**“Time in Fiction”**

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Abstract: Considering questions at the intersection of time and fiction deepens our understanding of fiction, introduces new questions for philosophy of time, and brings analytic philosophy in discussion with narratology. Philosophers debate whether fictional time can be tensed, whether fictional time can branch, repeat, pause, rewind, or skip and whether fictional time travel is possible. Much of the way we answer these questions will depend on our overall commitment to the nature of fiction. It’s also unclear what, if anything, we can learn about the metaphysics of time from fiction. This chapter will introduce readers to discussions that are shaping the debates in this domain.

**1. Introduction**

This chapter engages with questions that arise at the intersection of fiction and time. Why should we consider the two together?

First, thinking about fictional time helps analyze fiction in general. There’s been much attention paid to fictional persons (characters), but not as much work has been done on other aspects of fiction, such as fictional time and space. To gain a holistic understanding of what fiction is or what fiction produces, philosophers ought to analyze what fictional time is and what it’s like in the manner they’ve analyzed what fictional persons are and what they’re like.

Second, narratology benefits from a study of time given the central tenet that engaging with a narrative involves engaging with multiple temporalities. In turn, philosophy of time also gains new evidence or faces new puzzles. For example, if fictional time can be tensed or have its own flow, then our time will be a hypertime in relation to the fictional time since our world’s flow measures some other (fictional) time’s flow. If we care to ask whether fictional time can flow or possess A-properties (more on this shortly), then we might learn what it is about temporal flow or A-properties that we care about in the first place. Finally, if time travel can occur in a fictional world with an objective flow of time, then we have a representational scenario of something philosophers have argued to be impossible (Markosian 2020).

In the next section, I lay out possible views on fictional entities’ ontological status and nature; they lay the foundation for subsequent discussions since what one thinks of fictional time will depend on what one thinks fictional things are in general. Section 3 discusses time in narratology. Section 4 explores whether fictional time is tensed, and section 5 discusses whether fiction can feature time travel or branching, repeating, pausing, rewinding, and skipping time. Finally, section 6 asks whether we can learn about the nature of time from fiction. Sections 3-6 don’t need to be read in order.

**2. Metaphysics of Fiction**

Most metaphysical questions about fiction have focused on fictional persons and non-human animals, which leaves other entities that make up fiction—fictional places, objects, laws, etc.—comparatively under-analyzed (Bourne and Caddick-Bourne 2016: 14). The discussion likely developed this way because of our interest in reference (do fictional names refer?) and emotional reactions (why do we pity Anna Karenina?). But an analysis of fictional persons is inadequate for an overall metaphysical investigation of fictional entities, and we ought to analyze all entities that constitute a part of fiction, including fictional times. And our thoughts on fictional time should cohere with our thoughts on fictional characters.

When it comes to metaphysical questions about fictional characters, philosophers divide into two camps: the antirealists who argue that fictional characters don’t exist—that’s why they’re fictional!—and the realists, who argue that fictional characters do exist.

Philosophers such as Bertrand Russell (1905) and Kendall Walton (1990) support anti-realism. But anti-realists must account for our discourse about fictional characters. Russell offers paraphrases. He says a fictional name, like any other name, is a definite description, and once paraphrased, all claims involving fiction turn out to be false because there is no person who fits the descriptions. Walton, on the other hand, thinks claims involving fiction ought to be understood in terms of their role in make-believe (1990: 396). When someone utters “Pi drifts in the Ocean”, they pretend to assert a “true” claim as a way to signal that an appropriate engagement with *Life of Pi* involves make-believing that Pi drifts in the Ocean. Since pretending to refer to someone doesn’t commit one to thinking that the name refers (let alone that the person exists), Walton’s antirealism shows how claims about fictional characters can be analyzed as “true” or meaningful without committing to realism.

Among the realists, there is disagreement about what kind of thing a fictional character is. The neo-Meinongians think they’re nonexistent objects. Of course, technically, we can’t put them in the “realist” camp since I said that realists think fictional characters exist; but neo-Meinongians separate *being* from *existence* and say there are (nonexistent) fictional characters. Still, they grant being to characters and offer various interpretations of what they are, so I’ve included them in the realist camp (see Meinong 1960, Parsons 1980, and Zalta 1983).

