsity of investigation on Hustvedt’s inclusion of psychoanalytical discourses which Marks regards as “so formative to her rethinking of identity” (Marks 2014, 15). The publishing of Zones of Focused Ambiguity in Siri Hustvedt’s Works Interdisciplinary Essays in 2016 has added the more critics’ analyses to the subject. Additionally, in October 2015, the first academic seminar on Siri Hustvedt’s work, “Living, Thinking, Looking” organised by Alex Williamson, was held in London by Centre for Contemporary Literature by Birkbeck, University of London, which I attended. In
this seminar Dr Christine Marks was one of the keynote speakers along with her co-editors of Zones of Focused Ambiguity in Siri Hustvedt’s Works Interdisciplinary Essays Professor Dr Hubert Zapf and Dr Joanna Hartmann both of University of Augsburg, Germany. Siri Hustvedt was present in the seminar listening in for the keynote lectures and panel discussions presented by eight critics of Hustvedt’s works on the topics: “The Subjective World: Objects, Power and Perception”, “Trauma Narratives: 9/11”, “America and Global Mourning and Art”, “Authorship and Gender”.

Dr Marks’ keynote lecture explored relationality and play in The Blazing World, where she reflected on how a sense of self comes under threat when women play with the masks of men, exemplified by the three male artists who mask the main character Harry. Play, Marks indicated, demands a loss of subjectivity. Marks did not address The Summer Without Men or The Sorrows of an American in her lecture and yet Hustvedt’s preoccupation with play triggers my interest in investigating this element of her writing in my thesis.

Theory and Relevance of Dialogical Exchange in Psychoanalysis and Play

Despite the fact that human interaction includes language and thus distinguishes our communication from that of other mammals, deciphering language alone in a conversation sometimes leaves less than what was Between the persons engaged in the dialogue. In this thesis I will discuss how this extra linguistic something in novels such as The Summer Without Men and The Sorrows of an American influence character development of the main characters. Dialogue is central to both play, in any connotation of the word, and psychoanalysis. However, breaking down the language does not fully bring out the potential in either play or psychoanalysis. There are several literary critics, philosophers and
psychoanalysts who research dialogic exchange or dialogism, communication that goes beyond words.

Professor David Shepherd of Keele University, UK, defines dialogism:

The term “dialogism” is most commonly used to denote the quality of an instance of discourse that explicitly acknowledges that it is defined by its relationship to other instances, both past, to which it responds, and future, whose response it anticipates. (Shepherd 2017 paragraph 2)

Shepherd writes about attributes to discourse that indicate relationship to past and present. I would argue that Shepherd recognises how the relationship between the parts in a dialogue influence the communication between them, and that this relationship between the parts in a dialogue helps define features of verbal transmission. The “relational constitution” of dialogism, the principle of a relationship between two or more parties in a dialogue, Shepherd defines as an opposition to monologues:

The positive connotations of dialogism are often reinforced by a contrast with “monologism,” denoting the refusal of discourse to acknowledge its relational constitution and its misrecognition of itself as independent and unquestionably authoritative. (Shepherd 2017 paragraph 2)

Shepherd’s definition of dialogism builds on the heritage of two other scholars: the German philosopher Martin Buber and the Russian philosopher, literary critic and semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin.

However, Shepherd’s inclusion of the past, in addition to the future, somewhat opposes Buber’s distinctions within dialogical exchange. The German philosopher Martin Buber discusses dialogic exchange in *I and Thou*: “The basic word I-You can only be spoken with one’s whole being. The basic word I-It can never be spoken with one’s whole being” (Buber 1970, 54). Buber goes on to explain this relation between I and either You or It more thoroughly: “The world as experience belongs to the basic word I-It. The basic word I-You establishes the world of relation” (Buber 1970, 56). Buber calls the I-You a basic word, an entity, as he does not believe there to be I without either You or It. In Buber the I-You
illustrates relation, and Buber divides his world of relations into three: world with nature, life with men and life with spiritual beings. Hustvedt on several occasions refers to Buber and she gives credit to him “for having shaped her idea of ‘the Between’ ” (Marks 2014, 34). There is an example of Hustvedt’s use of the Between in her essay “Freud’s Playground”: “an ontological reality that could not be reduced to either person involved and was more than both” (Hustvedt 2013, 201). Hustvedt’s description of the Between resonates with Buber’s illustration of I-You when she describes I-You as an entity not to be reduced to the persons involved in a dialogue: “could not be reduced to either person”. Similarly, Hustvedt describes her understanding the entity of I-You as larger than both characters involved in a dialogue: “more than both”. Buber further accounts for the depth of the I-You relation in his work I-Thou (1970) in which he includes in this entity his world of relations of nature, life and spiritual beings. Marks in the following comments on Buber: “Buber illustrates his emphasis on an inner connection that goes beyond words” (Marks 2014, 38) The beyond words is an extra linguistic element essential to the discussion of character development in Hustvedt’s novels The Summer Without Men and The Sorrows of an American.

Bakhtin addresses an extra linguistic element in Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics where he describes the polyphonic novel by the quality of the relationship Between narrator and character. He talks about the narrator who allows the character the right to the final word. Bakhtin says: “A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices is in fact the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky’s novels” (Bakhtin 1999, 6) All these voices within the characters, I would argue, speak for a character development that extends beyond the author’s revealing of character. There are dialogistic elements to Bakhtin’s description that argues for multiple voices within the novel. The dialogical exchange Buber describes creates a larger entity and includes more than the textual in the dialogues of the characters in a novel in that the dialogical exchange
includes these voices and consciousnesses described by Bakhtin. In *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American* the narrators Mia and Erik are the main characters. I would argue that elements of psychoanalysis either in role of patient or analyst and patient function to add a polyphonic element to Hustvedt’s novels. Mia has a dialogue with Dr. S. and her inner voice of Mr. Nobody that gives *The Summer Without Men* this polyphonic level, whereas Erik carries both roles in psychoanalysis, that of analyst and patient, that gives a polyphonic element to *The Sorrows of an American*.

Communication in psychoanalysis and play, the dialogical exchange, move beyond words. Psychoanalysis and play address the extra linguistic aspect of dialogue that, I would argue, Siri Hustvedt uses to develop the main characters in *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American*. The intersubjective exchange of dialogism is central in Hustvedt’s novels both in revealing of character and of development of personality. Hustvedt uses a first person view- point in both novels to express her position of all view points being subjective. By dialogical exchange in psychoanalysis and play the first person main characters of the novels learn about their Selves. The dialogical exchange of play and psychoanalysis offers interaction Between the subject and other persons in which the characters can learn about their Selves from another angle. The first part of this thesis will introduce discussion of psychoanalysis as a perspective involving dialogic exchange where the characters can learn about their Selves, and the second part of this thesis will introduce discussion of play as another perspective of dialogism where the characters can learn about their Selves.
The narrative is central in the dialogical exchange of psychoanalysis in which Siri Hustvedt’s main characters, Mia in *The Summer Without Men* and Erik in *The Sorrows of an American*, are developed. In her essay “Playing, Wild Thoughts, and Novel’s Underground” Hustvedt says: “When psychoanalysis appeared on the horizon, the novel welcomed it into itself as it welcomes all discourses” (Hustvedt 2013, 38). In this essay Hustvedt talks about the mingling of the genre and calls the novel a “hybrid” a term she borrows from Bakhtin. Hustvedt incorporates psychoanalysis in *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American* and in this chapter I argue how psychoanalysis facilitate elements of character development and structure of both novels. I will analyse how both novels incorporate psychoanalysis in a way where it functions as a driver of character development in a way where the main characters gain knowledge about their Selves. When I use character development in psychoanalysis the connotation is the development of the characters’ personality, or reconstruction of the Self as contrasted to character development in the connotation of gradually revealing the character. Another aim for me is to discuss how the characters’ roles of patient or physician or both are cues to character development of Mia Fredrickson and Erik Davidsen. On a more formal level, I argue in this thesis that psychoanalysis operates as a hidden structure in the novels. This hidden structure becomes visible to the reader when the main characters gain knowledge about and reconstruct their Selves. This reconstruction of Self happens, I argue, whilst the characters are going through the different stages of psychoanalysis. Thus the structures of the plots of the novels, I suggest, might be viewed to resemble the structure of psychoanalytical processes. Psychoanalysis is not a linear time process: it more resembles that of memory where one moment in memory is linked to the
next. The linkage could be of emotions or experience for instance: Mia’s sex journals. In them the main character puts her sexual experience down in a journal. The journal is chronological, however the experiences happen sometimes with years apart. The narrative of the journal is interrupted by other incidents which infers with linearity. The title of a book review by Margaret Lush in Journal of Child Psychotherapy which she calls “The non-linear mind: psychoanalysis of complexity in psychic life” captures the structure of the plot in *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American*. The complexity shows right at the start of the novels that start by looking back and giving the reader a clue to the plot. References of Freud in Hustvedt’s works, elements of psychoanalysis incorporated into her novels and essays, as well as the fact that Freud is the “father” of psychoanalysis made me want to incorporate dialogism in psychoanalysis as one of the elements of analysis of character development in the two novels. I will now account for Freud’s psychoanalysis which is the point of departure for the analysis.

Psychoanalysis was developed by the physician and neurologist Sigmund Freud at the beginning of the twentieth century in Vienna, Austria. Psychoanalysis is a patient-physician process in which the patient develops an understanding of the relationship between her conscious and unconscious mental processes. In his work *General Introduction To Psychoanalysis*, Freud describes psychoanalysis and the importance of the patient-physician relationship to the process. In psychoanalysis the narrative of the patient is central. The physician’s role of catalyst in the psychoanalytical process is essential for the patient to reconstruct a new Self. The new Self is the character’s personality as it has changed to be during psychoanalysis. The physician helps the patient to achieve access to the hidden or unconscious parts of the Self in this process. Freud explains this in *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis:*

In psychoanalysis nothing occurs but the interchange of words between the patient and the physician. The patient talks, tells of his past experiences and present impressions,
complains, confesses his wishes and emotions. The physician listens, tries to direct the thought process of the patient, reminds him of things, forces his attention into certain channels, gives him explanations and observes the reactions of understanding or denial which he calls for in the patient. (Freud 2015, 338)

This passage describes the communication between the two parties in the process, the patient and the physician. We see that their roles are different in psychoanalysis. Freud says that the patient “talks, tells of his past experience and present impressions”. At the centre of communication is the patient’s narrative. In the dialogue of patient and physician, or patient and analyst as Hustvedt names their roles, the patient “confesses his wishes and emotions”. The analyst, the term I will use from now on, “listens, tries to direct the thought process” and we see that the analyst is not passive but active. However, the agenda in the psychoanalytical process belongs to the patient. The analyst “reminds him of things” and thereby evokes the patient’s memory. Additionally, the analyst “force his attention into certain channels”. The analyst’s understanding of protection mechanisms such as regression, forgetting and denial enables him to discover when these mechanisms are used and to push or force the patient into areas of his memory that are unpleasant. When the analyst “gives him explanations” the unconscious protection mechanisms become conscious and the patient’s understanding of these helps the direction of thoughts towards a new discovery of the Self. Thus, psychoanalysis enables the patient to develop a new construction of her own life narrative, a new story of the Self. The way psychoanalysis functions as a driver in character development we can see when replacing the word patient in the previous explanation of psychoanalysis with the word character. I think Hustvedt uses psychoanalysis skillfully for character development in The Sorrows of an American and The Summer Without Men and the following analysis of the novels will look at textual evidence for this.

The quote above, moreover, explains the function of “the Between”. The dialogical unit of something larger than the two characters who are involved in the communication. Freud seemed to think that there was more to psychoanalysis than the words exchanged
between patient and analyst. The relations to the world around included in the patients past experiences and the unconscious or unconscious memory of this past as well as what influences the present in the patient. The dialogical exchange Between I and You, Buber’s entity (Buber 1970, 100) which includes relations in the dialogue is essential in psychoanalysis. Different interpretations of the Between might be the room Between patient and physician, or the Between as a metaphor of the relation between illness and real life as Freud describes it: “creates an intermediate region between illness and real life,” (Freud 1912, 154). “An intermediate region” might imply that the patient comes to relate to her illness in a new way in which she sees her whole life story or narrative in a new and reconstructed manner. Additionally, the Between might be signifying time in other words the period in between psychoanalytical sessions. We find that Mia’s growth in the spaces between sessions is shown in the development in her relations with other characters in *The Summer Without Men* and her internal dialogue in the novel. Mia engages in what is presented to the reader as a mail dialogue with Mr. Nobody. Mr. Nobody seems to be a personification of Mia’s inner critic who points at Mia’s character flaws. Mr. Nobody changes to Mr. Somebody during the novel. The name Mia gives her inner critic I think is a textual evidence for a reconstruction of her Self even Between sessions of psychoanalysis. The new Self is allowed by Mia to incorporate all elements of her character, weak and strong. I will discuss the role of Mr. Nobody or Mia’s inner dialogue in my next chapter. In either of the interpretations above the Between creates something larger than the two persons engaged in psychoanalysis.

In her essay “Freud’s Playground” Hustvedt writes about the term the Between in both a psychodynamic as well as a philosophical perspective, and she borrows the term from the philosopher Martin Buber. The interpretation of his term that she seems to work from in her essay is the Between as an “ontological reality that could not be reduced to either the person involved and was more than both” (Hustvedt 2013, 201). Hustvedt’s fusion of literature,
philosophy, neuroscience and psychoanalysis creates an interesting understanding expressed by Hustvedt:

> I used to think that in every relation between two people, there was also a third entity—an imaginary creature the players made between them—and that this invisible thing was so important, it deserved to be given a proper name, as if it were a new baby. (Hustvedt 2013, 196)

In this passage Hustvedt talks about a third entity, and already when she was an adolescent she was thinking this third entity deserved a name. Hustvedt seems to have found an understanding for the third entity and says in her essay *Freud’s Playground* that she has borrowed the term the Between from the philosopher Martin Buber.

Another term relevant to the analysis and discussion of *The Summer without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American* is the term “mirroring” which according to the British psychoanalyst Malcolm Pine has been used in many different senses in theoretical and clinical psychoanalysis. One of the senses in which the term has been used is to describe the process in which the physician reflects what the patient is sharing in the dialogue Between the two during psychoanalysis sessions. The mirroring could also find place between the patient and other persons. The concept according to Pines relates to the capacity or incapacity of the patient to recognise similarities and differences between Self and others. Freud already comments on the analyst or physician as an image of a mirror in his *Papers on Technique* in 1912: “The doctor should be opaque to his patients and, like a mirror, show them nothing but what is shown to him” (Freud 1912, 118). Freud in this describes the function of the analyst in which he should leave his person, emotions and opinions out of the reflection he mirrors to the patient. The analyst should “show them nothing but what is shown to him”. Freud’s perspective I think corresponds with Buber’s ideal dialogical exchange when the I-You entity are in the present and engaged in the dialogue. This enables the analyst to be utterly present and the patient to see her Self through the reflections of her own words.
In *The Summer Without Men* the main character Mia’s role is that of the patient, whereas in *The Sorrows of an American* the main character Erik’s role is analyst as well as patient. Erik is a physician by profession, and as part of his profession he also experiences psychoanalysis as a patient, with his own analyst that he talks to, named Magda. The experience of both roles in the psychoanalytical process is important to the analyst and is often, if not always, part of the analyst’s professional further education. As previously described, all psychoanalyses consist of a patient-analyst relationship, where the patient is typically the active part whereas the analyst is typically the observer and catalyst. Erik describes how he behaves in consultation with a patient: “When I listen to a patient, I am not reconstructing the ‘facts’ of case history” (*Sorrows* 86). The analyst Erik comes across as an active part in the process: “listening for patterns, strains of feeling, and associations that may move us out of painful repetitions and into articulated understanding” (*Sorrows* 86). What Erik actively listens for will move the patient and him Self away from “painful repetitions” and into a place where “articulated understanding” may take place. The patient-analyst relationship in psychoanalysis is, as this thesis will move on to prove, central for character development in both *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American*.

*The Summer Without Men*

The main character in *The Summer Without Men*, Mia Fredricksen, is a patient in the patient-analyst relationship of psychoanalysis. In the beginning of the novel she suffers a trauma when her husband leaves her for another woman. Mia describes how her experience of being left by her husband causes her to become mentally ill and hospitalised in a psychiatric ward: “Sometime after he said the word *pause*, I went mad and landed in the hospital” (*Summer* 1). Mia’s husband creates trauma for Mia when “he said the word *pause*”. The
reason for Mia’s illness is introduced to the reader as caused by this incident. Freud talks about trauma as a fixation on a particular event in the past and explains this with reference to two of his patients:

In the first place, both patients give us the impression of being fixated upon some very definite part of their past; they are unable to free themselves therefrom, and have therefore come to be completely estranged both from the present and the future. They are now isolated in their ailment, just as in earlier days people withdrew into monasteries there to carry along the burden of their unhappy fates. (Freud 2015, Location 4546-4549)

In this passage by Freud, he describes mentally ill patients’ involuntary imprisonment by a fixation in the past, which keeps them locked out from their presents and their futures. Freud compares the “estranged” experience to retreats to “monasteries” in which he seems to believe they “carry along the burden of their unhappy faith” as opposed, I assume, to psychoanalytical treatment. According to Freud, it then becomes an essential consequence, I think, to address the trauma of mourning which Mia experiences and for the major part of the novel Mia is an outpatient in psychoanalysis with Dr. S. It is from the patient perspective that Mia gains knowledge about her Self. Thus I think that Mia’s role as patient is essential to the understanding of her character development.

Thus it seems relevant, when considering psychoanalysis as a literary tool for development of character and structure, to investigate the patient-analyst relationship in psychoanalysis a little further. According to Freud, the dialogue between patient and analyst is central to psychoanalysis and in this space of Between is where the unconscious of the patient becomes conscious to her. In this novel, in the Between the unconscious becomes conscious to the reader and the main character simultaneously. Mia gains knowledge about her Self through psychoanalysis, she tells her story, and reconstructs her life narrative in the dialogues with her physician Dr. S. Hustvedt in *The Summer Without Men* presents Dr. S.’s mirroring of Mia’s trauma:
Blowing up is not the same as breaking down and, as we’ve said before, even breaking down can have its purpose, its meanings. You held yourself together for a long time, but tolerating cracks is part of being well and alive. I think you’re doing that. You don’t seem so afraid of yourself.” “I love you Dr. S.” “I’m glad to hear that.” (Summer 19)

The dialogue above exemplifies that dialogue is central to psychoanalysis. In this interchange of words between patient and analyst lies the healing for the patient. The analyst mirrors the patient’s narrative, as when Dr. S. describes the difference to Mia between “blowing up” and “breaking down”. “Breaking down” seems to be working in the transitive connotation of the verb in which in means either to cause to fall or collapse by breaking or shattering and in this understanding Mia still retains all parts of her Self. However, these parts need to be reconstructed into a whole Mia where Dr. S. reflects to Mia that her breakdown might have happened for a reason. My interpretation is that Dr. S. creates this new awareness in Mia of how her breakdown creates possibilities for how her narrative can be put together. Dr. S. mirrors the way Mia has been broken down and figuratively speaking divided into parts. For Mia this opens for reconstruction which possibly will heal wounds from the past. When Dr. S. says “as we’ve said before” it indicates that the topic has been part of Mia’s psychoanalysis sessions before. I think this is an example in Mia and Dr. S. conversation of how psychoanalysis works through the analyst, to rephrase Freud’s words (Freud 2015, 338), when she listens and tries to direct the thought process of Mia. Furthermore, that Dr. S. reminds Mia of things and forces her attention into certain channels, gives her explanations and observes the reactions of understanding or denial which she calls for in Mia. At the same time Dr. S. encourages Mia to embrace the “cracks” in her character, the breaks without complete separation of the parts. The irregularities or imperfections that set Mia apart from a machine are perhaps what Dr. S. describes as “part of being well and alive”. Dr. S. comments that Mia does not seem to be “so afraid of herself”. Dr. S. seems to confirm that Mia has come to terms with the whole of her Self and that she is not so scared by her mental illness as she was at the
start of the novel. Previously in the novel Mia says: “I don’t like to remember the madwoman. She shamed me” (Summer 2). Mia talks of “the madwoman” as someone other than her Self, someone she does not recognise. She explains how her other unknown Self “shamed” her and it seems that Mia tries hard to repress and forget, two of Freud’s techniques of repression, for a period before she accepts her own flaws of character.

**Dialogical exchange is the core of psychoanalysis; however,** there are more dialogical exchanges of importance for character development other than between patient and analyst in the novel. The interpretation of Between as the period between psychoanalytical sessions points to periods when Mia engages with co-characters. I think that these dialogues could also be considered drivers in the psychoanalytical process. If Mia uses her reconstructed character in dialogues her reflections from other characters will presumably change. The manner in which Mia’s co-characters mirror her in dialogues will then function as a further driver of development for the main character. During the summer Mia teaches a poetry class of seven girls in Bonden. This is from Mia’s first encounter with the group and in the following paragraph she gives directions for the writing in her poetry class:

I gave my speech then. “There are no rules,” I told them. “For six weeks, three days a week, we’re going to dance, dance with words. Nothing is prohibited—no thought or subject. Nonsense stupidity, silliness of all kinds are allowed. Grammar, spelling, none of it matters, at least not at first. We’ll read poems, but your poems don’t have to be like the ones we read.” (Summer 23-24)

Mia’s poetry group reflects her speech: “The Seven were silent” (Summer 24). Where I think that the quiet response from the girls might be interpreted to express their surprise to the lack of rules that Mia presents. Maybe silent could be interpreted as a metaphor for depth and to describe the girls’ thoughts in the possibility that everything is allowed. Then one of her students responds verbally to Mia’s speech: “You mean we can write about anything,” Nikki blurted out. “Even nasty stuff” (Summer 24). Nikki puts the surprise into words with the emphasis on “anything” as if she does not believe this to be true. She tests the
water further by adding “even nasty stuff”. Mia then mirrors Nikki and her poetry group when she takes her suggestion literally: “If that’s what you want,“ I said. “in fact, let’s try nasty as a trigger word” (Summer 24). Mia uses Nikki’s suggestion and makes it a driver for their writing process when using “nasty” as a “trigger word” for the girls’ creativity.