Possibilists think fictional characters are possible people and fictional worlds are possible worlds. David Lewis (1978) had influentially argued that fictional claims like “Sherlock likes to show off” should be understood to include an intensional operator “in the Fiction, *F*…” where the operator quantifies over possible worlds that match the work’s descriptions. Lewis utilizes possible world semantics because he, unlike Russell, thinks that claims about fictional entities can be true. Lewis’s conclusion isn’t quite that fictional worlds are possible worlds in the sense that novelists faithfully report what some possible world is like. Rather, he thinks fiction makers in our world *pretend* to report facts, and if these facts are “about” anything or any place, they are about the worlds where the contents of the fiction are known facts. Craig Bourne and Emily Caddick-Bourne (2016) go further to argue that fictional worlds are in fact possible worlds.

Insofar as possible worlds are platonic (i.e., not created and necessary) objects, possibilism holds that fictional worlds aren’t created by a fiction maker’s creative activity. In contrast, artifactualism or creationism takes fictional worlds, and fictional characters in them, to be abstract cultural artifacts. If we think symphonies and laws exist, then fictional characters, too, might count as cultural abstract (i.e., lacking physical extension) objects that we create (Thomasson 1998). Characters and novels come into existence in virtue of concrete cultural activities (e.g., telling stories) just as a nation, a similarly abstract entity, comes into existence in virtue of concrete people and activities (Kripke 2013). Characters might also be understood along other literary artifacts, such as plots, meters, and rhyme schemes (van Inwagen 1977).

We might naturally extend the realist and antirealist distinctions to fictional entities beyond characters. Fictional objects, places, and times might be analyzed in the ways fictional characters have been analyzed; either they exist in nonexistent, possible, platonic, or abstract-yet-contingent fashion, or they don’t exist at all. In section 5, we’ll see how one’s underlying ontological commitment regarding fictional entities affects one’s view on what fictional time can be like.

Analytic philosophy of time in the context of fiction is underdiscussed, but there have been more narratological studies of time in the context of fiction. So, in the next section, we’ll discuss time as it has been discussed in relation to (fictional) narratives.

**3. Time and Narrative**

Fiction isn’t always a narrative since a drawing can be a fiction (e.g., Escher’s “Waterfall”). However, most fictions we engage with are narratives, and crucial temporal distinctions arise in the narrative context. The following is a brief overview.

A narrative, or a story, requires the portrayal of two or more events that are causally and temporally related. The notion of causality here should be understood broadly. Even if two events in a fiction aren’t directly causally related such that one immediately brings about the other, they might be considered “causally” related if the two form some coherent meaning. In *Poetics*, Aristotle gives the example of two seemingly unrelated events—a king being murdered and a statue of the king falling on his murderer—to show that it’s the “air of design”, and not actual causal relations, that counts. The temporal requirement is stricter. Events in a narrative must form a temporal relationship to each other, even if just that of simultaneity (Lamarque 2019). “The sun shone and the grass grew” is a narrative, but “Bill kicked the ball and the ball was kicked by Bill” isn’t, since the latter doesn’t have two events that are temporally related.

Robin Le Poidevin writes that “no story could be about two unconnected time-streams” (2007: 171), and most theorists agree that temporal relation is a constitutive necessity for a narrative. However, Bourne and Caddick-Bourne disagree (2016: 71ff). They argue that a story could be about two timelines that are temporally and causally unconnected, but thematically connected (perhaps in the Aristotelian manner). If stylistic features can unify timelines to form a story, then a temporal or causal connection among narrative contents may not be necessary.

In the philosophy of time, time travel occurs when “personal time” diverges from “external time” (see Effingham’s chapter on time travel). Similarly, virtually all narratological studies posit multiple “times” within narratives. Though storytelling seems like a simple practice, the very concept of *telling* adds complication, and a series of related distinctions—Chatman’s story vs. discourse, Forster’s story vs. plot, Shklovskii’s fabula vs. sjuzhet, and Benveniste’s histoire vs. discours— all point to the basic insight that most narratives manipulate the order and duration of events in time in the telling (Fludernik 2005). Narration can skip over large swaths of time, provide flashbacks, or linger over a scene so the reading experience takes longer than the scene would have.

The time or order in which fictional events transpire is different from the time or order in which those events are described. Gérard Genette (1972) splits the level of narration—Chatman’s discourse—into narration (the process of telling) and the text (the product),only the former of which is temporally extended. Günther Müller (1948) distinguishes *Erzählzeit* (narrating time) from *erzählte Zeit* (narrated time), which shows that there are at least two ‘now’s in any narrative (North 2018: 111). For this reason, David Wittenberg goes as far as to say that “time traveling might be considered a fundamental condition of storytelling itself, even its very essence” (2013: 1).