The main character’s encouragement of freedom of speech, to dance with words, might mirror the freedom in psychoanalysis, where the rules of conversation are different from those of regular conversation ruled by the expectations of social conduct. The mirroring might indicate Mia’s new aspects of her Self and that they help her move knowledge of her Self from unconscious to conscious in which she reconstructs her new narrative. The mirroring effects Mia’s co-characters have on her narrative and her character development influence the psychoanalytical process, and in this respect I think these dialogues enhance Mia’s reconstruction of her Self.

There are several more pieces of evidence that psychoanalysis functions as a driver of character development in The Summer Without Men. One is the use of a person’s initials instead of her name to keep her identity anonymous. This anonymity for the patient is typical of psychoanalysis. Erik uses initials for his patients in The Sorrows of an American: “After talking to Mr. T’s mother, the attending physician on the ward discovered what I already knew: Mr. T. had stopped taking his drugs” (Sorrows 108). Erik refers to his patient as Mr. T in which the reader learns about Mr. T without knowing his identity. Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, also introduced his patients by initials or a pseudonym. Anna O. is a famous example of this (Phillips 1983, 70). In Turmoil (1998) the Norwegian psychiatrist Finn Skårderud uses initials in a similar manner as Hustvedt’s character the analyst Erik. In The Summer Without Men Mia’s physician is being depersonalised by the narrator and main character Mia who refers to her analyst by the initial: Dr. S. The switch in use of initials from patient to physician contrasts the regular use initials in psychoanalysis and creates an
interesting literary tool of power. The textual empowering of Mia demonstrated how psychoanalysis functions as a driver of character development in the novel. The level of importance of Mia’s narrative grows by initialising the analyst and not the patient. This literary twist of the patient-analyst relationship could be interpreted in different ways. It could imply that main Mia has the more important role in the patient-analyst relationship. Thus the physician is depersonalised and I would argue that Hustvedt might also have used this as a literary tool to emphasise that it is the patient’s narrative that brings about the knowledge and the reconstruction of the Self.

I would argue that there are two understandings of character development in Hustvedt’s novels. One understanding of character development is that the author gradually reveals parts of the character in the novel, and another understanding of character development in which the character develops her personality in the novel. I would argue that Hustvedt uses psychoanalysis to drive character personality development. In The Summer Without Men the author uses psychoanalysis with a different function, where in my examinations the plot of the novel, I would argue that the structure of the novel itself resembles the structure of psychoanalysis. In psychoanalysis the patient-analyst relationship moves both patient and physician through the same development stages despite the fact that they have different perspectives. The psychoanalytical process moves the patient through personality developmental stages and when doing so redefines the traumatic incident or incidences which the patient has experienced leading to trauma. Freud described the stages of development of personality as the oral, anal, phallic, latent and genital stages. This thesis argues that the revelation of character, or quest for Self, is presented to the reader by the main character’s emotional journey through the phases fused by psychoanalysis. According to psychoanalysis Mia needs to move through the different stages in her natural development to find and heal what was lost or broken. The psychoanalytical process moves Mia forward in
her reconstruction of character, of Self, and in the process she redefines her trauma. Mia’s trauma is the loss of her husband that has caused her stagnation in that moment in time and has stopped her from her present and her future.

Mia is an adult of fifty-five and thus she is not going through the phases of personality development for the first time. However, through the tool of psychoanalysis Mia experiences knowledge about her Self from earlier periods in her life that had not previously been known to her on a conscious level. The structure of the novel coincides with her personality development when Mia goes back to previous stages of her psychodynamic development. There are several examples of this in the novel. When Mia leaves the hospital she find a house for rent in her birth town Bonden where her mother lives. There she spends most of her days with her mother and her mother’s friends. Mia’s interaction with her mother, I think, is a journey back to her origins and an example of Mia visiting the oral stage of her personality development, the first of Freud’s personality developments stages. This stage is when the child’s relationship is primarily with its mother. In her Essay “Yonder” Hustvedt talks about how perceptions of a person’s Self varies with geographical relocation: “Transformations of the self are related to where you are, and identity is dependent on others” (Hustvedt 2006, 30). She also talks about interaction Between people as a necessity to see our Selves and how shaping of identity is dependent on interaction with others. Mia relocates to Bonden and back with her mother the following informs both the reader and Mia about their mother-daughter relationship. Mia’s mother says: “I always thought you felt too much,” (Summer 15). The mother describes her reflections on Mia’s emotions and it seems that in her mother’s opinion Mia is very sensitive. Additionally, the view of Mia as an emotional and sensitive person has been talked about in her family before her mother repeats “a family theme” (Summer 15) and the dialogue goes on: “You are still beautiful,” my mother said (Summer 15). This is another example of a relationship between the characters where one, the mother, is in the position to
define the other, Mia. Mia gains knowledge about her Self in her encounters with her mother. Mia gains more insights into her relationships and how they have affected her when she visits other stages in her personality development during the psychoanalytical process. I think the structure of the stages is hidden to Mia and that the knowledge she gains about her Self becomes conscious to Mia and the reader simultaneously. *The Summer Without Men* thus incorporate psychoanalysis in a very specific way.

Psychoanalysis is, as already pointed out, a process in which the physician tries to direct the thought process of the patient. In the following I will attempt to link Freud’s distinction between mourning and neuroses to the main character Mia Fredricksen’s experience of a Brief Reactive Psychosis (*Summer 1*). The diagnosis Mia gets in the novel did not exist in Freud’s time. However, Freud’s description in the following:

> Mourning is a type of emotional fixation on a theory of the past, which also brings with it the most complete alienation from the present and the future. But mourning is sharply distinguished from neuroses that may be designated as pathological forms of mourning. (Freud 2015, 4591)

I think this passage sheds some light on Mia Fredricksen’s trauma when her husband of thirty years, Boris, leaves her for another woman. This trauma of loss, I would argue, corresponds to Freud’s definition of neuroses as a pathological form of mourning. I make this point to distinguish between the reactions to loss that Hustvedt describes in the main characters Mia and Erik where Mia breaks down whereas Erik does not. This is also one reason why the recovery processes in the two main characters differ. According to psychoanalysis, patients will have to move back to and through the different stages in their natural development to find and heal what was lost or broken. The trauma of the main character might have been known to her at an unconscious level for some time as Freud saw psychological problems as rooted in the unconscious mind. Psychoanalysis focuses on bringing the repressed conflict to consciousness, enabling the patient to deal with the conflict. The way Hustvedt uses
psychoanalysis it seems to be a suitable tool to bring the repressed conflict to consciousness for Mia.

The psychoanalytical structure of the narrative of *The Summer Without Men* becomes visible to the reader through Mia’s psychoanalysis. Yet this structure is hidden to the main character. The novel starts by bringing the repressed conflict in the relationship of Mia and Boris to a climax with the following breakdown of Mia. The novel then follows Mia’s reconstruction process where her character development seems to follow Freud’s development stages of the oral, anal, phallic, latent, and genital stages. Even though psychoanalytical processes have the patient going back to previous experiences, it does not take on a linear form. Neither does psychoanalysis, nor does the structure of the plot of *The Summer Without Men*. Therefore this chapter will look at examples from the different stages of development, and at the impact the knowledge the main character gains from the reconstruction of the different stages.

At the beginning of the novel when Mia is hospitalised, she experiences what she describes as a breakdown. A breakdown might be understood as wearing out or sudden loss of ability to function efficiently. In this situation psychoanalysis makes sense as a tool for the reconstruction of Self and the sense of a coherent whole narrative of the Self. The reconstruction work seems to be inevitable and the structure and form of psychoanalysis is the treatment Mia chooses. Mia describes her experience with Haldol at the very start of the novel: “I made this sorry observation as I lay on my bed in the South Unit, so heavy with Haldol I hated to move” (*Summer 1*). The medication experience “so heavy with Haldol” pacifies Mia and already on the first page of the novel the reader learns that the narrative of psychoanalysis seems to be a better form of reconstruction for her than heavy medication. Instead of hating to move Mia describes her analyst Dr. S. to stop her from falling and to help her continue to exist: “I was an outpatient for a while before I found Dr. S., with her low
musical voice, restrained smile, and good ear for poetry. She propped me up—still props me up, in fact” (Summer 2). Mia describes Dr. S.’ voice in warm and positive way and this might imply that Mia feels safe in her interaction with her. Mia loves poetry and shows transference of feelings when she says that Dr. S. has a “good ear for poetry”. A sharing of common interests might create some sort of recognition that is important, I would argue, in any relationship professional or private.

When leaving the hospital Mia moves to Bonden where she grew up to live close to her mother. She returns to the shelter of her mother, to the first of Freud’s development stages. Expressed in the novel by the physical relocation from her home, which she has shared with her husband Boris for thirty years, to a temporarily rented house so close to her mother that she can walk to her mother’s apartment every day. This might be interpreted as moving back to her mother’s womb or as close as possible given the adult circumstances and her mother’s apartment in “a building exclusively for the old and the very old” (Summer 5). I would suggest this is an example of returning to the oral stage, the Freudian development stage where the only important other of the child is the mother.

The conversations shared with her mother give her new information on her father’s and mother’s relationship that she had previously been unaware of. This knowledge seems to have been essential in creating the foundation of Mia’s relationship with her husband, Boris. It turns out there are patterns from her mother’s and father’s relationship that are repeated in her relationship. Both her husband and her father were in love with a woman other than their wives. Mia’s father did not act on it, whereas Boris did. Mia’s mother shares this story with Mia: “‘I have never told you,’ she said, ‘but when you were still small, I believe your father fell in love with someone else’ ” (Summer 30). Sometimes the unconscious notices what the conscious mind does not, and it might be that Mia somehow knew about her father’s feelings even though she was not told at the time. Dialogues with her mother bring the knowledge
about her father to a conscious level. The main character already knew that her father was emotionally unavailable, and Mia had turned to the familiar and chosen a husband who similarly was not emotionally available.

Through Mia’s dialogical exchange with Dr. S. she realises that her husband’s personality resembles her father’s. The following quote ensuing addresses both the emotional instability and unavailability of Mia’s father as well as the repetition of these emotional reactions in Mia’s husband. Dr. S. asks Mia:

“Is it perhaps that you felt your father’s emotions had power in the family, power over your mother, your sister, and you, and you were always stepping around his feelings, trying not to upset him. And you’ve felt the same thing in your marriage, perhaps reproduced the same story, and all the while you’ve gotten angrier and angrier?”

Lord, the woman is sharp, I thought. I answered her with a small, meek “Yes” (Summer 61).

The “power” her “father’s emotions” had in Mia’s family has affected Mia. She has been “stepping around his feelings” without being consciously aware of her actions. The way Dr. S. mirrors what Mia has told her before I think is a piece of evidence of the role the analyst has in the process of reconstruction of Mia’s Self. Dr. S.’s questions bring the knowledge about what has affected the main character to a conscious level for Mia. This change from an unconscious to a conscious level of the perception Mia gains of her Self thus shapes her narrative. She learns from her psychoanalytical process about the repetitions she has made in her life. When Dr. S. addresses Mia’s feelings: “it was perhaps that you felt” she mirrors Mia’s experiences to her and helps Mia look at her own feelings and how she might have experienced them at the time. Dr. S. then functions as a catalyst in bringing about a recreation of Mia’s narrative story about her Self. Mia’s response to her physician “Lord, the woman is sharp”. Dr. S. has taken known elements from her early childhood experiences and shown the main character the repetition of them in her adult choices. The growing self-awareness of the character which happens when Dr. S. reflects her own words back to her helps her reconstruct
her narrative and thereby to reconstruct her Self. This development is not only revealed by the author but the author uses psychoanalysis to create development of personality within the character Mia.

The reader naturally falls into pace with Mia’s journey of Self-awareness. The structure of psychoanalysis is narrative driven and it follows the reconstruction of Mia’s Self, sometimes linear and sometimes not. The reader is left to discover this structure following the narrator’s lead. This creates an interesting, intricate and hidden structure in the novel not even fully known to Mia. The pediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott believed that the true Self is the inner, unconscious, Self. He also believed that the social Self corresponds to the conscious Self that is an adapted version of the inner. Mia has learned about the cleft between what is hidden in the unconscious and what is available to her in conscious knowledge about her Self, and she utilizes her experience when she interacts with her poetry class:

I introduced the cleft between outer perceptions and our sense of inner reality, the misunderstandings that can sometimes shape our relations with other people, that most of us have a feeling of a hidden self, that the social self is different from the solitary self, and so on. (Summer 58)

“The cleft” that Mia talks about is an inner cleft between what we know about our Selves and what is unknown. The unknown or unconscious parts influence and “sometimes shape our relations with other people”. This quote I think illustrates how Mia has gained knowledge about her “hidden self” from her psychoanalytic process with Dr. S. The process has enabled her to express this to others herby that “the social self is different from the solitary self”.

Mia’s personality re-development moves on to the next stage in Freud’s psychosexual development: the anal stage. Although the anal stage seems to be all about toilet training, it is more about controlling behaviours and urges. When a child learns certain boundaries at this stage, she will know when she is crossing another person’s boundaries. Mia tip-toed around her father acknowledging his boundaries of Self while repressing her own. In her adult
relationship with Boris Mia repeats the same pattern: “My father had not been a yeller, Boris was not a yeller, but there can be power in silences, too, more power sometimes” (Summer 81). The “power” described in the passage above will ultimately lead to an overstepping of boundaries of those given the silent treatment. This form of treatment makes it impossible to react, because nothing has happened. This treatment from a parent resembles bullying in the form of exclusion from a circle of friends. The social community is of great importance to all people, and isolation from social recognition such as a silent treatment with no-response to the person will result in a lack of mirroring. The mirroring of the Self, as discussed previously, carries a power of confirmation and definition of the Self.

It may even explain the bullying that Mia experienced in her childhood. At the time when it happened to her, she was unable to react or to not care. Her reaction to the exclusion is the defense mechanism of repression as if the bullying does not exist. She uses the same techniques as her father has used towards feelings he could not handle, although at the time the main character is unconscious of her defense mechanisms.

Mia describes rejection of her poetry as an adult in this manner: “Rejection accumulates; lodges itself like black bile in the belly, which, when spewed out, becomes a screed…” (Summer 65). She has at this point not yet experienced psychoanalysis and repaired her earlier wounds from when she was bullied. Mia describes her experience of being bullied in this passage: “More surreptitious pinches, my ‘imagination,’ in the girl’s locker room. Tears in the toilet stall. Then, mostly, I don’t exist” (Summer 35). The description “I don’t exist” resembles the treatment done to her by her father. When a parent treats a child in this manner, it disturbs the natural development of the child. The main character Mia in The Summer Without Men then has to go back to this stage in her development to rewrite her narrative. She has to reconstruct a new Self that is being treated differently. The physician and Mia both have to give Mia the affirmation that should have been given to the child Mia by the
Mia recognises bullying within the girls in her poetry class. When conflict of rejection and exclusion in her group of girls builds up to a climax, she realises that she has the power to change the outcome. She utilises her change in reaction from flight to her reconstructed Self’s reaction of fight or confrontation with the group of seven. The main character uses her narrative tool, poetry, to have the girls practice empathy and rewrite the story from the point of view of one of the other girls in the group. She practices what she has learned in psychoanalysis to help the girls go back and reconstruct their experience through writing. While Mia’s narrative is reconstructed from passive to active, she empowers the girls in her poetry group. She shares her knowledge about the power of a shared narrative, a reconstructed story that everybody in her poetry group can relate to. Mia empowers the girls by letting them experience the exclusion from another person’s point of view in their writing, to grow empathy and to ensure inclusion of everybody in the poetry group. I would argue that the way Mia acts differently in the situation with her poetry group as to how she handled the situation when she was bullied as a child shows that the main character has changed. This seems to imply character development on two distinct levels simultaneously in the novel. One level is due to the gradual revelation of the main character by the author. The other level is the growth and insight of the character into her personality. I would argue that the process of psychoanalysis has given the main character insight to change her personality and in this respect psychoanalysis seems to be incorporated in a very specific way where it functions as a driver of character development in The Summer Without Men.

Freud describes mirroring by parents important in personality development of any child. The lack of parent mirroring creates a need in the child Mia and later the adult person. I have argued that Mia has to go back to the previous development stages to heal and reconstruct her personality. In Mia’s childhood she has been mirrored more by her mother.
than her father, whose distance seems to have created a barrier between them. This barrier of silence and no-response has disabled the father from mirroring Mia because mirroring only happens in relationships of trust and emotional availability. The emotional unavailability shared by Mia’s father and husband Boris Mia describes in a dialogue with Dr. S.: “I had longed to find both men, hadn’t I? My father and my husband, both prone to long disquisitions about torts or genes and so mute about their own suffering. ‘Your father and your husband shared a number of traits’ Dr. S. had said” (Summer 52). Here Mia describes to Dr. S. how she has had a persistent desire to find both her husband and her father because even though they have been right in front of her they have not been emotionally available to her. When sharing her observations with Dr. S. Mia notices the contrast between the long formal discussion both men can keep up to the lack of ability they show when it comes to narrate and share their emotions. Hustvedt lets Mia describe her observation to Dr. S. thus the author enables Mia to see her experience from another angle within the psychoanalytical session. In these sessions Mia comes to understand that it is not verbal insufficiency in the men but an emotional unavailability in them for her. In dialogical terms I would argue that the oral exchange of emotions between Mia and her father and Mia and her husband as Hustvedt presents them seems limited to the unit of I-It. Their dialogical exchange is not presented to the reader as a unit of I-You, a unit larger than the two people involved when they are present in the moment of the dialogical exchange and where this presence involves listening not only to the words but also what lies between. This divide between the men and their emotions make them unable to include emotions in their interaction with other characters. Hustvedt reveals this to the reader by the use of psychoanalytical process in which Mia’s character development of personality has made Mia aware that the two men do not possess the ability to mirror her as the character she has become. In the dialogue above there is textual evidence that Dr. S. supports Mia’s discovery and I would argue that Dr. S. is able to mirror Mia. Dr. S.
rephrases Mia’s words and confirms Mia’s newfound discovery. In the novel Mia realises that she unconsciously has experienced her father as emotionally unavailable. This led her to repeat the same pattern in her marriage to the emotionally unavailable Boris. Mia has already narrated all this to Dr. S. in their sessions. In the preceding quote Dr. S. mirrors Mia’s narrative, by summing up Mia’s narrative to her. Dr. S. uses the technique of mirroring, when she reflects Mia’s narrative and gives it back to Mia. In Dr. S.’ reflection Mia is able to see her Self and it enables Mia to reconstruct her Self one stage of Freud’s personality development stages at the time.

The stage relevant for the above quote is the phallic stage. At this stage, which normally happens between the ages of three and five or six years of age according to Freud, the child becomes aware of sexual differences between the sexes. The phallic stage in psychoanalytical theory of personality development is the stage where the child, at an unconscious level, wants to substitute the same sex parent with herself, the Oedipus complex. In the case of Mia in The Summer Without Men, her choice in husband seems to be a resolution to her Oedipus complex and might explain why she chooses a husband who is unable to mirror her. Mia’s solution to her Oedipus complex is finding a husband similar to her father drives her character development.

The repetition Mia does with the men in her life echoes what Hustvedt addresses in *Freud’s Playground* on remembering versus repeating:

> What we don’t explicitly remember, we repeat, and these reenactments of learned emotional responses, mechanical in their appearance, are like a musical phrase repeated, sometimes as nauseam, between patient and analyst in an echoing drama that often goes back to our earliest, unsymbolized relations (*Freud’s Playground* 209).

Hustvedt says that “we repeat” actions which we do not remember. These repetitions of “drama” might even be repeated across generations “back to our earliest, unsymbolized relations”. The cause of repetition in Mia’s behaviour could also be found in the behavioural
pattern of her mother from when she was in a similar situation of emotional infidelity from Mia’s father. That Mia copies her mother’s reactions to take her mother’s place with her father. The solution and reconstruction of Mia changes her behavioural pattern and Dr.S. mirroring enables to do so. The Summer Without Men ends in a scene where Mia is in her living room with her daughter Daisy and her neighbours in Boden. Daisy notices a car that comes up the driveway and she enthusiastically sees that it is her dad:

I heard the bell. “It’s Dad, Mom. It’s Dad! Well, well, aren’t you going to answer it? What’s the matter with you?” Flora grabbed Daisy around the thighs and began to bounce up and down in anticipations. “Well?” She crowed. “Well?” “You get it,” I said. “Let him come to me.” (Summer 216)

Mia breaks the chain of repetition when she says that she wants Boris to come to her, “Let him come to me”. This shows that Mia has become conscious of her behavioural patterns and changed features of her character and thereby her behaviour.

The ending of the novel corresponds to the fulfillment of her reconstruction of her Self. Mia has at this point of the novel moved through all of her development stages; oral, anal, phallic, latent and genital, as described by Freud. To reach full reconstruction she additionally has to move through the last two stages in personality development: the latent stage and the genital stage. The latent stage is the stage when the libido is dormant and most sexual impulses are repressed and channeled though other activities often with children of the same gender. The genital stage is when the sexual instinct is directed to sexual pleasure.

Mia’s sex journal provides textual examples from the main character’s return to these stages. Mia observes the girls in her poetry group, their difference in maturation both mentally and physically, and Mia describes her inspiration for her journal: “The girls and their blooming bodies may have been an indirect catalyst for the project I launched that same evening” (Summer 25). The girls’ “blooming bodies” evoke past memories in Mia. She describes how she remembers her Self at an earlier stage in life: “I had been called back to a young and hopelessly serious self, … (Summer 25) Her memories “called back” Mia as she used to be “a
young and serious self”. Mia describes her own Self from a distance, a distance including
time and emotions alike.

The different records in Mia’s journal relate to the different stages. She describes her
lack of emotional reaction in the following passage: “The sex journal was not providing me
with the release I had hoped for” (Summer 52). In this quote the main character explains to the
reader that she is not relieved when writing down her sexual experiences in her journal from
her first to her later experiences. Her lack of release that she had hoped for might stem from
different explanations. One of them is that the idea of a journal seems to be her own and not
initiated by her psychoanalyst. However, the journal as a genre is generally recognized as
having a potentially healing in effect in many psychiatric treatments. Additionally, the literary
form is familiar to Mia and a form in which she feels at home. The lack of release she
experiences by writing the journal might be explained by the lack of the Between in this
process. In Buber’s terms the journal might be seen as the It in the I—It since it relates to the
past and additionally does not involve another person. There is no Between, no dialogical
exchange Between I-You which is vital to psychoanalysis when Mia writes her journal. This
further enhance the idea that psychoanalysis functions as an underlying structure in the novel
The Summer Without Men where the narrator’s journal is a structural part of it.

In addition, the journal provides another piece of evidence for psychoanalysis
underlying the structure of the novel. I have argued that to reconstruct her Self Mia has to go
back to the stages where she has not been mirrored, stages where she was not reflected and
thus did not receive a confirmation of her Self. These stages are typically the ones Mia
realises that she repeats actions from that are non-beneficial to her. Mia seems to have an
expectation that she will find some answers for her breakdown by writing her journal. She
chronologically writes down her sexual encounters, which serve as examples of linear
structure in the novel. Only at one point she is disturbed by her thoughts about Boris. It seems
that this exact memory of Boris does not include emotional betrayal, disappointment, anger, sadness and loss linked to him in other parts of the novel. Mia describes how she loved Boris: “The electric air. He placed his hand over mine and pressed my fingers into the table, but I felt it between my legs. I felt my jaw loosen and my mouth open. It was grand, my love, wasn’t it?” (Summer 28). Hustvedt incorporates the journal which gives the reader new knowledge about the character Boris and it provides an example of character development that is not development of the character’s personality. In the journal Boris show strong emotions of love and the reader gets to know that the emotionally unavailable Boris has more sides to him in the beginning of the two characters’ relationship. Mia somehow talks to Boris towards the end of this quote. Then she seems to wake up and calls for Boris’ confirmation of her own feelings: “Well, wasn’t it?” (Summer 28). It is like she dreams herself back in time, into these lovely sensations that she experienced in the moment. The end of her sex journal incorporate her feelings more strongly than the earlier entries. I would argue that an additional reason for Mia’s lack of release when she writes her journal could be found in her lack of mirroring at these stages. When she goes back to these events it neither changes the experiences nor play a role in her reconstruction of Self.

Additionally, the lack of release Mia experiences from writing in her journal could also be seen as a piece of evidence that the psychoanalytical structure is hidden to the main character and the reader alike. The journal notes are put down at uneven intervals and its content varies in length and intensity. Mia starts to reflect on the increased difficulty she has when writing. She ponders on the process, the content and her own emotionlessness or lack of Self-respect perhaps: “And yet, why did the mature woman look back at the girl with such coolness, such lack of sympathy?” (Summer 52-53). It seems like Mia does not understand why she is not emotionally involved in her notes in her sex diary. She seems unconscious of her feeling or maybe she does not remember how she felt at the time. Maybe her development
was linear and present at the time when she experienced the action and in this respect deviated from the psychoanalytical structure.

The emotional void in her recording of past experiences could be understood to imply that she has not developed beyond the earlier stages in her personality. Thus Mia is unable to make notes of her early sexual experiences in a different manner. Maybe the I—It experience, the past but not relational Buberian understanding gives Mia’s experience only one dimension. Maybe Mia’s un-mirroring father, his emotional detachment, did not provide her with the emotional response, the I-You, necessary for Mia to establish a true Self. The distance and lack of emotional reactions in response to her journal might stem from the author, the false Self.

Marks analyses the role of the un-mirroring mother Lucille in Hustvedt’s novel *What I Loved* in her chapter on “Hustvedt’s Application of Relational Psychoanalysis” when she suggests: “Lucille is probably the most unattainable character in *What I Loved*” (Marks 2014, 188). Marks describes Lucille as an emotionally distant character not present for her son. In Marks analysis she discusses the effect this lack of emotional availability has on Lucille’s son Mark. The plot of *What I loved* unfolds the void in the mother character stops her from mirroring Mark and this has a devastating effect on Mark. He incorporates his mother’s reflection to his own perception; that he is insignificant and unimportant and consequently he treats himself as such a person. Similarly Mia experiences her father and her husband, Boris, as unattainable. Their reflections of her, their mirroring of her, is of someone insignificant and this she incorporates into her self-perception. In her analysis Marks uses theories and studies by the British psychoanalysts John Bowlby (1907-1990) and Donald W. Winnicott (1896-1971) who related to the emotionally absence, separation and death as loss.

We see that Mia in *The Summer Without Men* has experienced two losses: the emotionally absence in both father and husband and separation from both father, by death,
and husband, by separation. Her losses seem to add up and force her to redirect herself— to reconstruct, I argue, from a psychoanalytical perspective in this part of my thesis. The way Mia used to solve difficult situations in her life before fails to work and she breaks down, she becomes hospitalised and diagnosed. All broken down, she must find her new Self. She must reconstruct and redirect from her traumatic loss to find her Self.

_The Sorrows of an American_

Loss is a key to the understanding of _The Sorrows of an American_ too. Erik Davidsen, the main character and narrator of the novel, is a physician specialised in psychiatry. Erik applies psychoanalysis in treatment of his patients, and as a practitioner of psychoanalysis he also experiences psychoanalysis as a patient. Freud required that all physicians who wanted to practice psychoanalysis should experience the process before they were authorized to practice psychoanalysis. Today the training of physicians specialising in psychiatry still includes personal experience in the process. The journalist Rowenna Davis addresses this requirement in the headline of her article for _The Independent_: “If you want to be an analyst you must undergo psychoanalysis yourself” (Davis 2010). Davis comments on the psychoanalytical process as being a process of discovering the unconscious mind. Davis’ description of psychoanalysis as an “intensive personal analysis” emphasises the intensity of the process and the personal cost of moving unconscious knowledge to a conscious level. Erik’s insight into the psychoanalytical process from both the patient and the analyst’s point of view is important for his character development. Erik meets the experienced physician Magda for psychoanalytical sessions. His experience with both roles makes him represent both angles in psychoanalysis, the analyst and the patient, and he gains knowledge about him Self using both perspectives.
Erik’s role and perspective as an analyst is what he first turns to when experiencing the death of his father. This traumatic experience of loss upsets the main character; however, he seems to gain his knowledge about him Self from an analyst’s perspective. The behaviour of the main character in the beginning of the novel implies that Erik takes on his role of analyst and listens to his co-characters. In this analytic role he tries to direct the thought processes of his sister Inga and his niece Sonia. Erik gives them explanations and observes the reactions of understanding or denial in both of them respectively. Given the knowledge Erik has of psychoanalytical processes it might be that he is conscious of how the analytic role he takes on influences how he is dealing with this crisis of loss in his life. On the other hand, it might be that Erik unconsciously takes on a role in which he feels the safest or the role where he is able to keep a distance from his own emotions. Whether it is safety or distance that bring on the role Erik applies in this situation, the reader will find that the more distant perspective in Erik is dominant in the first part of the novel where his analyst role drives his character development.

Mourning brings about a crisis in the main character Erik. Freud describes mourning in this manner: “Mourning is a type of emotional fixation on a theory of the past, which also brings with it the most complete alienation from the present and the future” (Freud 2015, 4591). Freud describes the feelings of loss as an “emotional fixation on a theory from the past” and we find evidence of Erik’s fixation in his obsession with his father’s letters. When Erik goes back to his childhood home for his father’s burial, he looks through his father’s study where he discovers a lot of letters. The letters are to and from different persons, but the ones that catches Erik’s attention is from an unknown woman of a relationship prior to his father’s marriage to his mother. When sharing the content of the letters with his sister Inga they both become very curious about the mystery of their father’s unknown past. Erik seems particularly fixated on finding out about the past. This might be because the past could
change, in Buberian words, an I-It entity into an I-You entity. Thereby it changes his identity or Self as Erik knows it. Erik’s loss of his father is one loss, in another loss he is threatened by loosing his Self.

From Erik’s analyst perspective he observes the sorrow from the reactions of his close relations: his sister Inga, her daughter Sonia and to some extent his mother. They all give him perspectives on the sorrow or loss that he may observe, analyse and help them through. Erik thus gains knowledge about him Self and his mourning more indirectly at first. Erik initiates our acquaintance with him in the following. “My sister called it ‘the year of secrets,’ but when I look back on it now, I’ve come to understand it was a time not of what was there, but of what wasn’t” (Sorrows 1). Erik in this passage looks back at the traumatic incident of loosing his father and ponders on what was not there anymore. Hustvedt in this opening frames the plot of the novel in a few sentences. Erik’s father is dead and this creates a void of what is not there. The father’s secret that Erik and his sister search for reveals nothing more about their father than that he was a man of his words and this Erik and Inga already knew. The secret did not add anything new to their father’s personality and thus the year was a time of a secret that was not a secret after all in the way they feared. Erik shares his mourning of losing his father with his relatives and they are important for Erik to obtain his familiar perspective of an analyst and in this perspective he stands his ground in which he can manage his loss so that it does not turn into pathological mourning, called neuroses by Freud. Erik is still able to solve his problems by using the dialogical tools of psychoanalysis and of his physician training by which he tries to solve the puzzle of his father’s secret. Contrastingly, Mia’s initial way of solving problems broke down, and left without tools to solve her troubled situation she was hospitalised and diagnosed for her loss. Erik remembers an episode from a psychiatric hospital. There he met a patient who had not dealt with his traumatic experience. The patient had, however, escaped into alcohol abuse. Erik reflects: “Trauma isn’t part of a story; it is
outside story. It is what we refuse to make part of our story” (Sorrows 52). The narrator’s reflects on flight from crisis turn them into trauma. Erik knows that he eventually will have to deal with the loss of his father on a personal level and not to “refuse” it. When he takes on the role of analyst for his family he helps them include their mourning into their life story. When Erik steps out of the analyst role and into a patient role he allows his Self to gradually incorporate his loss. The quest to reveal the secret is another start for Erik to include the sorrow into his own story. However, the role of analyst is the dominant at the start of the novel.

The opening of the novel introduces the patient-analyst relationship exemplified by the introduction of Sarah who is one of Erik’s patients. Even though her role in the novel is minor, the introduction to the patient-analyst relationship is essential to the development of the main character:

A patient of mine once said, “There are ghosts walking around inside me, but they don’t always talk. Sometimes they have nothing to say.” Sarah squinted or kept her eyes closed most of the time because she was afraid the light would blind her. I think we all have ghosts inside us, and it’s better when they speak than when they don’t (Sorrows 1).

In the response Erik gives his patient he mirrors the words used by his patient when he rephrases and uses the same words as Sarah. Then his choice of words mirrors, resembles and reflects, his patient’s word choice and thus he confirms the Self of his patient. When Erik adds “we all” in his response to Sarah he makes the patient’s experience universal, a truth that goes beyond Sarah’s and his experience. He acknowledges her experience, her Self, and simultaneously he acknowledges his own Self and enhances a personal growth in both persons involved. This might serve as an example of how psychoanalysis functions as a driver for character development in the novel.

Erik in his role as an analyst gains conscious knowledge about his own emotions on the ghosts he feels inside simultaneously with his patient’s insight into her ghosts. His internal
ghosts’ existence thereby becomes possible to accept. Hustvedt comments on the role of the analyst, in an article in “On the Psychoanalyst in Fiction” The Guardian in June 2012:

Although the patient's narration must dominate, the analyst can steer, probe, wonder and interpret, while he or she maintains a thoughtful, sympathetic professional distance. A holding environment is not just a space for confession; it is where truths can be discovered and narratives remade. (Hustvedt 2012)

Hustvedt describes her perception of the analyst’s role in psychoanalysis when she uses the verbs “steer, probe, wonder and interpret” for her point of view. She comments on the “between” in psychoanalysis and defines it as a “space” in which “truths can be discovered”. The truth is a subjective matter and for the patient to find her truth or her narrative is important in creating an identity not defined by others. The process makes the patient and analyst dive into unconscious knowledge which psychoanalysis helps turn conscious. The conscious knowledge of Erik creates a foundation for his narrative remade; in other words a reconstruction of Erik’s Self even when in the role of analyst.

One of Erik’s patients is Ms. L. She has previously been in psychoanalytical sessions with other psychoanalysts. In the following Erik reflects on the ending of the patient-analyst relationship with Ms. L. Terminating their psychoanalytical relationship brings a revelation for Erik. Ms. L. says to Erik that she wants to stop the psychoanalytical treatment: “Ms. L. announced with a smile that she was ‘finished’ with me” (Sorrows 234). By using the word “finished” it sounds like Ms. L is ending a love relation with Erik whereas she is ending her psychoanalytical sessions with him. Maybe this implies the close relationship Between the I-You, the dialogical exchange of the Between in psychoanalysis. On the other hand, “finished” might also suggest some sort of dramatic sortie on part of Ms. L. due to Erik’s revelation about her: that Ms. L.’s mother did not physically abuse her. Either way, the closure touches an emotion in Erik: “All this I knew, but there was another strain between us—fear, my fear. Acutely sensitive, Ms. L. had picked up the odor of something I myself didn’t understand” (Sorrows 235). The “strain” is unknown to Erik and when Ms. L. picks up information about
Erik which “I myself didn’t understand” the information about Erik’s fear takes Erik out of the role of analyst in touch with his unconscious or repressed emotions. Erik’s meeting with his repressed feeling of fear scares him. Ms. L, the patient, is fully present to Erik, the analyst, in this passage and the dialogical exchange between them takes on an I-You quality that enlightens Erik about his fear.

Erik fears his inner ghosts that seem to bring about the emotion of sorrow in him. Maybe they represent a real person who have died, or maybe a loss of his Self or parts of his Self or perhaps even his loss of illusions. Erik says that “it is better when they speak than when they don’t” which could imply a greater sorrow or a total loss if the ghost is silent. Thus keeping the dialogue with the ghosts seems to serve the purpose of minimising loss.

Considering the profession of the main character of *The Sorrows of an American*, it seems reasonable to assume that Erik is either subconsciously or consciously aware that keeping up the dialogue with his ghost will keep him afloat in his moment of crisis.

The letters his father left behind seems to function as textual symbols of the lost dialogue Erik had with his father. When Erik reads his father’s letters it reduces his sorrow of his father’s death. Erik dives into his father’s letters and they serve as a reminder of Erik’s own past. Erik’s father, his ghost, comes to life in this dialogue of writer and reader of letters. Erik hears his father’s voice in his head when he reads his father’s letters and while the voice of his father does not tell Erik’s present story it “talks” about his past. In Freud’s terms Erik’s process seems to correspond to the oral stage. Erik goes back to this stage when he travels to his childhood home for his father’s funeral. Erik describes his journey back to his childhood: “Old places fire the internal weather of our pasts. The mild winds, aching calms, and hard storms of forgotten emotions return to us when we return to the spots where they happened” (*Sorrows* 159). In this passage Hustvedt points to the effect “old places” have on Erik’s emotions “the internal weather”. Old places evoke memories that might have been repressed
or forgotten. When Erik visit old places, like his childhood home, conscious memories comes back to him. The Metaphors of “wind” describe the strength of the emotions. Additionally, this quote underlines the universality with which Erik speaks and the need for him to formulate himself in this manner to accept that this typical reaction to old places also includes his own reactions.

When Erik finds his father’s letters in his study, the reconstruction of Erik’s Self begins. Lars, Erik’s father, was born on a farm and describes himself as a farm lad. In one of his letters he describes a relationship he had to a girl who was the daughter of a professor:

“We may have shared educational aspirations, but our backgrounds could hardly have been more different” (Sorrows 38). Lars here seems to emphasise the importance of “background” by contrasting what sets the two young people apart to “shared educational aspirations” which binds them together. Lars’ humble background has given him sympathy for those who did not make the same social mobility as him, and Erik reflects on his father’s tenderness for those who had tough lives: “Success, his own, but mine as well, was colored by a feeling of betraying those at home and the ghosts they had left inside him. The irony is that my ambition, if you measure the distances travelled, was finally not as great as my father’s” (Sorrows 38). Erik describes the academic “success” of his father as a history professor and his own as an analyst, and he paints a picture of how these successes have been overshadowed by guilt for those they left behind, “betraying those at home”, living in unchanged circumstances as the one Lars left. “The irony” which Erik is referring to might be that his feeling of guilt for success is less of a burden to him than the burden his father, Lars, felt he was carrying in his days. “The distance” could be interpreted as a geographical distance, or it could be the distance created by relocating to a different set of possibilities in life offered to him by the position as a professor.
Erik, due to his knowledge of psychoanalysis, grows an awareness of his emotions of shame, humiliation and fear of shared identity in *The Sorrows of an American* which causes him to grow conscious of previous unconscious experiences. Erik describes a flow of thoughts drifting from one to another of significant others: “My father was unhappy that I decided to go east to medical school” (*Sorrows* 38). His father, Lars, does not tell Erik that he was sad or “unhappy” that Erik chose another university than the one Lars had attended as a student. Hustvedt reveals that Lars read more into his son’s choice of place for his studies and that he is disappointed because of this. Erik went east further way from his childhood home and maybe further away from the possibilities of the west which in the past opened for possibilities to the American dream to own your land. Hustvedt describes a sense of shame for the family’s loss of land during the depression and this might be the feeling that Erik is moving from or that Lars thinks that Erik is moving from. Lars feels indirectly criticised that his son choses something other than him. Lars, however, does not tell his son. Erik later finds out via his mother and the reader gets a sense of fear of conflict within the family. Erik reflects on his father’s position in society: “Lars Davidsen became a history professor, but he also remained a “farm lad” and I don’t think that he ever reconciled the two” (*Sorrows* 38). Erik sense the shame his father felt about leaving the “farm lad” behind and encountering a new academic life which was miles apart in content to his birthplace. Lars’ feeling of not belonging and sense of displacement in which he failed to “reconcile” his farm inheritance to his position as “history professor” I think transfers to his son Erik.

In the following passage Erik has just talked to his sister Inga on how to make progress in unveiling their father’s secret: “I saw the small white house in the country again with its dark windows. I feel guilty, I thought. Is it my guilt or does it belong to someone else?” (*Sorrows* 83) The “dark windows” imply emptiness or abandonment as a metaphor for the death of Erik’s father. Erik has abandoned his father’s life and changed it into a life far
from “the small white house in the country” the house which carried all the optimism of the hardworking grandparents of Erik and Inga and which embodied all the sorrow and shame of loosing their lands and becoming poor thus failing to live the American dream where earthly goods are proof of human success and value.

However, the Davidsen’s family feeling of shame seems to diminish over generations. Erik has made an academic career and gained economic success. Contrasting to his other family, he shares his big house with his books and after the death of his father, with his father’s letters. Erik at this point in the novels thinks back and sums up humiliations he has experienced in his life:

I remembered my parent’s sympathetic faces, the cold taunts of my classmates, the heat of humiliation. I thought of that asshole Kornblum’s attack on my paper at the Brain and Mind Conference, his refusal to engage me, his patient, condescending tone as he pointed out my ‘errors’. I remembered Genie telling me she couldn’t stand the sight of my body anymore. “I’m fucking Allan. It’s time you knew. Everyone else does” (Sorrows 154).

The passage shows that Erik has experienced lack of sympathy from his classmates on several occasions and it described the intensity of shame he feels as “heat of humiliation”. The belittling tone Erik’s former analyst uses when criticising Erik’s paper shows that Erik feels shame in several relationships and roles. His parents “sympathetic faces” present a sharp contrast to Genie’s repelling description of his body that she “couldn’t stand the sight of anymore”. After Genie’s harsh break up of their marriage, Erik starts to walk and he says: “It wasn’t until I had walked for an hour that I thought about my father and his fugues. I know how strongly you identify with your father” (Sorrows 154). The breakup with his wife seems to create an urge in Erik to move around for hours. This state of restlessness reminds Erik of his father’s behaviour, “his fugue” used for a dreamlike state of altered consciousness when his father becomes emotionally unavailable to his son. The words in italics above appear to be Erik’s former wife’s still in position to put him down even when not present. However, the same words could alternatively be Erik’s inner dialogue and that it is his inner voice putting
him down. There is no answer to whose voice this sentence belongs to in the novel. Hustvedt might have put this in to cause doubt on part of the reader to who Erik is and also to what kind of reflections he makes about his Self. The way Erik identifies with his father, I would argue, creates a fear in Erik that what he will find out about his father will also apply to him. Erik’s unconscious memory of the sentence before this point in the novel before it suddenly becomes conscious implies that Hustvedt uses psychoanalysis for Erik see his Self from another angle and to restructure his Self. At this point Hustvedt makes it more clear to the reader when Erik’s character development is gradually revealed by the author and when it is a development of the character’s personality.