A final consideration of time and narrative concerns grammatical tense. The traditional view has been that narratives should be written in the past tense since one cannot experience and relay the experience at the same time. However, theorists point out that there is no simple correspondence between verb tense and temporal reference (Currie 2006; Fludernik 2005; Gebauer 2021). The proliferation of present-tense narration, not to mention the existence of stories told in future tense or mixed tense, suggests that we should take grammatical tense to be doing work that is different from portraying the underlying temporal relations among events. Indeed, the more appropriate treatment of grammatical tense in fiction might be to observe how it contributes to aesthetic effects. For example, present tense might flag the fictional status of a narrative by making explicit the world-building function of the sentences (Gabauer 2021), and past tense might provide a sense of distance, locating the events at a time that is not “here”, ostensibly because it’s in the past, but also because it’s not in our world (Fludernik 2005).

**4. Fictional Tense**

The discussion at the end of the last section suggests that figuring out whether fictional events are tensed cannot be answered by looking at the grammatical tense of the fiction. This gives rise to the question: Can fictional events have tense properties (or A-properties)?

The “A-properties” and “B-relations” distinction comes from John M.E. McTaggart’s A-series and B-series distinction (1908). A-series orders and characterizes times as past, present, or future; B-series orders and characterizes times as before, simultaneous with, or after (one another). Accordingly, A-properties are properties of being past, present, or future; B-relations are being earlier than, simultaneous with, or later than. To be tensed, or have tense, is to have A-properties, which is to be part of an A-series. A-theory is the view that time flows and therefore has tense. (Moravec’s chapter in the present volume also discusses these distinctions).

Le Poidevin (2007: 157) presents three options regarding whether fictional events form an A-series:

1. Take the fictional A-series as part of the intrinsic content of a fiction.
2. Base the fictional A-series on our imaginative self-projection into a fiction.
3. Reject all talk of a fictional A-series, and view fictional time in B-series only.

Mark Currie goes for 1; McTaggart goes for 2; Greg Currie says 3 should be the standard view; Le Poidevin goes for 2 and 3. Bourne and Caddick Bourne present another option:

1. Remain agonistic as to whether fictional events form an A-series.

We’ll go through each of their reasonings and assess them.

Mark Currie (2007) supports 1, arguing that fiction needs both the A-series and B-series. The contents of a fictional story are all sequentially laid out like the B-series, the fictional future existing before the reader gets to it (143). Käte Hamburger thinks that fictional events become temporally flattened simply in virtue of being narrated; she says fictional events “lose their temporal quality altogether and merge into an undifferentiated present” (Hamburger: 81). At the same time, the reading experience admits a privileged “now” in the sense that we can only attend to one part of the text at a time, and only the part that is attended to “exists” while the rest “wallows in the ontologically secondary realms of expectation and memory” (Currie 2007: 147). Our attention flows across a work of fiction just as the present continually flows in the A-series, which makes the reading of a novel tensed. Currie concludes that a temporal understanding of fiction requires the interaction of the A-theory and the B-theory, since our experience of a work (seemingly) possesses A-properties but the contents of the work only possess B-relations (147).

I’m sympathetic to the comparison Currie makes of the kind of temporality that describes the fictional world and the kind of temporality that describes the reading experience. But insofar as he is dealing with two “levels” of time— *erzählte Zeit*, the time of the narrated events, and *Erzählzeit,* the time of the telling or reading process—it doesn’t quite follow that fictional time requires both the A-theory and the B-theory. The time that orders fictional events, for all Currie has said, can still be B-theoretic even if our understanding of those events takes place in an (apparently) A-theoretic manner.

Once we separate the different times involved in fiction engagement, it’s no surprise that 1 is unpopular. “What time is it right now in Flatland?” doesn’t seem to have an answer, and if that’s right, it’s also difficult to locate when the present is in Flatland. If fictional events possessed A-properties as an intrinsic characteristic, we ought to be able to ask whether it is in the (fiction’s) past, present, or future that Square meets Sphere—but this sounds like a confused question, as *Flatland* doesn’t have an independent flow of time.

McTaggart says “time only belongs to the existent” (1927: 16). He means that only things that exist can be understood to be part of a timeline (such that we can then ask whether events in that timeline form an A-series or a B-series). However, McTaggart also argues that when we imagine fictional events, we imagine them to be taking place in the past, present, or future. When 1984 first came out, readers must have imagined the portrayed events taking place in the future. McTaggart, using a similar example (*After London* published in 1885 and set in future London), argues that we imagine certain events as past or future when we consume fiction, eventually concluding that imagining fictional events involves locating them in both the A-series as well as in the B-series (1927: 17). This is why McTaggart goes for 2.

Greg Currie is skeptical of the general claim that imagining fictional events involves imagining them in a tensed way. He argues that the standard mode of engaging with fiction is to imagine that fictional events form a certain order, but not to imagine certain things as occurring in the past, present, or future (2004: 95ff). He theorizes in relation to cinematic fiction more specifically, denying that when we see a bank robbery on screen, we’re meant to imagine that the robbery is happening now (1992: 346). One problem for the view that represented fictional events are tensed (happening now) is that flashbacks and flashforwards abound. Keeping the tensed view requires taking on explanatory burdens such as believing that fictional time jumps around or introducing an arbitrary functional discontinuity between material presented in standard order and those that are not (347).

More generally, Currie bases his thinking on the fact that we routinely draw a separation between the fictional world and our world. He thinks we engage in impersonal imagining when we watch films, which involves imagining the events of the fiction as spatiotemporally related to each other, but not to us (2014: 98). If there is a sharp separation between ourselves and fiction, then there is no point of view from which we can imagine the fictional events as past, present, or future. So Currie advocates for 3, though he maintains the possibility of 2, i.e., the possibility of imagining fictional events as tensed.

Le Poidevin begins with 3 and warms up to 2. He, like Greg Currie, argues that fictional events are tenseless because we’re not located in the fictional timeline. We lack a temporal perspective on fictional events, so we can’t coherently talk of them being past, present, or future (1988). But in his more recent (2007), he acknowledges that sometimes we imaginatively project ourselves into the fictional world, which temporally locates us within the fiction. Even if fictional events are not in themselves tensed, we can generate an (imagined) A-series in virtue of the point of view we take up within the fiction (2007: 176; also see Currie 2007: 149). Though fictional events may lack tense properties as an intrinsic feature, they may be tensed in the way we represent the fictional events to ourselves.

Note that most of the discussion so far has focused on our separation from the fictional world and the resulting lack of in-world perspective. We might think this only points to trouble regarding temporal *knowledge*, and not whether fictional time is a certain way. Indeed, Bourne and Caddick-Bourne (2016) argue that we ought to be agnostic when it comes to the metaphysics of fictional time. If we’re open to the possibility that fictional events form an A-series (i.e., if we don’t assume the impossibility of tensed fictional events), then our inability to identify whether particular fictional events are past, present, or future due to our lack of perspectival access only shows us the gap between our timeline and the fictional timeline, and not whether fictional events form an A-series or a B-series (35). The fact that we have no indexical perspective within the fictional world is an epistemological limit, and not a metaphysical limit to believe that fictional time is B-theoretic. So, Bourne and Caddick-Bourne argue that we should either be agonistic about the nature of fictional time or believe that fiction leaves it indefinite whether fictional events form an A-series or a B-series (38).

Let me conclude this section by returning to option 1—that we take the fictional A-series as part of the intrinsic content of the fiction—and showing when this would be an appropriate stance. Greg Currie and Le Poidevin’s skepticism of 1 and Bourne and Caddick Bourne’s skepticism of 3 centers on the fact that we lack an internal perspective that lets us discern tense properties of fictional events. But what if there are works of fiction that genuinely give us access to the fictional timeline? In Kim (draft), I argue that self-involving interactive fictions (SIIFs)— interactive fictions which are in some sense about the consumer—give us knowledge of, and perhaps even produce, tensed fictional events. A first-person interactive video game is an example of a SIIF, and insofar as the character that a player controls in the game portrays the fictional counterpart of the player, SIIF provides the player with access to the fictional timeline. If that’s right, SIIF constitutes an example where a fiction consumer has an internal temporal perspective within the fiction, equipping her to understand fictional events as an A-series. Option 1, then, might be appropriate for some fictions which are self-involving and interactive. This shows us that fictional events do not lack tense properties in principle.