The double perspective on psychoanalysis, the patient’s and the analyst’s perspective, adds to and at the same time questions the level of consciousness in Erik’s actions. As I have argued before, psychoanalysis moves the patient and the physician through the same stages of personality development although they have different perspectives in the process. Erik then is able to have a two-sided perspective on the different stages of his personality development when he starts to reconstruct his Self. His father’s death brings about a need in Erik to reconstruct his Self. Due to his profession Erik knows that unconscious actions will be repeated. When he realises that he might repeat his father’s “fugue” he consciously realises that he has to start his reconstruction process.

There are examples of both continuity and change in Erik in The Sorrows of an American, and somehow the strain of his reconstruction process seems to balance these capacities. Psychoanalysis requires willing participation from the patient and results do not come without personal effort and costs. The psychoanalyst Philip M. Bromberg’s work suggests that human nature’s capacity for both continuity and change explains how a person is able to invest in a reconstruction process such as psychoanalysis:

The answer, as I see it, touches what may be the essence of human nature—the fact that the human personality possesses the extraordinary capacity to negotiate continuity
and change *simultaneously*, and will do so under the right relational conditions. I believe that this attribute is what we rely on to make clinical psychoanalysis, or any form of psychodynamic psychotherapy, possible (Bromberg 1996).

Bromberg emphasises the human “capacity” of balancing “continuity and change” at the same time as a foundation for the psychoanalytical process. There are examples of both continuity and change in Erik in *The Sorrows of an American*, and somehow the strain in his reconstruction process seems to be balancing between these capacities. The dismantling process starts with the aim of reaching a presumably better version of his Self. However, the better version is unconscious before the reconstruction process starts. This might imply that psychoanalysis, in either roles before the point where Erik consciously realises that his identification with his father governs his life, serves as a hidden driver of character development and that this changes from this point in the novel. Erik starts to search for the hidden secret hinted to in his father’s letter and he uses his psychoanalytical skills when encountering the death of his father. Gradually Erik comes to terms with his own reactions and he develops new insights shaping or reconstructing his Self.

How is it possible for Erik to keep a professional distance in psychoanalysis and at the same time experience personal reconstruction? In sessions Erik holds his role as analyst with his patients. However, out of sessions the psychoanalytical processes of his patients and Erik’s reflections on them are influencing his life. There are themes he ponders on and emotional challenges he brings to his therapist Magda, and Erik experiences emotional growth in the role of patient with her in psychoanalysis. There are some dilemmas for psychoanalysis and a reoccurring question is to what extent it follows the demands of science. One demand is that studies should be possible to reproduce under the equivalent circumstances. This is impossible for psychoanalysis since the narrative of the patient in dialogue with the physician is not reproducible. Another dilemma which critics would call non-scientific elements of psychoanalysis is the objectivity of the physician. Siri Hustvedt
discusses her main character’s role of physician, or analyst, in *The Sorrows of an American* in an article in *The Guardian* in June 2012: “Erik knows he is not neutral, knows that psychotherapy happens in the land of Between, that wilderness between you and me” (Hustvedt 2012). Hustvedt here comments on Erik’s knowledge about not being “neutral”. The main character knows that he has an impact on psychoanalysis in his role as analyst. The impact goes beyond his person to the Between. The “wilderness between you and me” could be interpreted along with Buber’s definition: that the Between is more than the two persons involved. What happens in the land of between could also refer to the space of time between sessions, a time in which what knowledge has risen from unconscious to conscious affects real life for the patient and physician alike.

The patient’s and analyst’s movement in thoughts and emotions back to Freud’s stages of personality development in the reconstruction process of psychoanalysis partly happens in the sessions, partly happens in the Between. Siri Hustvedt in her article in *The Guardian* continues:

> Although the patient's narration must dominate, the analyst can steer, probe, wonder and interpret, while he or she maintains a thoughtful, sympathetic professional distance. A holding environment is not just a space for confession; it is where truths can be discovered and narratives remade. (Hustvedt *On the Psychoanalyst in Fiction*)

Hustvedt here ponders on her own novel in retrospect. Her reflections are interesting to the discussion of this chapter in the way she describes discovery of “truths and narratives remade”. Erik takes both sides in the patient-analyst relationship, however in different settings. Erik’s discovery of truths and remaking of narratives might refer to the process within patient and analyst alike. Whether the analyst makes this discovery when in the role of analyst or in the role of patient or in a combination of both, I argue that in all three positions Erik is in a process of reconstruction. His frustration of balancing his roles becomes apparent when some of his patients create emotional reactions in him that he does not welcome.
There seems to be times in the novel where Erik feels a need to meet his analyst Magda to concentrate on his own emotions. Towards the end of the novel Erik is in therapy with Magda and he has just read a passage from one of his father’s letters:

Magda was listening as I read the passage to her; her old face had wrinkled into that concentrated look I remembered from the years we had spent together. “It is as if I am looking for something,” I said, “but I don’t know what it is. Something that will release me.” “From the depression,” she said. (Sorrows 295)

This passage shows another example of how mirroring works in The Sorrows of an American. Magda mirrors Erik’s emotions when he describes the something and she sums it up in “from the depression”. The passage is additionally an example of the dual roles of Erik has in psychoanalysis “from the years we had spent together”. The year they have spent together corresponds to the years that Erik has worked as a psychoanalyst during which he has been taking the patient role with Magda. From his dual roles in psychoanalysis he gains knowledge about his Self from the observer, catalyst, mirroring and creator of the Between and as a patient the creator of own narrative reflected to him by Magda’s help to see him Self. “I am looking for something,” Erik says to Magda. What he is looking for is “something that will release me,” something that will set him free from the burden that he is carrying. Magda mirrors rephrases and repeats Erik’s words back to him when she says “from depression,” and she names his sorrow and his fear depression here. When the unconscious becomes conscious change become possible for Erik and thus the passage carries cues to the character development of Erik.

Erik’s emotional relationship to women change in the novel due to Erik’s restructuring his Self through psychoanalysis. When his wife breaks off their marriage, Erik remembers with shame the way she was disgusted by his body. Her infidelity is revealed to Erik as universal knowledge: “I’m fucking Allan. It’s time you knew. Everyone else does” (Sorrows 154). It seems from the quote that everybody Erik’s wife knows, “Everyone else”, is informed that she has an affair with another man and, I would argue, is a piece of evidence that she has
emotionally left Erik already. This evokes a memory almost forgotten to Erik. The sense of shame, however, brought the memory back. The memory Erik has repressed is when he finds his father’s World War 2 uniform and proudly presents it to him: “I know it’s my father’s uniform from the war, and I feel a quiver of pride” (Sorrows 155). The feeling of pride shows that Erik expects a positive response from his father. “Look what we’ve found! Look, Pappa, look!” (Sorrows 155). Erik knows that his father has fought for his country in the war and he is proud of him for protecting the USA. Lars’ military uniform offers visual clues that lead to expectations in Erik of his father’s behaviour and the social status implied by the clothing. Where Erik expects his father to be proud of his military service and his behaviour in uniform he find that Lars is shameful of it. The uniform might symbolise Lars’ conformity, and it might question his father’s self-control as the quote exemplifies in Lars’ anger at the sight of the uniform. Erik narrates: “And then our father is standing in front of us. I lift my eyes to his face and am startled to see that he’s angry” (Sorrows 155). When the boy Erik looks into his father’s face he is looking for his pride mirrored back to him from his father. However, this mirroring does not happen. His father is “angry” and anger reflects back to him instead of pride. The shame his father felt about his uniform, which could symbolise the actions performed and experienced by Lars in the war, transfers on to the young boy Erik where the feeling of shame lives on, at an unconscious level it seems, in Erik and he only realises this after his wife leaves him for another man. The growing consciousness of the impact of shame in his life happens after Erik uses his psychoanalytical knowledge to go back to the phallic stage and reconstruct his Self by stopping to imitate and internally adopting the values, attitudes and behaviours of his father.

The anger that Erik saw in his father’s face when he showed him the military uniform, Erik shockingly encounters in his Self in an exhibition by the photographer Jeffrey Lane. Erik’s uncontrolled anger is portrayed, resembling his father’s, is mirrored back to him by a
picture shoot and exhibited without permission by Miranda’s on and off boyfriend Jeffrey Lane:

When I walked over to the *Father* section, I spotted it right away. It was an eight-by-ten photograph, mixed in among many other pictures with the caption *Head Doctor Goes Insane*. But in that first moment, I wasn’t sure who I was looking at. Anger had completely contorted my face to such a degree that I was almost unrecognizable. Like a rabid dog, my eyes bulged and my teeth shone. (*Sorrows* 262-263)

Erik finds his distorted portrait displayed in “the *Father* section”. Erik does not have any children, but he has felt some similar feelings towards Lane’s daughter Eglantine whose mother Miranda has rented Erik’s ground floor apartment. Erik is shocked by the unfamiliar role he is given by Lane. The title of the picture “*Head Doctor Goes Insane*” interferes and contrasts Erik’s perception of his familiar role as analyst. Furthermore, Erik does not recognise his Self in the photo and describes himself as “almost unrecognizable” in the exhibition, which may be because he does not combine the rage he feels when the photo is taken to the role he carries as an analyst. Then Erik notices that the setting has been altered: “Lane had altered the setting” (*Sorrows* 263). The photo is set in the streets and not in Erik’s house where Lane had broken an entry to take the picture.

Through Lane’s exhibition Erik’s anger becomes universal knowledge, and Erik has to come to terms with and consciously acknowledge this part of his Self to be able to reconstruct his Self as set apart from the identity of his father. This might be interpreted as transition from the phallic to the genital stage in Erik’s development. His relationship to Miranda also changes after this incident. When he becomes conscious about how he has identified with his father and taken on similarities in his personality, the changes in him makes him finally see that Miranda is not interested in him. Erik talks to himself: “Perhaps you loved Miranda because you knew you couldn’t find her, I said to myself, and that kept you from moving forward and left you shivering like Ms. L. on the steps outside a locked door” (*Sorrows* 302-303). Erik has felt as if he was “outside a locked door” of Miranda’s feelings. The knowledge
Erik has gained from his role as a physician with Ms. L. incorporates psychoanalysis in a way where it enables Erik to retrieve unconscious knowledge, make it conscious, and to realize that Miranda is unavailable to him. All this releases Erik to pursue an adult relationship, move through the genital phase, and establish a renewed and more durable relationship to Laura: “We ate the pasta and we ate the veal and we ate the arugula salad and we drank the wine and we laughed, and I paid close attentions to her animated, generous face throughout the eating and the drinking and the laughing, and I felt as if I were seeing it for the first time” (Sorrows 281). The descriptions of regular human actions such as “we ate pasta and we ate the veal” and “we drank the wine and we laughed” function as a mirror in which Erik can view functionality versus previously dysfunctional experiences in his life. The shared meal makes Erik see Laura for the first time. He sees her with his new reconstructed Self and Erik’s internal growth has brought about the new perspective in him which serves as another example of how psychoanalysis functions as a driver of character development in The Sorrows of an American.

Conclusion

Siri Hustvedt’s works The Summer Without Men and The Sorrows of an American use a first person view-point to express her position of all view-points being subjective. This first person captures the overall subjectivity of the world and can only learn about its Self by dialogues or interactions with others. The way that Hustvedt incorporates psychoanalysis in The Summer Without Men and The Sorrows of an American, I would argue, facilitates character development and structure for both novels. Only in the interaction Between the subject and other persons can the characters learn about their Selves from another angle. Psychoanalysis and the relationship Between patient and analyst is an example of such an interaction and I
argue in the discussion of this chapter that psychoanalysis is a relevant interaction dialogical exchange in both of Hustvedt’s novels where Mia and Erik can learn about their Selves. My discussion emphasises the importance of the roles Erik Davidsen in *The Sorrows of an American* incorporates and his experience of psychoanalysis from the point of view of patient and analyst. Mia Fredricksen in *The Summer Without Men* on the other hand experience psychoanalysis from the point of view of patient. Through dialogism or dialogical exchange in psychoanalysis the characters can learn about their Selves from another angle. This other angle is created in the Between of I-You entity in the psychoanalytical process. The Between is a term that Hustvedt has borrowed from Buber’s third entity I-You (*I and Thou* 1970) that includes relations of the world, nature and man. I argue in this chapter that the analysts’ presence in the dialogical exchange enable them to mirror the main characters and in the psychoanalytical process the analysts help Mia and Erik develop their characters by having them move through Freud’s stages of personality development to reconstruct their conscious Selves.

In my discussion I apply Freud’s theory of psychoanalysis. Freud describes psychoanalysis in *General Introduction To Psychoanalysis* where he accentuates the importance of the patient-physician, or analyst, relationship to the process of reconstructing the patient’s narrative: the story of the new Self. Similarly to the way the analyst helps the patient to achieve access to the hidden or unconscious parts of the Self in psychoanalysis, Hustvedt uses the dialogism in psychoanalysis for character development. I also argue that the characters’ roles of patient or analyst or both are cues to their character development.

On a more formal level, I argue in this chapter that psychoanalysis operates as a hidden structure in the novels and that this hidden structure becomes visible to the reader when the main characters gain knowledge about and reconstruct their Selves. This reconstruction of Self happens, I argue, whilst the characters are going through the different
stages of psychoanalysis. I further argue that the structure of the plots of the novels resembles psychoanalytical processes, and in my discussion there are several pieces of evidence to support this view. The structure of psychoanalysis takes on the form of narrative and it does not follow a linear structure in time. However, going back and forth in time is central to psychoanalysis and to Hustvedt’s novels alike where memories bring the main characters to visit earlier experiences conscious as well as unconscious ones.

The conscious and unconscious levels of knowledge about the Self of the main characters in the novels add a level of intensity of the narratives to the novels. The Between conscious and unconscious drives the characters to explore their Selves and I argue that Hustvedt uses psychoanalysis for this process for both her main characters. In their reconstruction of their Selves they gain new insights in which previously unconscious knowledge become conscious to Mia and Erik. The analysis aims to show pieces of evidence for how the process of psychoanalysis helps surface the unconscious that drives character development in The Summer Without Men and The Sorrows of an American.

**Dialogism as Character Development: Play in Siri Hustvedt’s Novels**

**Introduction**

“Making a work of fiction is playing, playing is deadly earnest, perhaps, but playing nevertheless” (Hustvedt 2013, 38).

Siri Hustvedt presents some of her thoughts on the novel genre and how it’s creative process relates to “playing” in her essay “Playing, Wild Thoughts, and a Novel’s Underground”. Hustvedt shares her reflections on how play or playfulness is necessary to invent works of fiction that resemble what the British psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott discusses the importance of playing in the creation of a Self in his work Playing and Reality (1971). Winnicott says: “Now I shall discuss an important feature of playing. This is that in playing,
and perhaps only in playing, the child or adult is free to be creative” (Winnicott 1971, 53).

Winnicott here describes a state, in playing, in which the creativity in both children and adults emerges, which is similar to Hustvedt’s description of the process of writing fiction. My aim of this chapter is to discuss how the playing and playfulness of the novels creates a “playground” of dialogism between the characters, narrator, author and reader where characters develop.

I would argue that the thoughts Hustvedt shares in “Playing, Wild Thoughts, and Novel’s Underground” on how a novel can be written describes the space in which character develop their Selves or are gradually revealed by the author. Hustvedt explains: “In fact, I have discovered that a novel can be written only in play: an open, relaxed, responsive, permissive state of being that allows a work to grow freely” (Hustvedt 2013, 38). The freedom and the possibilities that she describes allow her works and character to evolve. The state of mind in play of “an open relaxed, responsive, permissive state” from which her novels are conceived conveys an atmosphere in which creative work can emerge. The playfulness Hustvedt seems to encounter in this state of mind opens for multiple possibilities of the dialogism of play within her novels. In the introduction to Bakhtin’s Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics Wayne C. Booth addresses the genre of the novel when he says:

Only “the novel,” with its supreme realization of the potentialities inherent in prose, offers the possibility of doing justice to voices other than the author’s own, and only the novel invites us to do so. This is not a matter only of length; epics have all the space in the world but they still tend to be monologic. It is more a matter of the technical resources of narrative in prose – the inherent capacity of narrative to incorporate languages other than the author’s (or reader’s) own. In various kinds of indirect discourse, novelists can maintain a kind of choral vitality, the very same words conveying two or more speaking voices. (Booth 1984, L. 298)

Booth here talks about the possibilities within the genre of the novel. He does not seem to think that this is due to the length of a novel but rather to the possibilities within the prose of the novel. Boots also talks about that the same words might convey “two or more speaking voices”. Hustvedt utilises these possibilities within the genre, I would argue. In her essay
“Being a Man” she writes: “but when I write, that same ambivalence becomes my liberation, and I am free to inhabit both men and women and to tell their stories” (Hustvedt 2006, 103). In her dreams Hustvedt experiences to be drawn between the two sexes and she wonders which sex she is. She uses her dream experiences to create speaking voices of both sex and incorporates this confusion of voices in her novels as we will see when the narrator Mia of The Summer Without Men says that Mia could be Morton for all the reader would know. This playfulness that Hustvedt talks about in the creative process of writing her novels she elaborates further.

An element of the possibilities of novels and of the creative process that Hustvedt describes in her essay “Being a Man” is that she hears her characters when she explains: “When I write a book, I am also listening. I hear the characters talk as if they were outside me rather than inside me” (Hustvedt 2006, 103). Hustvedt’s description how she can hear her characters in the creative process of writing fiction resembles how she might hear real persons. The American film and literary critic Seymour Chatman was a former professor at the University of California, Berkley, and a driving force in establishing the field of Narratology. Chatman in Story and Discourse Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film says: “A viable theory of character should preserve openness and treat characters as autonomous beings, not as mere plot functions. It should argue that character is reconstructed by the audience from evidence announced or implicit in an original construction and communicated by the discourse, through whatever medium” (Chatman 1980, 119). The reader’s involvement in the interpretation and understanding of character implied by Chatman is something that Hustvedt explicitly uses when she addresses the reader in her novel The Summer Without Men either by “dear Reader”, “old friend” or simply “you”, thus engaging the reader in the plot of the novel which will be part of this chapter’s discussion. I argue that this is also part of Hustvedt’s dialogic exchange that engages the reader in play.
In his essay on “Characters in Bakhtin’s Theory”, Anthony Wall of Queens University argues: “In order to understand his concept of character we must first discard all notions of language as langue and think of it rather as parole, that is, as a pure product of interpersonal contacts” (Wall 1984, 41). The understanding of character as a pure product of interpersonal contacts thus shifts focus from the pure linguistics of a novel to the relational, the Between characters, in the analysis of characters. This way of understanding character then additionally contrasts character development as the author’s revealing of character to the development of character personality in a novel. In my interpretation of Wall’s essay, I would argue, the understanding of character that extends beyond the textual reaches out to the dialogical exchange that Buber defines within the I-You entity. This extra textual interpretation is essential in the discussion of character development in both this chapter and this thesis as a whole.

In this chapter I argue that Hustvedt includes dialogism in several elements of play in her novels that are important to understand how her characters develop in The Summer Without Men and The Sorrows of an American where she incorporates drawings, poems and e-mails. She breaks the fourth wall of the novel when she addresses the reader and she adds play Between novels. Furthermore, I argue that Hustvedt includes the playful state of mind that she describes as “an open relaxed, responsive, permissive state of being” (Hustvedt 2013, 38) into her novels and that Hustvedt writes in a way that allows the reader to hear and see the characters as in a staged play. Additionally, I argue that The Summer Without Men and The Sorrows of an American incorporate the main characters’ roles as roles in drama that drive character development in these novels. The analysis of dialogism as character development in both of the novels will provide textual evidence for these opinions.

In “Playing, Wild Thoughts, and Novel’s Underground” Hustvedt describes her perception of the genre of the novel: “The novel is a chameleon. That is its glory as a genre”
Hustvedt use of the imagery of the “chameleon”, this highly adaptive animal that can change its skin colour to blend in and become invisible in any environment, to describe “its glory” includes the possibilities to incorporate other genres within the novel. In *The Summer Without Men* e-mails and poems as well as drawings and drama are incorporated into the novel, and they create extended possibilities to explore the main character from another angle other than the first person all knowing narrative. In *The Sorrows of an American* there are examples of playing with masks and identity to reveal the plot driving secret. The major turning point in *The Sorrows of an American* happens through a doll’s show. The doll’s show is staged to reveal the secret which influences the main character’s identity or Self, and it serves as an example of this drama genre incorporated into Hustvedt’s novels. In addition Hustvedt playfully braids the autobiographical element of her father’s memoirs into *The Sorrows of an American*. These memoirs are incorporated into the novel as Erik’s father’s memoirs, where I would argue they represent autobiography in play with fiction.