**5. Fictional Time Travel and Topology**

Is time travel possible in fiction? And can fictional time branch, repeat, stop, rewind, or skip? How one answers these questions will depend on one’s prior commitment to what kind of thing a fictional “world” is. Time travel occurs when there is a discrepancy between personal time (time experienced by a traveler) and external time (objective world time). Physicists and philosophers debate whether our best scientific theories support the possibility of time travel (see Smeenk, Arntzenius, and Maudlin 2023). Time travel in fiction only becomes a potential problem if time travel is impossible, so let’s assume actual time travel is impossible given our physical laws, and also assume that it’s impossible for time to branch, repeat, stop, rewind, or skip.

On the one hand, if one takes fictional worlds to be possible worlds, then fictions can’t have time travel to the past, especially the kind that involves changing the past. The same would go for divergent temporal topologies; time can’t branch, repeat, stop, rewind, or skip within a possible world, so no fictional world can have time that acts that way. On the other hand, if one takes an anti-realist stance (such that there is no fictional world) or takes fictional worlds to be nonexistent objects or created abstract artifacts, the constraint on possibility doesn’t immediately apply. In this case, one can affirm fictional time travel and fictional time’s ability to branch, repeat, stop, rewind, or skip. This isn’t to say that there aren’t local constraints; judging whether time travel occurs or whether time acts erratically might depend on the genre of the work. But unless one takes the view that fictional worlds are possible worlds, there is no principled reason to believe that fictional timelines can’t be divergent or fictional time travel is impossible.

Time travel fictions abound. *The Time Traveler’s Almanac* (2014) brings together sixty-five short stories and five non-fiction pieces that concern time travel, and classic films such as *La Jetée* (1962), *The Terminator* (1984), *Back to the Future* (1985), and *Donnie Darko* (2001) centrally feature time travel. Then there are fictions that feature divergent time. *Groundhog Day* (1993) repeats February 2nd; *Click* (2006) allows the protagonist to pause or fast-forward parts of his life; and *Funny Games* (2007) rewinds time so a different ending can play out. Possibilists can’t accept these fictional truths at face value, and they must provide alternative interpretations of these fictions. (But see Badura and Berto (2019) for how impossible worlds can accommodate fictions like these).

Bourne and Caddick-Bourne (2016) are possibilists, so they argue that any fiction that involves time travel merely give the impression that time travel is represented. A work of fiction can’t represent the impossible, but a work can cleverly structure its representations so that it looks as if an impossible world is represented. They apply the same argument to times that seem to branch, repeat, stop, rewind, or skip. What seems like a story with temporal repetition is really a collection of different possible worlds on the same day. What looks like paused time is mere stasis where nothing happens. And what looks like rewinding is really a presentation of two different possible worlds. Their overall strategy is to systematically distinguish between features of a representation (what we’re shown) and features of what is represented (what is fictionally the case).

Recall how Bourne and Caddick-Bourne argued for agnosticism concerning whether fictional time is tensed. Why don’t they also advocate for agnosticism about time travel or temporal topology? They maintain that viewers aren’t licensed to interpret the above stories as representations of impossibility in the first place. For a story to be analyzed in terms of genuine branching time, for instance, it needs a metaphysical feature that cannot be captured by mere representation. The contention is that there is no feature that we might attribute to branching time which can’t be explained away in terms of representations of different worlds with linear time series. Since branching time is impossible, “the burden is on the defender of branching time to find a positive characterization which proves this wrong” (81). A defender of fictional impossibilities must provide “an account of what would constitute a successful representation of an impossible scenario” (102).

I’m unsure about Bourne and Caddick-Bourne’s claim that the defender of impossible fiction must identify a metaphysical feature that goes beyond mere representation of an impossibility or otherwise show what it takes to really represent an impossibility. There is no genuine contrast class to the impossible. What is this supposed difference between branching time “actually” being represented and it only *seeming* as if branching time is represented? Andreas Elpidorou (2016) reminds us that we can’t draw a distinction between an apparent contradiction and a real contradiction because there will never be a “real” contradiction that we can genuinely observe. If all branching, repeating, or rewinding times will be in representation only, then there can be no separate criteria for a successful representation of impossibility apart from the fact that it seems as if we’re looking at something impossible and the work encourages this interpretation (Kim (forthcoming)). Of course, fiction sometimes gives us illusions that mislead us. But insofar as what Bourne and Caddick-Bourne ask for might be nonexistent, their claim that fiction can’t actually feature divergent time might be resisted.