Dialogical exchange as defined by the philosopher Buber includes an understanding of I-You that implies inclusion of the surroundings into the dialogical exchange. The way Hustvedt merges Buber’s understanding of the Between into her works, I would argue, creates another depth to her characters. I further argue that the main characters Mia and Erik create entities of I-You in their dialogues with other characters within both novels. These dialogical entities enable the main characters to see and gain knowledge about their Selves from another angle and serve to drive character development, development of character personality, in *The Sorrows of an American* and *The Summer Without Men*.

Dialogical exchange is additionally present, I would argue, in the parts of the novel that incorporate drama: in the dramatic dialogue, in the puppet show, in the use of disguises of mask and wig, and in the author’s play with genres. In Anthony Wall’s essay on “Characters
in Bakhtin’s Theory” he says: “The presentification of literature in general carried out by the novel genre is responsible not only for the possibility of dialogical relations between author and characters, but also between reader and author and among reader, author, and characters…” (Wall 1984, 52). Wall here recognises the dialogical possibilities for exchange between author, characters and reader within the novel that Hustvedt is fully aware of and which she incorporates in her novels.

In the following Wall talks about the role characters play in a novel and he refers to it as “this theatre” and the relationship that the reader has with the characters. Wall says: “It is always important to explore the means by which an author can move a reader through literature, and it is essential to determine what role character plays in this theatre, through his, and not just the author’s relationship with the reader” (Wall 1984, 52). The author’s relationship with the reader is something that Hustvedt incorporates in her novel on an explicit level even.

Dialogical exchange requires presence in the characters involved in the dialogue and the reader of a novel as a third presence, similar to the audience in a theatre. In Hustvedt’s novels, there is also dialogical exchange between the main character narrator and the reader in The Summer Without Men where Mia addresses the reader on several occasions. I will provide examples of how the novel reaches out and breaks the fourth wall of the novel in the discussion of this chapter.

Theories of Play in Fiction

Brian Edwards the author of Theories of Play and Postmodern Fictions suggests: “the postmodern is that turn or moment in which the creative inspiration, the play, exceeds the constraints of tradition, consensus, or institutional approval, the rules of the game” (Edwards
Edwards’ definition of the postmodern corresponds well to this chapter’s initial quote in which Siri Hustvedt shares her notion of writing a work of fiction that she regards as playing (Living, Thinking, Looking 38). Edwards in the following defines play:

> Play is always already interplay, and against ideas of solitariness and singularity, fixed positions, simple binarism, privilege and truth, I present an argument for specificity, difference, pluralism and process. There is a double bind that I acknowledge, the problem of preserving the openness of play, its resistance to closure, while exploring and defining its contributions to forms, procedures, critical vocabularies and cultural interpretation (Edwards 1998, intro)

Acknowledging other theories of postmodern fiction, among others Derrida, Edwards offers his understanding of play “as the principle of energy and difference which unsettles arrangements, promotes change and resists closure” (Edwards 1998, intro). Edwards recognises in this the paradox in defining play by “its resistance to closure”, and that the innate possibilities of play is in danger of becoming confined within the definition of play itself.

Hustvedt describes the way in which a novel may be written as “an open, relaxed, responsive, permissive state of being that allows a work to grow freely” (Hustvedt 2013, 38) and this state she describes as “in play”. I think there are similarities in Hustvedt’s description and Edwards’ definition of play and thereby I think that Edwards’ definition might be relevant to the discussion and analysis of play in Hustvedt’s novels even though, I would argue, it might be problematic describing Hustvedt’s novels as postmodern. Dr Gabriele Ripple, professor at the Department of English at the University of Bern, in her essay “The Rich Zones of Genre Borderland: Siri Hustvedt’s Art of Mingling” talks about Hustvedt’s: “negotiations with genre and genre boundaries” (Ripple 2016, 27). Ripple reasons: “The blurring of genre boundaries is commonly considered as a typical feature of postmodernist fiction, and Hustvedt’s novels have often been discussed within the postmodernist frame” (Ripple 2016, 27). Ripple acknowledges the recognisable features of postmodernist fiction in Hustvedt’s novels and she contrast these to the non-postmodern
topics in Hustvedt’s novels. Ripple continues: “Due to the novelist’s indefatigable interest in topics such as the personal, the relational self, and intersubjective bonding, the postmodernist label of her works is becoming, however, increasingly questionable” (Ripple 2016, 27).

Ripple describes how Hustvedt’s themes in her novels do not correspond to themes typical of postmodern literature and thus questions the label postmodern for Hustvedt’s novels. In the discussion on American literature that Ripple sums up in her essay she observes a shift: “beyond the cerebral character of postmodernist art by stressing ethical responsibility, affects, sincerity, and authenticity, thus engaging a fresh engagement with the real” (Ripple 2016, 27).

This shift from the cerebral character of the postmodern to Hustvedt’s engagement “with the real” that Ripple describes here, I would argue, resonates with the characters in Hustvedt’s novels The Sorrows of an American and The Summer Without Men. In both novels there are examples of the real in the subjectivity of the main characters’ all subjective first person narrative of the novels, and in how the insight into the development of their characters’ personalities depends on perspectives from other characters. It is from the dialogic exchange with these other characters that they gain knowledge about their Selves.

The dialogical exchange that Edwards describes in the following talks about sender and receiver as I and You. Edwards talks about sender and receiver and includes the levels of cultural context in the following:

> It must also include equivocation about “I” and “you,” sender and receiver, or the language users, in this simple, yet inescapably complex, communication model, as well as consideration of conventions applicable to the exchange. What does a sender intend? What will receivers understand? In what ways are meanings of an utterance shaped not only by the linguistic system but also by cultural context? (Edwards 1998, 3)

The intentions of the sender and the understanding of the receiver, the reader, are put into a setting of shared values and beliefs that influence the linguistic interpretation of the communication. Edwards explains this extra linguistic level of communication and how it
influences the interpretation of what is said and this resonates with Buber’s explanation of
dialogical exchange to include “the world of relation” (Buber 1970, 56). I would argue that
the world of relation might also include the reader’s personality, experience and cultural
background. This implies that there is more to the dialogical exchange between characters
than the words and their linguistic connotations, and the cultural context within the novels
that influences the dialogical exchange process. I will analyse this element of dialogical
exchange in relation to the way the narrator and main character Mia addresses the reader in

*The Summer Without Men.*

In the following passage Edwards talks about postmodern fiction in a way that
resembles Hustvedt’s description of the novel as a chameleon and the making of it as playing
that she describes in her essay “Yonder”. In *Theories of Play and Postmodern Fiction*
Edwards describes features of postmodern fiction:

> Not exclusive to postmodernist fiction but informing its wily manoeuvres, such play
> with the forms of fiction, and therefore with the construction of meanings,
> compliments readers by challenging them to participate in that interassociation of texts
> and contexts which is the play of language. (Edwards 1998, 5)

Edwards addresses the play of postmodern fiction with the inter-textual as well as the
contextual layers of the novel. Furthermore, he seems to think that play with the form of the
novel imposes impact on construction of meanings. I think that the contextuality Edwards
describes corresponds to my understanding of what Buber incorporates into the dialogical
exchange: the basic word I-You that establishes the world of relations of the world with
nature, life with men and life with spiritual beings. Thus I will apply Edwards’ and Buber’s
theories with regard to the analysis of play in Hustvedt’s novels *The Summer Without Men*
and *The Sorrows of an American.*

Edwards distinguishes play from game when he says: “Although they are often
related, game and play are not synonymous. As activities that are finite and rule-governed,
games involve play but play is not bound to games” (Edwards 1998, 12). Edwards here marks play off as something different than game where play is less “finite and rule-governed” than games. The creativity that both Hustvedt and Winnicott refer to is limitless as play not governed by rules as a game. Consequently, I intend to use Edwards’ definition of play with its “creative inspiration” that goes beyond limitations of “tradition, consensus, or institutional approval” and beyond “the rules of the game” (Edwards 1998, 81) for my analysis of play in Hustvedt’s *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American*.

*The Summer Without Men*

In *The Summer Without Men* Hustvedt incorporate roles as in drama for the main character Mia that drives her character development in this novel. Mia has several roles in the novel where one is that of the mentally ill patient and another is of a character who has recovered from her temporary mental illness as is well. I would argue that Hustvedt in *The Summer Without Men* plays the reader’s perception of Mia’s mental state of whether she is recovered from her Brief Psychotic Disorder or if she still is psychotic. The dialogical exchange between narrator and reader incorporates what surrounds the reader and that might influence the reader’s interpretation of Mia’s mental condition. *The Summer Without Men* does not give an answer to this, I would argue.

At the beginning of the novel Mia is hospitalised in a psychiatric ward and when she leaves the hospital she continues to be in psychoanalytical treatment. Hustvedt explains Winnicott’s distinction between someone who is mentally ill and someone who is not that is relevant to my discussion of Hustvedt’s play with Mia’s roles. There are pieces of evidence in *The Summer Without Men* of Hustvedt’s playfulness with Mia’s roles in which the reader’s perception of Mia shifts between seeing her as well and seeing her as a mentally ill character.
In the following discussion I will incorporate textual evidence for both perspectives on the mental state of Mia’s character. First I will turn to Hustvedt’s essay “Charles Dickens And the Morbid Fragment” where Siri Hustvedt retells a dialogue by Dr Winnicott and a group of Anglican clergymen in which they ask Dr Winnicott about how they could distinguish between mental illness and people who only experienced problems as “who could be helped by their counselling” (Hustvedt 2006, 173). Hustvedt says:

The brilliance of this comment is that it unearths a truth about many people who are mentally ill: In their preoccupation with what is happening inside them, they are walled off from other people, and this barrier prevents them from engaging another person in genuine conversation. The speaker’s lack of connection inevitably creates boredom in the listener. (Hustvedt 2006, 173)

Hustvedt here reflects on Winnicott’s explanation on how mental illness could be distinguished from other states of mind. The absorption in the Self of the mentally ill not only excludes the person and builds a “barrier” between the patient and any other person that prevents her “from engaging another person”. Mental illness in this respect bars dialogism from the main character in her interrelation with others. All other characters are on the outside of the boundaries of the Self and mental illness seems to require full internal focus at the cost of exclusion of others. Thus “genuine conversation”, a dialogue in which both parties are engaged and interactive in talking and listening, becomes impossible. The presence necessary for dialogical exchange of I-You is not present whereas one of the interacting parts in the dialogue is not in the present of the other. Hustvedt’s description of the mentally ill patient’s unavailability and requirements that Buber sets as the foundation of dialogical exchange of I-You, I think will reduce the dialogue between a mentally ill patient and other persons to an I-It dialogue. The mentally ill patient, preoccupied in her own head, is not able to reflect and thus mirror another person. In this respect I think the previous quote is important to understand the mental state of the main character and narrator Mia in The Summer Without Men.
Mia’s mental illness seems to be “a barrier” which Mia feels “prevents her from engaging another person” and there is an example of this at the beginning of The Summer Without Men when Mia is in the role of the patient. The novel starts when Mia is in a psychiatric ward diagnosed with a Brief Psychotic Disorder, a mental illness of a limited duration. Mia says: ”Insanity is a state of profound self-absorption” (Summer 12). Hustvedt seems to have incorporated Winnicott’s words into her novel and proves his point in the following of the first visit from her daughter Daisy when Mia says: “I don’t know exactly what she saw, but I can guess: a woman gaunt from not eating, still confused, her body wooden from drugs, a person who couldn’t respond appropriately to her daughter’s words, who couldn’t hold her own child” (Summer 2). Daisy did not recognise her mother because Mia did not fulfil her role of caretaker when she was all broken down and in the role of the patient. Mia “could not hold her own child”. In Daisy Mia sees her Self as a patient, not looking after her Self and on the receiving end of care. Hustvedt proposes in Freud’s Playground: “In you, I am able to see myself, or through you I become able to see myself” (Hustvedt 2013, 205). Here Hustvedt talks about psychoanalytical sessions from the patient’s perspective. Mia’s psychosis stops her from fulfilling this essence of motherhood of reaching out for her daughter to wrap her up in her arms. Mia seems so caught up in her Self, in her role of patient, that it disables her from responding verbally as well as physically to Daisy and their roles in this meeting is reversed.

This not only scares Daisy, it also scares Mia. She is in a role with her illness that she does not recognise. Mia says: “By the time Daisy returned for a second visit, I was sane. The ruin had been at least partially rebuilt, and I did not wail in front of her” (Summer 12). Mia talks about herself as “sane” and free from mental derangement when her daughter comes to see her in hospital again. This might serve as a piece of evidence that Mia is actually recovering from her mental illness and as another piece of evidence in the novel that describes
Mia’s return from her patient role to her maternal role: “I sent my own Daisy a reassuring message” (Summer 29). In this Mia is in her role as mother when she is calming her daughter and her character’s Self is able to incorporate this role.

When Mia is hospitalised she takes on the role of patient. This is all new to her. In her life up till this point she has never encountered this part of her Self before, this role of a mentally ill person, and she later refers to her Self as the madwoman: “I don’t like to remember the madwoman. She shamed me. For a long time, I was reluctant to look at what she had written in a black-and-white notebook during her stay on the ward” (Summer 2). Mia does not like the memory of this role: “the madwoman”. She even talks about her Self as “she” not “me”; the narrator’s choice of personal pronoun indicates that she does not incorporate the madwoman as part of her Self but sees her as another Self. It takes time and psychoanalytical treatment for Mia to come to terms with her other Self. I think there is a significance of meaning in the colour of the notebook, the “black and white notebook”, where black might be a metaphor for the unrecognised madwoman, Mia’s unknown other Self in role of patient, and the white a metaphor for the acceptable or the Self Mia has known for fifty-five years. The black and white notebook then represents two different extremes within Mia, where the colours united in one notebook could be seen as a symbol of the whole character Mia who contains several roles. Mia holds back her recognition of her other Self for much of the novel and only when she recognises the madwoman, when the thoughts of her role of patient no longer shames Mia, then she is able to unite the two opposing parts of her, or two opposing roles, into one whole Self.

Mia’s struggle between her two roles in The Summer Without Men of the mentally ill patient Mia and the sane character Mia trusted by friends and relatives and the question of who she really is creates an unresolved “mystery” in the novel. There are examples of Mia’s inner struggle between her roles in the verbal exchange Mia has with Mr. Nobody. In his first
messages, from an address Mia does not recognise, Mr. Nobody tells her that she is mentally ill, that she is still in the role of patient even when out of the psychiatric ward: "I know all about you. You’re Insane, Crazy, Bonkers. Mr. Nobody" (Summer 47). This all knowing accusation scares Mia who is afraid of condemnation from others. She struggles to find out who Mr. Nobody is and why he knows this about her, and there is not a factual answer to Mr. Nobody’s identity in the novel.

However, I would suggest that Mia’s dialogue with Mr. Nobody is a manifestation of her inner dialogue telling her the role of madwoman is not acceptable and thus should not be integrated into her character. There is evidence in the text that support this view where Mia narrates her inner speech: “Good old Mama Mia, who lies alone in the great king bed with its wide-open spaces, a blank expanse of white sheets she fills up with inner speech and memory, a whirling of words and thoughts and aches and pains” (Summer 163). In this Mia paints a verbal picture of the emptiness and loneliness she feels are signified by the “wide-open spaces” of her bed. The words spinning around inside her without a partner to exchange dialogue with find an expression in Mia’s inner dialogue. Mia reflects on her inner dialogue with Mr. Nobody and this adds a level of dialogical exchange to this.

In Mia’s reflections on what Mr. Nobody writes she doubts or questions her role as a sane person. This sane Mia, identical to her reconstructed Self built in psychoanalysis after her breakdown, is a role that incorporates Mia’s patient role as well as other previous roles in her fifty-five-year-old life. Mia shows by the dialogue with Mr. Nobody, or inner dialogue with her inner voice, that she does not recognise her breakdown as part of her Self, as part of her personality as a character in this novel.

During the course of The Summer Without Men there are examples of this in Mia’s inner dialogue with Mr. Nobody, who sometimes changes his name to Mr. Somebody and then back to Mr. Nobody again. The quote above is the first time Mr. Nobody enters the
scene. In his role he puts down Mia. The second time he addresses her: “The second message read simply: Looney. Mr. Somebody” (Summer 53). Mr. Somebody again inscribes the main character when he calls her “looney” a colloquial for lunatic or someone who is insane. The prefix to body no or some does not change the way this character views Mia in the novel. Mia says:

I confess now that I had already entered into a correspondence with Mr. Nobody. In response to my inquiry as to who he was and what he wanted, he had written, “I am any one of your voices, take your pick, an oracular voice, a plebeian voice, an orator-for-the-ages voice, a girl’s voice, a boy’s voice, a woof, a howl, a tweet. Hurtful, coddling, angry, kind, I am the voice from Nowhere come to speak to you. (Summer 92-93)

In the mental illness, Brief Psychotic Disorder, that Mia experiences and which puts her in role of patient hearing voices is a described part of the illness. Mia describes her diagnosis at the start of the novel as a Brief Psychotic Disorder also called Brief Reactive Psychosis (Summer 1). According to Medscape delusions and hallucinations are part of the symptoms of the disease and I would on one hand argue that “I am any one of your voices” could indicate that Mia still is in the role of patient since she hears voices in her head.

On the other hand when Mr. Nobody says to Mia that she can pick which voice she wants him to be, I would argue, implies that these dialogues are examples of her inner dialogue. This inner dialogue seems to create an inner dialogical exchange that enables the main character to unite her different roles of her character’s personality and I would argue that this could be an example of the sane Mia who is able to chose to enter perspectives of other parts of her Self or character. The voice could also incorporate the roles of different sexes in either “a girl’s voice” or “a boy’s voice” which could be seen as an example of voices heard by Mia in psychoanalytical treatment when she returns to the Freudian stages of personality development. Contrastingly it could be interpreted to imply that the all knowing subjective character also might enter the mind of animal or the all knowing oracle or the voice
of a tweet on twitter and that Mia needs to create an inner voice to achieve a dialogical exchange within this subjective perspective.

After Mr. Nobody gives Mia the choices of voices, Mia talks about her loneliness without her husband Boris. She says: “I had no one to dance with anymore” (Summer 93). Dance might be the metaphor for the relationship Mia shared with Boris. Mia then says: “This Mr. Nobody fellow was a leaper and a twister” (Summer 93). Mia’s description of Mr. Nobody resembles that of a real person with features describing him as “a leaper and a twister”. This description indicates a personality not easy to predict or maybe even trust. Mia continues her description of Mr. Nobody: “An intellectual omnivore who seemed to have pressed himself to the limits of his own whirling brain, he wasn’t well, but he was fun.” (Summer 93) Mia describes Mr. Nobody as someone who would feed on any intellectual challenge and who has pressed his intellectual capacity into illness “to the limits of his own whirling brain”. However, Mia finds him fun even though he is ill which could be a metaphor that the character Mia starts to acknowledge of all of her Self. Even though Mia still treats Mr. Nobody as a real character in the novel that is another example of play with the real within fiction.

Mia reveals to the reader how she came to give Mr. Nobody a face and she says: “When I wrote to him, I always saw a picture of Leonard. Most of us need an image, after all, a someone to see, and that was how I gave Mr. Nobody a face” (Summer 93). In this quote the narrator Mia creates an image of Mr. Nobody in which she incorporates features of Leonard, the one other patient she respected, that she met when she was hospitalised. It seems that Mia recognises the mental illness in her own character by addressing a fictive character within the novel. The struggle between her roles or what is her Self goes on in Mia’s narration where she has an inner discussion. Mr. Nobody says: “‘You can’t locate the self in neural networks!’” (Summer 117) in this he criticises Boris where after Mia defends Boris. She says “According
to my invisible comrade, not only Boris but everybody was asking the wrong questions, with the exception of Nobody himself, isolated spokesman for a synthetic vision that would unite all fields, end expert culture, and return thought to “dance and play” (Summer 117). The play with roles serves to show the distance that Mia seems to experience between the parts of her Self. Mia’s journey towards a complete and united Self continues to the very last page of the novel.

Mia continues to reflect on her character’s Self in her inner dialogue: “When I was mad, was I myself or not myself? When does one person become another?” (Summer 117). The questions Mia asks her Self address the recurring theme of development of character in The Summer Without Men where I would argue that including dialogues with Mr. Nobody is an element of play with what is fiction and what is fiction within fiction that serves to drive character development in this novel.

During the course of the novel it turns out that Boris’ brother Stefan was mentally ill and had declared his love for Mia. He shows this by kissing Mia and she responds to it. Stefan and Mia seem to recognise similar features between them. Later Stefan commits suicide and Mia realises that this is when her breakdown starts. However, her mourning first seem to turn into mental illness when Boris leaves her. Mia says: “Stefan was crazy, but he was not always crazy” (Summer 137) and later she compares Stefan to Nobody when she says: “, like my friend Nobody, he spouted mysterian philosophies that were sometimes hard to follow” (Summer 137-138). In this passage I would argue that Mr Nobody represents a metaphor for the mentally ill Mia. When she is ill she has troubles understanding her own thoughts and this reveals itself in the text as a maze of reflections on multiple topics that creates a discontinuous and multiple looped structure of the novel. This non-linear structure is similar to psychoanalytical process and it is also similar to the role struggle within the main character, perhaps two sides to a flipped coin.
Mia misses Mr Nobody when he is not around. I would argue that this is a piece of evidence that Mia has incorporated this part into her character’s Self or to a more complete role that she plays in her life in the novel. Mia says:

Mr. Nobody had not written in some time, and I began to worry. We had been lobbing balls back and forth on the subject of play, that is playing with play. He threw me a Derridian fastball first, the endless play of logos, round and round we go without end and without resolution, and it’s all texts, the doing and the undoing, then I threw back Freud’s “Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through,” in which the esteemed doctor tells us that transference, the spooky place between analyst and patient, is like a spielplatz, a playground, a terrain somewhere between illness and real life, where one can become the other. (Summer 171)

In this passage Mia carries an internal dialogue in which she reflects on literary and psychoanalytical theory of Derrida and Freud. Her inner discussion seems to come to an understanding of where a change in character might happen: in the area of Between, in a “playground”, where Mia might unite her roles and her whole character “where one can become the other”. Where Mr. Nobody can become Mia and Mia can become Mr. Nobody as one character that has one role.

Mia writes to Mr. Nobody to share her mourning after Abigail dies. Mia says: “I wrote to Nobody about her works and the long-ago love affair. I don’t know why I told him. Maybe I wanted an answer of some grandeur. I got it” (Summer 205). In Nobody’s answer, or Mia’s inner dialogue, she reflects on how some parts of her have to live in a box with “only temporary release” (Summer 205). The box Mr. Nobody talks about shows how hidden parts of her character have to be acted out in secret: “on a stage no one watches” (Summer 205). Mia here compares her Self to an actor on a stage. This incorporation of play with characters and their roles is another example of how Hustvedt incorporates elements of play and playfulness in this novel.

Hustvedt incorporates four drawings in The Summer Without Men. The box Mr Nobody describes above is present in all four drawings. Additionally, there are one or two
women present in the drawings. I would argue that these are other examples of Hustvedt’s playfulness with the genre of the novel. The way the author has incorporated the drawings into her novel make them serve as a part of a dialogical exchange with the reader. This extra linguistic element that Hustvedt incorporates into her novel illustrates what Chatman argues about characters as open or closed constructs. Chatman says: “In short, should we restrain what seems a God-given right to infer and even to speculate about character if we like? Any such restraint strikes me as an impoverishment of aesthetic experience. Implication and interference belong to the interpretation of character as they do that of plot, theme, and other narrative elements” (Chatman 1980, 117). The way that Chatman includes the implications of the interference of inner dialogue and drawing are examples of other narrative elements in the novel genre that might serve to drive character development. The first drawing, I would argue, captures the large woman caught within the box while reaching her arms over her head, with wide open scared eyes and an open mouth crying for help (Summer 6). The second drawing shows the large woman standing behind the box, holding onto the top of it while having a screwed look on her face (Summer 70). In the third drawing the large and the little woman are having a conversation. The large woman shows behind the box from her shoulders up where she listens intently to the little naked woman lying on top of the box gesticulating and talking to the large woman (Summer 115). The fourth drawing shows the little naked woman flying high above the box, smiling and folding out her arms (Summer 207). The drawings incorporate a non-linguistic or extra textual element to the novel that illustrates character development. I would argue that by only looking at the drawings in the novel it would become visible to the reader that there has been a development of character. I would further argue that this is part of dialogism or a dialogical exchange between narrator and reader, and author and reader that goes beyond the dialogue of I-You. Dialogism represented by these drawings includes interference and interpretation on part of the reader that serves to
development the readers understanding of the character Mia in The Summer Without Men. The drawings illustrate Mia’s inner dialogue as well as the development of her character’s personality or reconstruction of Self that she experiences in psychoanalysis. The illustrations might additionally reveal the relation Between Mia’s conscious and unconscious parts of her Self.

The role the inner dialogue plays in the novel to incorporate two separate part of the main characters personality: the madwoman and all the roles that Mia is familiar with already including the mother, the wife, the sister, the poet and the friend, it serves as a part of the dialogical exchange on three levels. Where one level is the dialogical exchange within Mia, another is the narrator Mia’s dialogical exchange with the reader and the third level of dialogical exchange is Between the author and the reader when Hustvedt incorporates elements of her own reflections on themes she also discusses in her essays on psychoanalysis and philosophy into the novel.

Winnicott explains the difference between mental illness and having problems in life. The Self- absorption mentally ill patients experience, I would argue, Mia narrates in her Self in parts of the novel. However, the engagement that Mia shows in relation to other characters in the novel such as her mother, her daughter, her sister, her neighbour, her poetry group and her mother’s friends show that she is not cut off from dialogical exchange.

On the contrary, the reader knows about this by Mia’s narrative and dialogues with other characters. Even though what is happening inside her is of great importance to Mia in her dialogues with Dr S. and also in her narration of her thoughts and reflections, her mental illness does not seem to create a wall between Mia and other characters. Winnicott describes that someone who is mentally ill will experience a barrier towards others. Mia’s inner thoughts as the reader knows them, do stop her from dialogic exchange with her co-characters. On the other hand, there are textual pieces of evidence that Mia is the preferred
partner of dialogue for Abigail who is one of her mother’s friends. Abigail has just shown Mia one of her embroideries with a secret hidden in them. Mia has shown her appreciation of her artistry and then says: “‘You had to hide it?’ She nodded, then smiled. ‘I was spitting mad at the time. Made me feel better’” (Summer 43). Abigail has hidden a secret in her embroidery that Mia describes as “touched with anger or revenge” (Summer 43). The secret is embroidery showing a vacuum cleaner sucking in Abigail’s hometown Bonden, perhaps a metaphor for clearing away the limitations of small town life. Abigail has had to hide parts of her life and she has symbolically used embroidery, which was considered an appropriate activity for women in the nineteen fifties, to hide her protests against these limitations on her life.

Abigail writes a note that she passes to Mia in secret. The note says: “Mia, I have a bit more to show you. Would Thursday be suitable? Yours, Abigail” (Summer 64). In the dialogues with Mia, Abigail reveals secrets that she has been hiding from most people. Abigail seems to feel a very strong connection to Mia and she finds their conversations reinvigorating to her. Mia describes how Abigail finds a place to sit down to show Mia some pieces of her handicrafted embroidery. She notices that Abigail’s body is frail but that her spirit is not. “When I looked up from the tapestry of self-pleasuring women, Abigail’s expression was both shrewd and sad. She told me that she had not shown the masturbators to anyone but me. I asked her why. ‘Too risky’ was her curt response” (Summer 79). This dialogue indicates an extra-textual understanding in the Between of the two women of dialogical exchange. I would argue that this confidence between Mia and Abigail serves to prove that Mia is well from her mental illness since she is capable of engaging in the lives of other characters and has passing the barrier of self-concern found in the mentally ill. The two characters’ dialogue additionally add another element of dialogic exchange in the way this dialogism shows the complexity of the female role and to what is acceptable and what is not it
for the characters in the novel. Thirdly the main character’s capability in caring for other characters could prove that the picture of the mentally ill that dialogues with Mr. Nobody or her inner dialogues create are not true. The playfulness of Hustvedt manifests in many respects in this novel.

This playfulness of Hustvedt additionally breaks the fourth wall of the novel where the narrator addresses the reader. The narrator Mia addresses the reader in the following: “And the pen, as it were, Dear Reader, is now in my hand…” (Summer 178). “Dear Reader” courteously addresses the reader of the novel. The structure as well as the choice of words of the quote carries a polite and formal tone, showing the authority of the narrator. “As it were” addresses the reader in a manner similar to what could be expected in a theatrical stage performance when an actor would address her audience in the theatre. “And the pen” the power tool of a writing artist and for the narrator and main character Mia. “Is now in my hand” serves a metaphor that the power by the tool of the pen is in in the hand of Mia, the narrator, enabling her leadership in the creation of her own narrative, her own story. The power lies in the hands of the storytellers and Mia is in charge of reconstructing her Self by telling her own story. The play with the reader here enables Mia to create a dialogical exchange to extend beyond the frame of the textual of the novel. The dialogical play of voices inside and out of the novel gives the main character other angles and perspectives to see her Self from and thus to gain knowledge about her Self.

In the following playful acknowledgement of the constructedness of the texts Mia addresses the reader on the narration of her story. Mia says:

How to tell it? Asks your sad, crack-brained, crybaby narrator. How to tell it? It gets a bit crowded from her on in—there’s simultaneity, one thing happening at Rolling Meadow, another at the Arts Guild, another at the neighbouring house, not to speak of Boris wandering the streets of NYC with my concerns Daisy on his heels; all of this will have to be dealt with. And we all know that simultaneity is a BIG problem for words. They come in sequence, always, only in sequence, so while I sort it out, … (Summer 134)
By breaking the fourth wall of the novel the narrator reveals important aspects of the nonlinear narrative of the novel to the reader. The settings Mia presents all give stages for her dialogues and interaction with other characters that helps drive the character development of Mia. Additionally, the multiple settings for character dialogism in the passage open for the polyphonic in the novel. The narrator here points at the limitations of words in the simultaneity of action of the novel. She addresses the reader on the possibilities and limitations of different settings and warns, or prepares, the reader of the limitations words might have on Mia’s narration of actions that happens at the same time. The words the narrator Mia addresses the reader in this passage could similarly have been used by a narrator on stage when she reveals the setting to the audience. The introduction to the setting not only reveals the limitations of words, it additionally encourages the reader to get involved in the novel beyond the words. This passage invites the reader into the dialogical exchange with the narrator and main character. Thus, I would argue, the passage above includes dialogical elements of the reader such as personality, experience and presence that will influence the reader’s understanding of the novel. This serves to prove, I would argue, that dialogic exchange seems to drive the development of the main character in *The Summer Without Men*. Not only does dialogic exchange engage the reader-narrator and the reader-character entity, it also creates settings where the character might gain self-knowledge from another angle that is an example of development of character personality rather than revealing of character by the author.

The next quote introduces the reader to Mia’s creation of a setting in which the poetry group Mia teaches will set up their play. Mia tries to create dialogical exchange within her group by making the girls write a piece of fiction from the angle of one of the other girls in the group. Mia has chosen their roles, which enables the girls to see their Selves from another angle, and it is another element of play Hustvedt incorporates into this novel. They are now
ready to perform and Mia says: “, the above paragraph gives you an idea of what I said, so we won’t bother to rehearse it here” (*Summer* 174). In this passage the narrator is in dialogical exchange with the reader. The reader is included in the “we” of the narrator and reader that, I would argue, is an example that Hustvedt incorporate entities of dialogical exchange in her novel. The novel reaches out to the reader again when Mia says: ”You friend out there, will mostly be spared the tedium of early adolescent prose; it is worse than the poetry” (*Summer* 184). The narrator shares her sentiments her students’ writing skills with the reader, calling the reader “you friend out there” as if she is aware of her Self as a narrator and a character in a novel. By engaging the reader in this way the narrator seems to take on an external point of view in which she might not only observe her students but also her own character. This, I would argue, is another example of character development of the personality of the character by breaking the fourth wall of the novel.

Mia says in the following: “I have come around to myself, as you can see” (*Summer* 213). The reader is invited to have a look at her character and to confirm to her that she has changed from the mentally ill woman the reader met at the start of the novel. Here Mia reflects on her own character’s personality “myself”. Where “come around” could imply that Mia now approves of her Self. Mia relies on the reader to approve of her approval of her Self, thus bringing in several layers of confirmation to the Self of the main character. The above might serve as an example of how Hustvedt plays with the inter-textual levels of the novel.

Hustvedt expands the playfulness within the novel by playing the reader’s perception of the sex of the narrator main character. The narrator seems to be the character Mia in the novel, however, this passage might lead the reader to doubt this perception: “Mia might really be Morton for all you know. I, your personal narrator, might be wearing a pseudonymous mask” (*Summer* 179).
The narrator comments on herself as “your personal narrator” showing direction of the narration from the narrator towards the reader. The narrator is controlling the situation since the reader cannot see her and is thus forced to rely on the narrator to create the vision of the novel for her. If the narrator is “wearing a pseudonymous mask” and is presenting herself as someone other than the real narrator then the reader of a novel written from the first person point of view would only know the sex of the narrator when the narrator lets her: “Mia might really be Morton”. The reader will as the narrator puts it “for all you know”, not know any truth or facts other than what is told or presented by the narrator. This allows the narrator to play with the perception of the reader and make the reader question the illusion of what she has already read. This might imply that the reader has been tricked through the whole of the novel, that the story the narrator has told is one out several possible stories she or he could have told and one of the many voices in characters that Bakhtin refers to. Mia reconstructs her Self in the novel and if the narrator and main character is Morton then the reader has been tricked into, played by the narrator and author, to follow the reconstruction of another Self. The Self of a man and not of a woman. Hustvedt show the all-knowing subjectivity of the main character and there is no background knowledge the reader might check. This first person, Mia or Morton, can only learn about it Self by dialogues or interactions with others.

In this chapter I argue that Hustvedt in The Summer Without Men incorporates elements of drama in the dialogues of the main character that drives character development in this novel. In the following I will analyse how dialogic exchange is incorporated in these dramatic elements. In The Summer Without Men there are textual examples of play right at the beginning. The novels starts with this dramatic dialogue:

LUCY (IRENE DUNNE): You’re all confused, aren’t you?
JERRY (CARY GRANT): Uh-huh. Aren’t you?
LUCY: No.
JERRY: Well, you should be, because you’re wrong about being different because they’re not the same.
Things are different, except in a different way. You’re still the same, only I’ve been a fool. Well, I’m not now.
SO, as long as I’m different, don’t you think things could be the same again? Only a little different.

—The Awful Truth
directed by Leo McCarey
screenplay by Vina Delmar

(Summer intro)

Hustvedt has borrowed this dramatic dialogue from the film The Awful Truth from 1937 where the plot is a bad scheming of a couple on the verge of divorce. The dramatic dialogue serves to set the stage for the plot theme of The Summer Without Men. Dramatic dialogue contains the essence dialogic exchange in communication in that it incorporates I-You and thus creates a larger entity that includes an audience, the reader. The dramatic dialogue creates an understanding on part of the reader that incorporates the environment of the characters and the reader alike. The exerted scene from the screenplay forms a sharp contrast yet a coherent transmission to the main character Mia’s first lines of her narrative: “Sometime after he said the word pause, I went mad and landed in the hospital” (Summer 1). The cause and effect of Mia is introduced in this first sentence where the dramatic element in the introduction functions to elevate the atmosphere and prepare the reader for the dramatic turn in the main character’s life that follows. The theme of the novel introduced here forms the development of Mia’s character from this point on.

Dramatic elements appear several times in the novel. After Mia has left the hospital she goes to live in the little Midwestern town where her mother Laura lives in an apartment for elderly people and Mia says: “During the time my mother had lived in Rolling Meadows, any number of characters in the theatre of her everyday life had left the stage for ‘Care,’ never to return” (Summer 11). Mia refers to her mother’s everyday life as a theatre stage. Mia uses dramatic language to describe death in characters where she uses expressions such as “had left the stage never to return” as a metaphor for dying. This dramatic element of language
included in the novel enables the narrator to address a serious topic. The dramatic element adds another level in the dialogical exchange to include the reader’s associations to known formulations to enter into the I-You entity of narrator and reader. The following quote in a similar manner includes the reader’s associations of plays. Mia says:

, and then I walked over the moist grass into the rented house where I raged alone. Sturm und Drang. Whose play was that? Friedrich von Klinger. Kling. Klang. Bang. Mia Fredricksen in revolt against the Stressor. Storm and Stress. Tears. Pillow beating. Monster Woman blasts into space and bursts into bits that scatter and settle over the little town of Bonden. The grand theatre of Mia Fredricksen in torment with no audience but the walls, not her Wall, not Boris Izcovich, traitor, creep, and beloved, Not He. Not B. I. No sleep but for pharmacology and its dreamless oblivion. (Summer 17)

Here Mia describes her rage in playful connotations and yet the force of her anger is transferred to the reader, I would argue, in the sounds of the words “Kling. Klang. Bang”. Here it is possible for the reader to hear Mia’s anger, maybe in the same way as Hustvedt describes that she hears her characters. The narrator refers to the eighteenth century German poet and author Fredrich von Klinger’s play Storm und Drang. Von Klinger’s position was a representative for literary revolt against rationalism in favour of emotionalism. This is an example of how Hustvedt includes a dialogical emotional element in this quote by referring to a well known play, and she thus allows room for inclusion of emotions not only rational thought processes. The narrator then uses elements of play for Mia to develop as a character.

Bakhtin talks about play and stage dialogues as representatives of points of view of the world: “Under these conditions the profound independence of the individual ‘voices’ takes on, as it were, a special poignancy” (Bakhtin 1999, 33). The voices of the individual the main character Mia stress the readers where they create emotions on part of the reader. The staged dialogues in Dostoevsky’s novels affects the emotions of the reader and I would argue that Hustvedt uses her staged dialogues in a similar manner in which Mia’s individual voice comes across to the reader and creates a dialogic entity beyond the text. The engagement of
the reader’s emotions is possible due to the dialogic elements of this staged dialogue. The connotations Hustvedt uses of play, I would argue, serve to indicate that drama drives character development in *The Summer Without Men*.

Hustvedt incorporate dramatic references several places in her novel. Mia says: “Playground or royal court? Isn’t the human business the same?” (*Summer* 34). The narrator and main character allows for the general, “combines the plurality of consciousnesses” (Bakhtin 1999, 6) not one unity but merged in the perception of Mia here. Mia makes another stage reference when she says: “There were bodies all over the stage” (*Summer* 36). Mia paints a verbal visual of dead people on a battleground to illustrate her defeat in her marriage. I would argue, that this staging of her emotions incorporates the world into the entity of the I-You of narrator and reader and that the dialogic element used here gives Mia the same view of her emotions as she shares with the reader. From this angle she is able to develop her character, in that she sees her Self and this recognition will keep her from repeating the same actions in a similar pattern again.

At the Arts Guild during poetry class Mia sees a play unfold that she has been a part of in her younger days. Mia says: “There were glances exchanged among them and barely discernible nods that sometimes made me feel as if I were watching a play that was taking place behind an opaque screen” (*Summer* 56). Mia describes the screen that the girls hide their non-verbal actions behind to make it nubilous to her what goes on between them. Mia recognises it as bullying and the visual image the narrator creates strengthens the dialogical exchange in the novel the Between narrator and reader in this turning point. Mia experienced bullying as a child and this is a subjective experience in the main character and narrator. When Mia in the above quote makes her observation a stage performance, she recognises her Self and sees her Self from another angle and this enables her to develop her character. Hustvedt integrate elements of drama at more turning points in *The Summer Without Men*. 85
The drama element of stage performance also in these other examples gives Mia a possibility for Self-observation and reflection from another angle where she moves out of the subjective perspective. Mia sets the stage for Mia’s and Boris’ dramatic dialogue. Mia says:

Below, without commentary, an epistolary dialogue made possible by racing twenty-first-century technology that took place the following day between B.I. and M.F. on the scenarios A, B, or D, and so on.

B.I.: Mia, does it really matter what happened? Isn’t it enough that it is over between us, and I want to see you?

M.F.: If the story were reversed, and I were you, and you I, wouldn’t it matter to you? It is a question of the state of you heart, old friend of mine. Heart dented by rejection à la francaise, unhappy and surprisingly helpless alone, Husband decides in may be better to begin reconciliation proceedings with Old Faithful; or, Seeing the error of his ways, Spouse penetrates his Folly (ha, ha, ha) and has revelation: Worn Old Wife looks better from Uptown.

B.I.: Can we dispense with the bitter irony?

M.F.: How on earth do you think I would have made it through this without it? I would have stayed mad.

B.I.: She broke it off. But the thing was already broken.

M.F.: I was broken, and you came to the hospital once.

B.I.: They wouldn’t let me come. I tried to come, but they refused me.

M.F.: What do you want from me now?

B.I.: Hope

I couldn’t answer “hope” until the next day. The reversal I had dreamed had come, and I felt as hard as a piece of flint. My answer to the big B. arrived in the morning: “Woo me.”

And he, in high Romantic style, wrote back, “Okay” (Summer 170-171).

This is the major turning point in the novel where the wooing start and Boris works to have Mia back in his life and Hustvedt uses drama to illustrate this. Mia, the main character and narrator gains another perspective when she “watches” her stage performance with Boris. Not only does she see her Self differently, she also gains a different perspective on Boris. Thus, I would argue, that the dramatic dialogue above serves to presents more voices of the novel
which consequently creates change and thereby development in the main character and also in Boris. We see the consequences of change in dialogue quality when the dialogue between Mia and Boris achieves a dialogistic level, when reach a level of unity of the Between. The last turning point of the novel includes this staged drama. The important characters from the different settings are gathered at the house Mia rents in Bonden. Daisy, her daughter looks out the window and says:

“A car’s coming up the driveway.” She leaned toward the glass. “I can’t see who it is. You’re not expecting anybody, are you? Good Lord, he’s getting out of the car. He’s walking toward the steps.” I heard the bell.” It’s Dad, Mom. It’s Dad! Well, well, aren’t you going to answer it? What’s the matter with you?”

Flora grabbed Daisy around the thighs and began to bounce up and down in anticipation. “Well?” she crowed.” Well?”

“You get it,” I said. “Let him come to me.”