**6. Learning Metaphysical Truths from Fiction**

We routinely use thought experiments, which might be thought of as little fictions. Can fictional representations teach us about time? A fictional story can obviously be a “receptacle of knowledge” and communicate existing philosophies when it includes a character who provides information or philosophizes openly (Currie 2007: 108). But can the work produce new philosophical insight?

We might distinguish between “logico-physical philosophy of time”, time understood through conceptual analysis and physical and mathematical theories and “literary philosophy of time”, which is time understood through representations of temporal experience (Currie 2004). For example, in Paul Ricoeur’s seminal *Time and Narrative*, time (as it relates to narrative) becomes “increasing divorced from objective or scientific notions of time and moves towards more psychological, subjective, and contextually malleable conceptions of temporality” (Fludernik 2005).

Greg Currie argues that literary philosophy of time fails to generate genuine insight (beyond what time feels like to us) because perception or subjective experience—no matter how good their descriptions—are unlikely to provide knowledge about time (that goes beyond our experience). Fictional stories invite us to imagine the contents of a story, but imagination’s epistemic power is questionable given that we don’t typically learn about things by imagining about them, and the circumstances under which we learn from imagination are difficult to control (Currie 2004).

Le Poidevin (2007), too, is skeptical of fiction’s ability to teach us new things about the world, in part because we should expect what’s fictionally possible to be broader than what is metaphysically possible. He says we’re able to construct a fiction about anything as long as there is no clear contradiction (although see Kim (forthcoming)), and insofar as just about anything can be fictional, we ought not to look to fiction to learn what is true in the real world. Bourne and Caddick-Bourne (2016) also join the skepticism regarding fiction’s ability to produce knowledge about time that we can export into the real world. At most, fictions can represent things to be true in the fiction, and it’s not even always true in the world of the fiction that divergent temporal topologies exist, so they conclude that fictions can’t show us genuine possibilities for how time can be just on the basis of appearing to represent those possibilities (1).

Mark Currie, on the other hand, is more optimistic, though he seems to think temporal knowledge provided by literature might be “hidden behind the surface of fiction, in the sense that it is not explicitly stated” (2006: 135). But if fictional knowledge is to be regarded as “pure phenomenality, without depth beyond its literary phenomenon,” it’s unclear how this would count as knowledge about the world, fictional or otherwise (136). A “secret knowledge” which is “absolutely inviolable” won’t help us understand time any better, at least in the logico-physical sense that goes beyond our experience or perception of time.

Instead, we might find promise in the way Mark Currie thinks literature might provide knowledge about time. “If literature really says something about time in the sense that it makes some contribution to metaphysical reflections on time,” Currie writes, “it will be analysed by a serious effort to understand the temporal structure of its discourses rather than by the citation and paraphrase of its statements by a content-based criticism” (140). In other words, merely looking at the contents of fiction where time is addressed as a topic would be unsatisfactory. It would be literary form, and not content, that teaches us about time.

I think this is an interesting suggestion, but I’m not sure formal considerations of stories will give us metaphysical knowledge about time, either. Temporal distinctions within narratives—such as *Erzählzeit* (narrating time) vs *erzählte Zeit* (narrated time) or *fabula* vs. *sjuzhet*—don’t concern different kinds of time. Though narrating time is sometimes treated as a special kind of time that is on a “different plane” than narrated time, really the contrast is between events and their descriptions, and not between two kinds of times (Currie 2004, 94). Insofar as both narrating time and narrated time take up “real” time, and the *fabula* vs. *sjuzhet* distinction concerns the different lengths or order in which events are narrated, it remains uncertain how fictional narratives can produce metaphysical insight about time.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Related Topics**

Time Trael (Nikk Effingham); The Folk Concept of Time (Jack Shardlow and Ruth Lee)

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**Further Reading**

C. Bourne and E. Caddick-Bourne, *Time in Fiction* (OUP 2016) is the first book-length application of analytic philosophy of time to fiction. R. Le Poidevin, *The Images of Time: An Essay on Temporal Representation* (OUP 2007) examines how the metaphysics of time and our experience of time relate to mechanisms of temporal representation. D. Wittenburg, *Time Travel: The Popular Philosophy of Narrative* (Fordham University Press 2013) argues that time travel stories are thought experiments that engage with philosophical and narrative questions through literary devices.

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