FADE TO BLACK

(Summer 216)

Mia towards the end takes on a different role than she has had before. Her actions are different and serve to prove that her character has developed. There are elements of drama in the quote where Daisy’s descriptions intensify the action. Flora the little neighbour girl responds to the tension in the room and starts to jump showing the emotions Daisy and Mia contain. Mia, who at the beginning of the novel was hospitalised due to her breakdown, has changed from broken down to contained in her character the way she awaits Boris to be the active part, reverse and heal their marriage. “Fade to black” visualises to the reader that the play is over and it is time to leave the theatre. The show has come to an end. This is another piece of evidence of how the playfulness of Hustvedt’s novel writing drives character development in the Summer Without Men.
“In the first two months after my arrival, I met Boris Izcovich, a homeless, alcoholic former cellist” (Sorrows 37). This is one of a number of examples of Hustvedt’s playfulness in The Sorrows of an American. Here the alert reader recognises the husband of the main character Mia from the Summer Without Men: Boris Izcovich. However, in The Sorrows of an American Boris is “a homeless, alcoholic and former cellist” that the narrator and main character Erik meets on the streets of New York (Sorrows 37) whereas in The Summer Without Men Boris is the main character Mia’s science husband. It seems Hustvedt plays with the reader on several levels here. The quote above leaves the reader in question of who Boris Izcovich is. Is the character Boris Izcovich a homeless alcoholic or is he Mia’s science husband? Hustvedt plays with the reader’s perception of character in that it leaves doubt of the character Boris. Moreover, the way Hustvedt includes him in both novels sheds additional doubt in the reader this time of the recovery of Mia, whether her narrative is fiction within fiction and that Boris is one of the characters she hears in her head when she is psychotic. By allowing characters to cross over and enter other novels Hustvedt adds another level of playing: a play Between novels. Another element that plays Between The Summer Without Men and The Sorrows of an American is the black and white notebook of the main characters of both novels. Erik says: “Those solitary winter evenings seemed to spawn fantasies. I recorded some of them. Others never found their way into the black-and-white journal I reserved for my private thoughts,” (Sorrows 23). Erik narrates his fantasies into the notebook and not his character’s real experiences it seems. Hustvedt’s use of the metaphor of black and white in the notebook could symbolise the moral dichotomy of good and evil. It could also be an example of Hustvedt’s play with this regular interpretation of the metaphor and instead be a symbol that Erik’s fantasies of Miranda symbolises the black in the notebook and Erik symbolises the white in it. Similarly Mia writes her private thoughts on her early sexual
experiences in her journal, a black and white notebook. It might be that Mia invents these experiences and that they represent her fantasies instead, in this interpretation I would argue that Mia’s fantasies are in dialogic exchange with the other part or parts of her character. However, this interpretation I have not pursued further in my discussion. I would argue that Hustvedt uses the metaphor of the black and white dualism to symbolise the fight between the parts of the characters personalities or Selves, the white is the one that Mia and Erik accept and the black part of their characters they repress to use a Freudian expression of a defence mechanism. I suggest that *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American* are novels where Hustvedt’s characters develop by dialogic exchange in the Between characters in the novels and Between these novels.

Hustvedt’s playfulness additionally becomes visible to the reader when she includes autobiographical elements in *The Sorrows of an American*. Hustvedt includes and braids her deceased father Lloyd Hustvedt’s memoirs into her own work of fiction and creates a Between within the novel of memoirs and fiction. The memoirs are in italics and presented as the Erik’s father Lars Davidsen’s memoirs. Only in the acknowledgements following the novel does Hustvedt let the reader know the origin of the memoirs. The combination of autobiographic parts interwoven into her novel is another example of Hustvedt’s playfulness in her writing of this novel, a playfulness that is essential for the dialogism of author and reader in the novel. In the dialogical exchange of autobiography and fiction Hustvedt develops her characters where the memoirs form a historical context in which Erik can relate to his father Lars. What used to be dialogue between Erik and Lars’ is turned into Erik’s inner dialogue with his father’s memoirs. Erik makes reflections in this inner dialogue and by this he creates another angle that enables him to see his Self from. The way that Hustvedt incorporates her father’s memoirs thus represent another of the many voices within the novel.
that Bakhtin talks about and form a Between of I-You of Erik and his father where Erik develops his character.

Another level of play, I would argue, that seems relevant for my discussion of dialogism in character development is with reference to how these memoirs play with content. The main character Erik reflects on this when he narrates: “Every memoir is full of holes. It’s obvious that there are stories that can’t be told without pain to others or to oneself, that autobiography is fraught with questions of perspective, self-knowledge, repression, an outright delusion” (*Sorrows* 8). Erik shares his thoughts on what is possibly left out in autobiographical literature, whether this is unconsciously repressed or forgotten, or simply left out in concern of others and that this creates another story than what happened. In her work Hustvedt compares memories to creating fiction in that she seems to believe that people and characters make up what they do not remember or do not wish to remember. In this perspective, I would argue, autobiographical material might not divert from fiction. Hustvedt explains in “Freud’s Playground”:

> I am convinced that Freud was right about words: self-conscious narrative memoirs gain their flexibility—motion in time—and their mutability—they are not reliable but continually reconstructed over a lifetime—in language. They depend on our ability to see ourselves as others see us—that’s me in the mirror—a character in my family, a player in the social world, and this otherness becomes highly articulated in words, which allow us to gather up ourselves in the past, project ourselves into the future, and create fictional worlds that are always in essence dialogical (Hustvedt 2013, 210)

Hustvedt makes reference to Freud in this passage. She talks about the reliability of memoirs and how they are “continually reconstructed—in language” in the course of a characters life. The ability for characters to see their Selves, “as others see them”, relies on access of another angle in which they can see their Selves. Dialogism in play as well as in psychoanalysis, I would argue, creates this other angle of the Between I-You. Hustvedt talks about how memoirs allow us to collect our Selves “in the past” and to “project” our Selves into a future perspective that is essential to dialogism by the tool of language.
Not only does Hustvedt include her father’s memoirs she also includes a fictional letter that Inga finds and hands over to Erik who narrates:

The letter was dated June 27, 1937. Beneath the date, in a large childish hand, was written: “Dear Lars, I know you will never ever say nothing about what happened. We swore it on the BIBLE. It can’t matter now she’s in heaven or to the ones here on earth. I believe in your promise. Lisa.” (Sorrows 4-5)

The letter leaves an unresolved question in Erik and Inga of what the secret is, of “what happened”, what secret their father kept all these years. Their father has kept the “promise” to Lisa that they “swore on the BIBLE”, he has been reliable, a trait in his character that his children recognise. Lisa and Lars swore on the Bible might be a metaphor in the novel for telling the truth that is generally used in the court of law. “The large childish hand”, I would suggest, indicates the age of Lisa at the time when she writes it. The date of the letter symbolises time and indicates the past to the reader. The “she” Lisa refers to in her letter is in my opinion the uncertain element in this passage of what character in the novel Lisa writes about. In the secret that Lisa and Lars share, Erik and Inga see a potential change in their perception of their father’s character.

In The Sorrows of an American Erik and Inga set out to search for their father’s secret hinted to them in his letter from Lisa, this unknown woman from their father’s past with an, to them, unknown role in his life. Their uncertainty of this leads them to think that Lars and Lisa’s relation might affect both their lives and their personalities. This sets Erik and Inga off to search for clues to the secret in registered official papers of their father’s hometown. They additionally talk to elderly people who might know something of Lisa and Lars and their secret. Their search leads them to Lorelei who lives and works with Lisa. Erik narrates their first meeting with Lorelei: “It was Rosalie, with some help from her dauntless mother, who arranged the meeting at the Ideal Café in Blooming Field. Lorelei Kavacek had business to take care of in town and had granted us an interview” (Sorrows 189). Lorelei might be the key for Erik and Inga to approach Lisa, and in their interview with her they find out more about
Lisa. Erik narrates: “Lorelei lived with a reclusive woman connected to my father and the community where he’d grown up. She was lame and, at least by association, secretive” (*Sorrows* 190). The information Erik and Inga gathers on the environment around Lisa and the lack of social life she seems to have besides Lorelei, add to keeping their expectations high of what may be revealed about Lisa. Erik narrates: “We ordered coffee, and she said in a voice rich with long Minnesota vowels. ‘My aunt remembers yer dad, but she said that she never saw him since before the war, read some articles on him in the paper though’” (*Sorrows* 191). Little by little small pieces of information dismantle the image the siblings have of a love story between Lars and Lisa, a story they seem to think might influence their perception of their father as a man of fidelity to their mother. However, they already perceive their father a reliable man. At a later meeting at Rosalie’s house Lorelei shows Erik and Inga some of the dolls Lisa and she have made and they make strong impressions with their lifelike expressions in both faces and bodies. It seems that the dolls impressions on Erik and Inga resemble voices in the novel and provide examples where there is an exchange among dialogic positions within the text.

In his essay “Characters in Bakhtin’s Theory” Wall suggests means authors might use to move a reader through literature. I would argue that Hustvedt’s uses the dolls’ voices to move the reader through the last part of the novel. The dolls stories create a Between that facilitates dialogical exchange of doll and character within *The Sorrows of an American*. This use of dialogism adds another level of dialogical exchange to the novel, a level that comes in addition to the author’s relationship with the reader. The dolls in *The Sorrows of an American* are created out of stories. Similarly, I would argue, the character development of Erik and Inga’s rely on Lisa and Lars’ secret. Erik and Inga’s fear might be found in the unknown secret and in this lies the potential power to reconstruct their identities as they know them.

Erik asks Lorelei: “‘What comes first,’ I asked, ‘the story or the doll?’ ‘Why, the story, of
course. Couldn’t make ‘em without knowing who they are and what happened to them.’” (Sorrows 199). Lorelei seems surprised by Erik’s question which shows when she adds the suffix “of course” to her answer of what the order the story and the doll making comes in.

Lorelei reveals that the dolls are developed by identities “who they are” and stories “what happened to them” Lisa and Lorelei make dolls that express stories, the dolls thus engage in dialogic exchange with their audience, their buyers and viewer who are characters within the novel and the readers of The Summer Without Men. Hustvedt’s introduction of this element of dialogism to her novel engages the characters as well as the reader in play and the author’s playfulness still keeps this secret hidden until it is revealed on stage in the doll show at a later point.

George W. Burns in 101 Healing Stories for Kids and Teens: Using Metaphors in Therapy explains and defines: “In metaphor therapy, the stories acted out by the puppets, dolls, or toys will (a) identify the problem, (b) communicate means for resolving the problem, (c) model the types of skills and resources necessary for such resolution, and (d) offer a potentially attainable outcome” (Burns 2005, 28). In The Sorrows of an American Hustvedt writes about dolls in a way, I would argue, that resonates with Burns description of dolls’ role in therapy to “identify the problem”. In this novel the dolls later reveal the secret of Lars Davidsen and Lisa Odland in a staged performance. Hustvedt’s incorporation of the metaphor of dolls adds an element of dialogical exchange Between the characters in the novel where their dramatic performance might “communicate means of resolving the problem” of the secret.

Erik and Inga have not found the answer to their father’s secret in their meeting with Lorelei. On their journey back to New York after the meeting Inga says: “‘WE FOUND THE wrong story,’ Inga said to me in the plane back to New York. ‘We were looking for one story and ran into another.’” (Sorrows 200). The capital letters intensify the novel and then prepare
the reader for the revelation of the secret only to find that Hustvedt playfully engages the reader. The reader’s anticipation incorporates dialogistic exchange of the reader’s experience with such build up in other novels and the surprising twist of the novel is another secret. The secret they ran into is the story of Inga’s dead husband Max’s infidelity that resulted in a child. This discovery changes Inga’s perception of her husband and it subsequently changes her perception of her Self, of her character’s identity perception.

“If we knew what happened between Pappa and Lisa, if we knew who died and how, we might understand him better. Secrets can define people.” She glances at Sonia who was fast asleep in the window seat across from us. “Every day, I think about the fact that she knew about them and didn’t say anything. It’s like a knife in me. And still, when we talked, I couldn’t bring myself to mention Joel to her.” She lowered her voice to a whisper. “What if she has a brother? I’ve been thinking about it. Wouldn’t it be terribly wrong to keep siblings apart? And yet, what are they to each other, really? I mean, what does biology mean in a case like this?” (Sorrows 201)

Inga wants to know who died hoping that this might reveal some other definition of her father. This is what the narrator presents as the secret to the reader. However, this could include another element of play in *The Sorrows of an American*, a play with the quest or the search for the secret and that Inga searches for Max’s secret at an unconscious level. When Inga talks about that “secrets define people” it might imply that secrets define characters who carry the secret and those characters who are affected by the secret.

These secrets create a dialogism of thoughts and dialogue on the unspoken, the pondering and inner dialogue in the character and the dialogues between characters on the possible content of the secret, that influence the development of character. I would argue that this is an example of the novel’s potential where, it follows the ideas of Bakhtin and does justice to the voice of the unspoken. Inga’s daughter Sonia saw her father with the other woman but she did not tell. Sonia did not want her parents to get divorced and therefore she forgot about it, she made it go away. Just like Hustvedt describes memoirs in that they “create fictional worlds that are always in essence dialogical” (Hustvedt 2013, 210), seems to apply to Sonia and Inga stories where some is kept in the story and some is left out. Sonia leaves the
other woman out of the story on purpose, and Inga represses signs of her husband’s infidelity that enables her to repress the idea of it completely. The contents of their stories depend on their ability to see their Selves as others see them and in their roles in the world and in nature. The dialogism in the stories these characters tell and the ones they do not tell similarly are part in developing their characters. Sonia and Inga are not the only characters in *The Sorrows of an American* who keep secrets. From what the reader already knows Lisa and Lorelei hold on to a secret that Erik and Inga, in addition to their mother and Sonia, are anxious to find out about. Erik narrates: “‘The dolls were testimonies of some sort.’ Inga nodded. ‘Telling but not telling.’” (*Sorrows* 201). This quote lifts the intensity of the novel again after the sad emotions that Inga experiences when she acknowledges her husband’s deceit.

When Inga discovers Max’s affair with another woman it alters her husband’s story and concurrently her lifestory. The new story she now tells her Self about her life alters her character’s personality. The infidelity that she was anxious to find, but still expected to find, in her father’s life she found in her own story. Other characters’ voices have made it possible for the reader to anticipate the possibility of Max’s infidelity such as Burton’s voice. Burton is a friend of Erik’s and a lifelong admirer of Inga. Burton’s dialogues with Erik give the novel another perspective where both Inga and Erik can learn about their Selves from another angle. Burton takes on a different quest than the siblings. He starts out to reveal the threat Inga perceives are in letters Max has written and that are in the possession of another woman. The letters that Henry, a journalist and admirer of Max, wants to incorporate into a biography about Max. The threat for Inga lies in the words of the letters “which allow us to gather up ourselves in the past” (Hustvedt 2013, 210). She seems to fear that the words of Max’s letters might create a world in which she will not recognise her Self or her husband’s Self, that the letters reach out beyond the textual to a dialogical exchange that will alter her and her dead husband’s characters. The understanding of character as a pure product of interpersonal
contacts thus shifts focus from the pure linguistics of a novel to the relational, the between characters.

Burton is first introduced in the novel as the not so successful friend of Erik who has been out of touch for some years. Erik tells how: “Burton gripped my hand, pumped it, and said, ‘To articulate the value, to me, of our renewed friendship, one that had been in hiatus, interrupted, as it were, for many years is quite impossible. My gratitude is all the more replete now as I wrestle, metaphorically of course with the Beast Melancholia” (Sorrows 234). The discontinuity of their friendship seems only to have strengthened Burton’s unyielding feelings of friendliness for Erik. His choice of words and sentence structure in this dialogue signifies courteousness. Hustvedt’s choice of words, for instance “to articulate” as a words for say, emphasises the formality in Burton’s language. The author’s use of formal language might signify and reveal the chivalric parts of his character to the reader, the word choices may additionally add dialogism of the text in that it creates an anticipation of the future of the development of the character’s personality.

Later he takes on a different character, hidden to the reader, to his fellow characters and possibly to Burton himself. I would argue, in alignment with how Chatman defines character formation within a novel (1980), that Burton is an example of a character that is reconstructed by the reader from evidence implicit in the novel and communicated by the discourse. There are further pieces of evidence in The Sorrows of an American of how this is expressed in this character. The reader has to re-evaluate her opinion of Burton’s character when his character seems to be empowered and he takes on a new role in the drama that is about to unfold. Burton in his new role of the knight in shining armour who fights for the love of his life, Inga, employs dramatic elements of play in his quest. To obtain information about Max’s letters, he disguises himself and dresses up as a woman. By wearing a mask, an
element of drama, Burton reveals the plot of the secret letters and defends “his” woman. Erik narrates:

Dorothy held up one of the bags and said in a clear deep voice, “I have them.” I suddenly knew who it was, but it was Inga who said it: “Burton?” It was Burton all right, skin shining with perspiration and in need of a shave. The man’s disguise was hardly brilliant. As I gaped at him, I wondered how anyone could mistake him for a woman, and yet an instant earlier, he had been someone I didn’t know (Sorrows 288).

Burton’s shining armour is a coat and he takes on a female role to execute his rescue of Inga by attaining Max’s letters. Burton’s masking is his disguise and the cross dressing hides his character’s personality. This is another example of how Hustvedt integrate aspects of drama into her novel. In addition, this quote exemplifies that Erik sees what he expects to see. When he sees a coat he expects it to be a woman who carries it, an example of how the dialogistic elements of Erik’s perceptions of nature, the world and other characters influence his formation of character within the novel. The quote reveals that Erik is not impressed by Burton’s disguise, “the man’s disguise was hardly brilliant”, and Erik observes that Burton is stubbly yet Erik did not recognise neither that it was a man nor that it was Burton.

Burton has used the disguise to get hold of Max’s letters and he gives them to Inga. Burton says: “‘Open it,’ he said, and then, in a voice more excited than I had ever heard him use, he burst out, ‘I bought them. The letters. They’re yours. Thant’s my gift, my…my atonement’” (Sorrows 289). Burton with his chivalric manners wants to make amends, of his “atonement”, for the embarrassment he once made of himself in front of Inga by buying Inga the letters. The tone of voice that Erik describes Burton uses in the quote shows the excitement and joy that Burton feels. I would argue, that the shame Burton has felt since the embarrassment has influenced how he has perceived himself as a character. Additionally, it might have influenced his perception of Inga’s character and of her perception of his character. Burton regains his self-respect and synchronously he expects to be respected by Inga. The growth in Burton’s self-respect shows in his excitement and how he lets his
dialogue go less censured and less formal. The sentences he uses are short as in more informal language and he seems to have to search for the more complex word as “atonement”. Erik and Burton shares a drink and in their conversation Burton reveals his hidden work and how he managed to buy Max’s letters.

During their dialogue Erik understands something new about Burton: “While we talked together, I understood that my friend had whole territories within him I had never known about” (Sorrows 291). Erik in role of friend has believed that what Burton presented to him by his appearance and his language is the character Burton. What Burton has shown to Erik has formed Erik’s perception of his personality, and Erik’s role of analyst does not seem to have been in play in forming his perceptions of his friend’s character. I would argue, that this is a piece of evidence of several voices in the same character. Hustvedt’s playfulness with character’s roles shows in the characters’ perceptions and how they are blinded by, or only open to, the most obvious interpretations of the other characters in The Sorrows of an American. This is, I would argue, an example that Hustvedt utilises possibilities within the novel genre to inhabit both men and women characters, and their two or more speaking voices, to tell their stories.

Siri Hustvedt amalgamates another element of play with the dramatic element of masks. The masks in The Sorrows of an American, I would argue, are represented by the pictures taken by one of the characters of the novel: the photographer Jeffrey Lane. Jeffrey Lane is related to Erik Davidsen’s tenant Miranda and is the father of her child Eglantine. The relationship between Lane and Miranda shifts several times during the novel. Where their inconsistent relationship causes Eglantine to meet father for the first time, and then within a short time span to split her time between her mother and her father. The narrator Erik first encounters Lane through his pictures of Miranda in which her eyes are carved out. The eyeless pictures resemble masks. In Erik’s second encounter with Lane he breaks an entry
into Erik’s house and takes his picture. Erik discovers a stranger walking down the hallway: “As I yelled, ‘What the hell are you doing in my house!’ I noticed that the thing the man had taken from his pocket was a small digital camera, an in that same instant I understood that I was face to face with Jeffrey Lane” (Sorrows 111-112). The “digital camera” Erik symbolises a gun for Erik and the picture that Lane takes of him shows sides to his character that are unknown to Erik. The dialogical exchange with Lane introduces Erik to unrecognised sides of his character. With his camera Lane “kills” Erik’s perception of his Self and the roles he is familiar which includes the contained, observing and helpful parts of his character.

When Miranda reengages in a relationship with Lane, Miranda explains to Erik that Lane prepares for an exhibition. Lane calls Erik: “I need a shrink” (Sorrows 210). Lane’s call on Erik’s professional role helps Erik relax a little in his fear of Lane. Erik seems to think that Lane needs someone to talk to, a psychoanalyst or “shrink”, but later he realises this is not what Lane intended for. Miranda leaves for a holiday in Jamaica and suddenly Lane comes to visit Erik. Lane talks to his Self in Erik’s mirror about his need for the photos: “But I need the photos, you see, it’s not like I can help it. It’s documentation, man, it’s my whole splendid mess on film” (Sorrows 217). This might be an example of Lane’s attempt to create a Between to enable him to see his own Self, his character, by using a mirror. The mirror is an object, thus I would argue that the entity Lane manages to create is one of I-It. Erik is in position of a spectator and is not engaged in dialogic exchange with Lane which is a piece of evidence for this argument. Lane continues his dialogue with his mirror image: “The world’s going virtual anyway; there’s no reality left. Simulacra, baby” (Sorrows 217). In this quote Lane makes reference to a lack of reality and thereby a lack of relations with nature, the world and men that Buber includes in his dialogical entity of I-You. In the fictional world within the novel Lane needs a shrink, not one to talk to but one he can exhibit.
Lane’s photo of Erik is included in his exhibition called: “Jeff’s Lives: Multiple Fictions, or an Excursion into DID” (*Sorrows* 260). The exhibition title gives the main character a clue of what he might find in it. Erik has seen examples of Lane’s twisted reality perception before and is still weary of what is about to discover in his own character. The “multiple fictions” might refer to the stories made up to create memories, narratives and memoirs. DID is short for dissociative identity disorder; a mental illness that is characterised by at least two distinct and relatively enduring identities or dissociated personality states. The dissociative aspect of the disease is thought to stem from a combination of factors that may include trauma experience (WebMD). The inclusion of a diagnosis of mental illness in the title of his exhibitions might be a metaphor for the illusions of characters, or fictional characters, that he portrays in his photos. The image of the analyst that Erik has of his own character has already been shaken, if not slightly altered, by facing the reactions to him of patient who had seen Lane’s exhibition and who showed fear of him while in a psychoanalytic session.

Erik tries to mask his identity when he shows up at the exhibition as he anticipates the worst presentation of his Self: “…, I entered the gallery, wearing an old baseball cap and a scarf in an admittedly absurd attempt to hide my identity” (*Sorrows* 259-60). The description of his clothing resembles a disguise and seems to indicate that Erik does want to be recognised. His masking might be interpreted as a wish for an objective position from which he might observe Lane’s representation of him.

When I walked over to the Father section, I spotted it right away. It was an eight-by-ten photograph, mixed in among many other pictures with the caption *Head Doctor Goes Insane*. But in that first moment, I wasn’t sure who I was looking at. Anger had contorted my face to such a degree that I was almost unrecognizable (*Sorrows* 262-263).

The picture that Lane has taken shows an expression of Erik’s character that he is not familiar with. Anger is not an emotion that is prominent in Erik’s roles as analyst, son, brother, uncle
and lover. Anger seems to be an emotion that scares Erik and one that he recognises in his father Lars when the latter was confronted with his past. The expression the picture shows is not an incorporated part of Erik’s character personality and the section in which it hangs “the Father section” symbolises is a role that Erik connects to his father. Erik does not have children and father is not a role he inhabits. The picture thus presents a fictional expression of his character much as the title of Lane’s exhibition “Multiple Fictions”. Erik analyses his expression in the picture closely and notices his bodily as well as his facial expression.

When he inspects the picture he sees another fictional element: “As I looked more closely, I noticed that the picture appeared to have been taken outside rather than from the stairs above the second-floor hallway. I saw the fuzzy outlines of parked cars, a sidewalk, and the street. Lane had altered the setting” (Sorrows 263). Lane has created an image of a raging Erik in the streets where his emotions apparently are available to the public eye. The multiple voices of Erik’s character that Lane presents in his picture enables Erik to see his Self from another angle. In Edwards (1998) he explains what a sender intend and what the receivers will understand. Lane’s intentions become obvious to the reader and to Erik. Lane’s pictures are examples, I would argue, of non-verbal communication that is shaped by cultural context. In this cultural context there are expectations of Erik’s role as analyst, brother, uncle, son, friend and lover that are in contrast with what Lane’s picture of Erik conveys. Lane creates a different character for Erik, fiction within fiction, and an example of play that is already interplay as Edwards describes it in Theories of Play in Postmodern Fiction (1998).

When Lane visits Erik he says: “Every biography, every autobiography is make-believe, right? I’m creating several in real time, but it’s all staged, if you see what I mean. I’m staging it. You’re one of the players. So is Miranda” (Sorrows 218). In this Lane takes on the role of the director of a play and he says that he plays Erik and Miranda. This is a piece of evidence of how Hustvedt incorporates play in The Sorrows of an American. Lane uses his
pictures without eyes as masks to play Erik and Miranda, where the masks might be expressions of their fictional characters created by Lane. This playfulness of Hustvedt, using Lane to create fictional characters within a novel that in itself is a piece of fiction, gives the novel an element of dialogical exchange between fiction and fiction. The dialogism enables Miranda and Erik to see their Selves from another angle and thus to gain knowledge about their Selves. Lane’s perception of autobiography seems to resonate with Erik’s: “…, that autobiography is fraught with questions of perspective, self-knowledge, repression, and outright delusion” (*Sorrows* 8). Lane wants to direct all the delusional elements of autobiography in a stage performance starring Erik and Miranda. In this performance Lane chooses his point of view, his “perspective”. Lane creates doubt in Erik and Miranda of their “self-knowledge” by showing distorted images that they are uncomfortable with or ashamed of. The roles these parts represent might correspond to the repressed parts of their characters’ personalities. *The Sorrows of an American* does not answer to the different characters introduced delusions. However, the novel embodies elements of play in which the characters develop by learning about their Selves from another angle.

Lane’s creation of character resembles that of an author’s. The creative freedom Lane displays in the fictional characters he makes up for Miranda and Erik seem to resemble the creative possibilities Hustvedt describes when she creates a novel in play. Chatman (1980) describes that characters are reconstructed by the reader from evidence in the novel that is communicated by the discourse. When Lane creates fictional characters for Miranda and Erik, the dialogical effect also reaches the reader and influence how the reader perceives or reconstructs their characters. Traces of doubt might be left in the reader as to what should be included in her reconstruction of the discourse that amounts to define the characters. *The Sorrows of an American* keeps several possibilities open for the reader due to what the reader includes in her entity of I-You of the novel of the world, nature and men.
Staged performances of drama includes a Between the actors and the audience. In the dolls’ show an element of drama is included into the novel. This incorporates dialogism of the audience and the dolls, a dialogism Between the past and the present, where the doll’s show is staged to reveal the secret of Lars and Lisa. George W. Burns in *101 Healing Stories for Kids and Teens: Using Metaphors in Therapy* explains and defines: “In metaphor therapy, the stories acted out by the puppets, dolls, or toys will (a) identify the problem, (b) communicate means for resolving the problem, (c) model the types of skills and resources necessary for such resolution, and (d) offer a potentially attainable outcome” (Burns 2005, 28). The metaphor of a doll’s show seems relevant in *The Sorrows of an American* in that the narrator expects a secret to be revealed that might both identify the problem, the secret, and possibly give Erik and Inga an idea of how to handle the situation the secret will reveal to them, “communicate means for resolving the problem”, as they seem to expect that it will cause problems or at least affect their lives. In the novel Lisa has made contact and invited Erik and Inga to her house to tell them what happened back in 1937 when Lisa and Lars swore their secret on the Bible. Erik feels uncomfortable:

At exactly that moment, I recognized that my irritability had taken the place of dread. I knew the old lady was going to confess, and the story she would tell might change how I felt about my father. As I looked at her in anticipation, I realized all at once that she was enjoying the scene, that it was a production. She had planned for it, hairdo and all; perhaps even her sickbed was a charade. For a dying woman, she struck me as unusually robust. I watched as Lisa nodded to Lorelei, who walked across the room and lifted the sheet to reveal what I had expected: more dolls (*Sorrows* 244).

Erik’s fear of what the doll’s show might reveal shines through in this quote. He seems to have negative emotions directed towards Lorelei and Lisa, his negative expectations of the secret in transference to them. There are textual examples of presentiment, “in anticipation”, in the way Erik looks at Lisa. Erik questions the state of Lisa’s health and seems to believe that she is better, “unusually robust”, than he has been told. Erik seems to believe that Lisa’s
sickbed has pretentiousness about it as though it was a “charade”. He prepares himself for the staged performance.

Then the doll’s show begins, a show in three parts:

On a low table there were three dioramas. That was the only word that came to mind—three wooden boxes about three feet by four feet with the familiar small figures inside them. I saw immediately that the scenes all took place at night outside. Fields, sky, stars, and a small white house had been painted onto the back of the box. The floor was covered with dirt, which I could smell from where I sat. In the first, a blonde female doll was squatting on the ground in a blue dress. The doll’s mouth had been stitched with red thread in imitation of a full-throated scream. After patting Lisa’s hand, I gently removed her fingers from my arm and leaned forward. A dark string that came from between the doll’s legs was attached to a tiny gray figure, a skinny infant that had been painted with red blotches. In the next box, I saw the tall, thin figure of a boy in overalls. His hair was dark and curly, and he was bent over the girl in the dirt, a small knife in his hand. He was about to cut the umbilical cord. In the last box, with no house, only the trees and fields in the background, the male figure wielded a spade, his foot pressing it into the dirt. The girl lay curled up on the ground, hugging her knees. The tiny figure beside her was wrapped in gray cloth (Sorrows 244-245).

The doll’s performance creates another angle in which Erik and Inga gain an objective perspective of their father when they see him in the role of a doll in a play. In this perspective, I would argue, the characters might gain knowledge about their father and consequently of their Selves as their father is part of the dialogism of their world. Lisa and Lorelei’s life-like dolls are made from stories, and the dolls staged in the three boxes in the quote are developed out of a story of their father. The dolls are made to express experience. Therefore the dolls’ looks and odours are revealing and there are pieces of evidence in the text to support this view. I would argue that the smell of dirt from one the doll representing their father is one example. Another example is that the doll that plays the role of Lisa expresses a scream. The scream comes across to the audience, Inga and Erik as well as the reader, in that it has its mouth “stitched with red thread in imitation of a full-throated scream”. Hustvedt has made the doll characters life-like and by this more like the other characters in the novel. This is a piece of evidence of the dialogism of fiction within fiction that creates a Between where the
character are gradually revealed to the reader by the author. Additionally, the dialogical exchange creates an entity of I-You within the characters as well as with the reader. In this doll’s play both characters learn more about their father.

The staged performance of the dolls, however, does not answer Erik and Inga’s question of who the father of the child is. Inga says: “‘It was a secret, all right, kept for years and years, but it doesn’t explain much about Pappa, does it?’ she said finally. ‘Except that he kept his word.’ ‘And we knew that already,’ Inga said. ‘Yes,’ I said. ‘We knew that already.’” (Sorrows 248). The secret when revealed does not alter the way the siblings perceive their father and it does not alter his character. They perceived their father a reliable character and he proved in the play that he was. The threat that they would find something hidden that would make them change their perception of him dissolves and the fear that the secret would make them change their perception of their Selves fades. However, the dialogical exchange of Lane’s pictures and Max’s letters make them develop their characters. The characters are forced into the dialogism of these encounters and thus the character development that follows. Siri Hustvedt seems to play the reader and the characters a trick of delusion: they look for and fear one secret and on their search they bump into unexpected ones.

Conclusion

In my analysis in this chapter I apply Edwards’ and Buber’s theories with regard to the analysis of play in Hustvedt’s novels The Summer Without Men and The Sorrows of an American due to the idea that the contextuality Edwards describes in Theories of Play and Postmodern Fictions (1998) corresponds to my understanding of what Buber incorporates into the dialogical exchange of the basic word I-You that establishes the world of relations of the world with nature, life with men and life with spiritual beings.
In this chapter I discuss how Hustvedt’s playfulness and incorporation of elements of play, drama, and the dialogism in them function as drivers of character development in *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American*. Along with the ideas of Winnicott’s in *Playing and Reality* (1971) I discuss the state of creative freedom of the author in playing. Furthermore, I suggest that fiction within fiction is a creative element to these novels. The discussion of play as a staged performance and incorporation of elements of drama, I argue, bring dialogism into the novels. By incorporating elements of drama Hustvedt creates a dialogic exchange that provides her characters another angle from which to gain knowledge about and develop their Selves. Moreover, Hustvedt playfully braids the autobiographical element of her father’s memoirs into *The Sorrows of an American* where they represent autobiography in play with fiction.

In *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American* Hustvedt incorporates drawings, poems and e-mails, and she breaks the fourth wall of the novel when she addresses the reader. Additionally, I argue that she adds play between novels. Furthermore, the way Hustvedt explicitly addresses the reader in her novel *The Summer Without Men* involves the reader in the plot of the novel. This is another example of Hustvedt’s use of dialogic exchange that engages the reader in play.

Booth in the introduction to Bakhtin’s *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* talks about the possibilities within the novel genre (1984). There are pieces of evidence that Hustvedt utilises these possibilities of the novels when she tells the stories of both men and women for instance by causing confusion in the reader of the sex of the narrator Mia in *The Summer Without Men* and by causing confusion in the characters of *The Sorrows of an American* with the cross-dressing of Burton. These examples breaks the Buberian entity of I-You of the Between of the reader and narrator where a new dialogic entity with a wider perception of the world, men and nature has to be created in which characters for them to develop their Selves.
Hustvedt makes use of the possibilities of the genre of the novel when she incorporates other genres within the novels. The discussion of this chapter addresses e-mails and poems as well as drawings besides drama that are incorporated into The Summer Without Men and which create extended possibilities to explore the main character from another angle than the first person all knowing narrative. In The Sorrows of an American dialogism as character development is discussed in Hustvedt’s play with masks and identity to reveal the plot driving secrets.

Edwards’ (1998) understanding of play as interplay, a principle of energy and difference that unsettles arrangements, that promotes change and resists closure, I argue in this chapter, resemble Hustvedt’s description of play. In the discussion of pros and cons for describing Hustvedt’s novels as postmodern aided by Dr Brian Edwards, Dr Gabriele Ripple, and Siri Hustvedt herself, I argue that there are elements in Hustvedt’s novels of postmodern fiction yet she incorporates elements of the “real” into The Sorrows of an American and The Summer Without Men. These elements define her out of this tradition and possibly into one of post-postmodernism. In both novels there are examples of the real in the subjectivity of the main characters’ all subjective first person narrative of the novels, and in how the insight into the development of their characters’ personalities depends on perspectives from other characters. It is from the dialogic exchange with these other characters that they gain knowledge about their Selves.

Conclusion

"In fact, I have discovered that a novel can be written only in play: an open, relaxed, responsive, permissive state of being that allows a work to grow freely” (Hustvedt 2013, 38).

This two-part thesis discusses dialogism as character development in psychoanalysis and play of Dr Siri Hustvedt’s novels The Summer Without Men and The Sorrows of an American. The
definition of dialogism that this thesis applies I borrow from David Shepherd. This definition includes a relational constitution of two or more parties in a dialogue. However, I apply the theories Shepherd builds his definition on that of Mikhail Bakhtin and Martin Buber to explain the dialogical exchange that enables character development in the main characters and narrators Mia Fredricksen and Erik Davidsen.

*The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American*, I suggest, have elements of the postmodern as well as post-postmodern traditions. A position that seems to be supported by Dr Christine Marks’ view of Hustvedt’s works presented in “*I am because you are*” *Relationality in the Works of Siri Hustvedt* (2014), that while there are elements within Hustvedt’s works that suit the “postmodern framework” of dubiousness with regard to limitations of dyads and confines of her novels there are other elements connected to subjectivity of the main characters and the existential fragmentation that exceeds the framework of postmodernism. In addition Dr Gabriele Ripple in her essay “The Rich Zones of Genre Borderland: Siri Hustvedt’s Art of Mingling” (2016) argues that there are recognisable features of postmodernist fiction in Hustvedt’s novels. She contrasts these to the non-postmodern topics in Hustvedt’s novels that do not correspond to themes typical of postmodern literature and thus questions the label postmodern for Hustvedt’s novels.

Hustvedt’s engagement in the real, I argue in this thesis, resonates with the subjectivity of the main characters’ all subjective first person narrative of the novels. In addition, the main characters’ insight into the development of their characters’ personalities and how it depends on perspectives from other characters I interpret as a piece of evidence of the “real” in these novels. Dr Seymour Chatman in *Story and Discourse Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* argues that theory of character should “preserve openness and treat characters as autonomous beings” (Chatman 1980, 119). This is a perspective of character that I argue Hustvedt presents her reader with in these novels. This thesis discusses two
perspectives of dialogism as character development: play and psychoanalysis. In the interrelatedness of these dialogic exchanges with other characters the main characters gain knowledge about their Selves.

Theoretical foundation for this thesis I have found and incorporated from representatives of several academic disciplines. For theory of play in literature I draw on Dr Brian Edwards’ *Theories of Play and Postmodern Fiction* and for psychoanalytical theory I have incorporated elements from Dr Sigmund Freud’s theory of psychoanalysis. In addition, theory of the psychoanalyst and paediatrician Dr Donald W. Winnicott is incorporated in the discussion. The theoretical foundation for dialogism or dialogical exchange comes out of Martin Buber’s theory of the I-You entity and the Between that includes the world, nature and men into this relation. The thesis has analysed how dialogic exchange is essential in play, drama or playfulness, as well as in psychoanalysis in *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American* to create a Between of the I-You entity important for the main characters’ development as a development of their Selves.

The discussion shows ways that Hustvedt merges Martin Buber’s understanding of the Between, *I and Thou* (1970), into her works where I argue it creates another depth to her characters. When the main characters Mia and Erik create entities of I-You in their dialogues with other characters within both novels, these dialogical entities enable the main characters to see and gain knowledge about their Selves from another angle and serve to drive character development, development of character personality, in *The Sorrows of an American* and *The Summer Without Men*. Another element of the Between that Hustvedt incorporates into her novels are the Between of narrator and reader, and author and reader, that serves as other examples of dialogism as character development. Additionally, there are examples of character development in Hustvedt’s novels when the author gradually reveals the character to the reader and the two aspects of character development are both included in my discussion of
The Summer Without Men and The Sorrows of an American. However, my main focus has been drawn to the development of characters’ Selves and their endless possibilities.

These possibilities of character development grow out of, I would argue, the main characters experience of life crises due to loss: Mia has lost her husband to another woman and Erik’s father has died. The way the narrators and main characters relate differently to their losses and their need to reconstruct their Selves, the personality of their characters, in order to incorporate their loss drives the character development in both novels. The main characters’ development happens in the dialogic exchange of psychoanalysis and play. The discussion shows how their roles as patient and analyst or both in psychoanalysis create dialogical exchange that enables them to see their Selves from another perspective. The novels present Hustvedt’s playfulness in her writing as well as her incorporation of elements of play that gives her novels a Between of dialogical exchange and the main characters’ development within.

Dialogic exchange in The Sorrows of an American and The Summer Without Men includes the environment of the characters, society, and nature into the entity of I-You. Into the dialogism of these novels, I argue in my discussion, there are voices within the novels that resemble the ones Anthony Wall writes about in his essay “Characters in Bakhtin’s Theory” where he emphasises the dialogues of the novel to include dialogic positions within the text to the dialogic exchange of author and reader. Mikhail Bakhtin addresses an extra linguistic element in Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics where he describes the polyphonic novel by the quality of the relationship between narrator and character. He talks about the narrator who allows the character the right to the final word. In my discussion of The Sorrow of an American and The Summer Without Men, I argue, there are dialogistic elements similar to Wall’s description of Bakhtin’s theory of multiple voices within the novel. The dialogical exchange Buber describes creates an entity that includes extra-textual Between the characters
foundational for dialogism as character development in Hustvedt’s novels. The characters’
dialogical exchanges include polyphonic elements of voices as described by Bakhtin. I
discuss in this thesis that elements of psychoanalysis, in role of patient or analyst and patient,
function to add a polyphonic element to Hustvedt’s novels. I have discussed Mia’s dialogue
with Dr. S. and her inner voice of Mr. Nobody that gives *The Summer Without Men* this
polyphonic level, whereas Erik carries two roles in psychoanalysis, that of analyst and patient,
that gives a polyphonic element to *The Sorrows of an American*.

This thesis illustrates by the examples that several of the turning points in *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American* happens in dialogical exchange
similar to drama. Some elements of dramatic play that I have analysed are the doll’s show,
Jeffrey Lane’s pictures and Burton’s disguise. In each of these three examples a secret that
changes the characters perception of their Selves is revealed. This serves as both as an
example of character development as gradually revealed by the author. However, the
dialogical exchange of the Between in these examples of play allows the characters to see
their Selves from another angle and character development, a development of Self takes
place. Similarly, in *The Summer Without Men* Mia’s staging of narratives in the poetry group
is a turning point in this novel. Hustvedt allows for the dialogical exchange of dialogue in
which these girls discover other angles to their experience of bullying of one of the girls
within the group. In her role as teacher Mia gains knowledge about herself from another angle
and she is empowered to restructure her Self, to incorporate her experience of being the
bullied girl into her personality and thus restructure her Self, which is another example of
character development in Mia. The discussion of this thesis addresses another turning point
that happens in the dialogical exchange of play. Mia stages her and Boris’ reunion where she
gives the characters lines.
However, Hustvedt’s playfulness leaves many open possibilities for interpretations in the way that both *The Sorrows of an American* and *The Summer Without Men* carry the spirit of Bakhtin of polyphonic voices within them. Hustvedt incorporates knowledge of several academic fields into her novels and her other works. By utilising dialogism as character development in her novels Hustvedt creates main characters in her novels that develops in every reading of the novels. The Between of the author and reader, as well as the narrator and the reader, presents the reader with limitless possibilities of interpretation of the novels. I find that in every new reading of *The Summer Without Men* and *The Sorrows of an American* I discover something new that casts shadows of doubt on my previous interpretations of the characters and their development. The Between of the novels and my relations of the world, nature and men influences my interpretations and I see a potential life long relation with Hustvedt’s characters in which I will probably discover something new every time I encounter them.

“Making a work of fiction is playing, playing is deadly earnest, perhaps, but nevertheless playing” (Hustvedt 2013, 38). I believe reading and analysing is playing too…
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