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A Phenomenological Exploration of Objects in Time Travel Short Fiction

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A Phenomenological Exploration of Objects in Time Travel Short Fiction

By

Andrea D. Howe

A THESIS

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

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Master of Arts in English Thesis

Andrea D. Howe

A Phenomenological Exploration of Objects in Time Travel Short Fiction

APPROVED:

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Introduction: A Phenomenological Exploration of Objects in Time Travel Short Fiction

Memory of a past time is triggered by objects existing in the present. Sights, sounds, smells, sensations and flavors each and all can cause a person to experience a sense of *Ah, that takes me back*. While, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty points out, all human processing takes place within the mind, all human experience comes to the mind by way of the physical, and every experience through every sense is the impact of an object. Sight, smell, taste, touch and sound are the five taught in elementary school, each of which contains subsets of categorization (pressure, itch, thermoception and proprioception¹ are all subsets of the sense of touch, for example). Interaction with objects informs every part of human experience, from basic functions for survival – *does this smell rotten to you?* – to the most complicated considerations of the universe and one's place therein. Human experience of an object is not, then, the image of an object in its entirety and in a single moment. Rather, human experience is a constant flow of images, of perceptions of objects over the course of an amount of time. An object, to a living being, is always perceived through the senses rather than being the entirety of the thing itself. That is, we experience a perception of an object, rather than the fullness of the object's being. That gap between an objects being and the human perception thereof is increasingly explored in the realm of Posthumanism, and often leaves out entirely any attempt to involve humans in the consideration of non-human being. Be that as it may, the accumulation of perceptions over time contributes to the experience of an object. I propose to consider objects present in a selection of time travel literature to explore what those objects and the effects of time thereupon reveal about the nature of humanity by way of human relationship with and experience of objects.

Humans perceive the physical world of objects, which are essentially space which is established as being inextricably connected with time. One can hardly talk about one without mentioning the other – space is required to observe the progression of time and time is required to observe space, or objects.

¹ Proprioception: the sense of the relative position of neighbouring parts of the body and strength of effort being employed in movement.

Nonetheless, scholars of time travel literature tend to focus almost exclusively on the nature of time and the consideration of the strangenesses that time travel introduces to human narrative. The thesis addresses the lack of object-oriented consideration of time travel literature by examining some objects present in time travel literature to explore what they reveal about the nature of humanity. As the time travel genre is already expansive and continuing to grow, I shall discuss a particular selection of short time travel stories: “Rip Van Winkle” by Washington Irving (published in 1819), “Mimsy Were the Borogroves” by Lewis Padgett² (1943), “A Sound of Thunder” by Ray Bradbury (1952), “And It Comes Out Here” by Lester Del Rey (1952), “The Skull” by Phillip K. Dick (1952), “All You Zombies” by Robert Heinlein (1959), “The Gentle Assassin” by J.G. Ballard (1961), “The Anniversary Project” by Joe Haldeman (1974), “Fire Watch” by Connie Willis (1984), “The Price of Oranges” by Nancy Kress (1989), and “Wikihistory” by Desmond Warzel (2007). Each of these short stories was selected because it is representative of one of the common themes of the time travel genre, which include aging, paradox, economics, causality, family relationships, and the nature of scientific or educational progress. These themes are reexamined through the lens of their relevance to the object.

The process of questioning what it means to be human includes focusing upon the things which surround and affect humans. More specifically, however, this means examining the spaces humans inhabit and the objects with which humans interact over the course of lived time. When one perceives an object, in a timeless moment, one perceives only a still and fleeting image of one portion of that object rather than the fullness of that object’s being. Yet, as Edmund Husserl points out, experience is not simply the image of an object in its entirety and in a single moment but instead is a constant flow of images. Human experience is perceptions of objects over the course of time, and the accumulation of perceptions over time contribute to the experience of an object.

² “Lewis Padgett” is a pseudonym used by authors C. L. Moore and Henry Kuttner on some of their collaborative publications.

Gaston Bachelard explores space and objects in the Kantian tradition (as developed by Husserl and Heidegger) in his *The Poetics of Space*. This work furthers Husserl's assertion of experience as an accumulation of perspective by considering lived experience almost entirely through images, through physical space, and through the aggregate of impressions and associations afforded by collective human experience of objects. Bachelard chooses several particular sorts of objects and spaces to pick apart, examining their physical aspects and the associations they hold for human beings. His focus tends to be on the images, through which he digs into the intersection of space and time in terms of an image's lasting impact: "The poetic image is not subject to an inner thrust. It is not an echo of the past. On the contrary: through the brilliance of an image, the distant past resounds with echoes, and it is hard to know at what depth these echoes will reverberate and die away. Because of its novelty and its action, the poetic image has an entity and a dynamism of its own; it is referable to a direct ontology" (Bachelard xvi). Each object we perceive contains within its image all previous perceptions of the object perceived – or rather, each perception of an image of an object adds to all previously collected images of that object.

Following Bachelard's work, Graham Harman builds upon the exploration of the image first in the work *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects* and then in his follow-up work *Guerilla Metaphysics*. In the latter he considers the implications of not only perceptions of but interactions with the stuff of the world, in conscious contrast to his previous book: "The central thesis of the earlier work [*Tool-Being*] is that objects exist in utter isolation from all others, packed into secluded private vacuums. Obviously, this can be no better than a half-truth about the world: if it were the full story, nothing would ever happen, and every object would repose in its own intimate universe, never affecting or affected by anything else at all" (Harman 1). No thing is in a vacuum; therefore, the progression of time affects everything, leaving its mark one image at a time on all objects, including upon humans. As Husserl puts forth, an object is not a mere image but a series of continually flowing images. Time is a crucial element in the human experience of objects. Every moment of experience of an object adds to the aggregate

perception of that object, adding to the human experience of it in phenomenological time. Hence, changes to the flow of time affecting an object transform human experience as well.

In the wake of Bachelard's observations, Paul Ricoeur in *Time and Narrative* examines the nature of time in terms of human lived experience and puts forth his own conclusions on the aggregation of object image perceptions, particularly that humans actually experience time in two ways. The first is the continuing progression of time, living through it, which he calls cosmological time. This is what is referred to as the space-time continuum – the intersection of space and time as a continuing whole. It is linear succession, with every moment following one and followed by one, in order, forever. The second is phenomenological time, which includes that which has already happened and that which will happen, in addition to the present. Phenomenological time encompasses not only a present object or event but also the contextual memories of previous events of the same type, all other iterations of the same object, as well as possible projections of the object in the future. Phenomenological time can be illustrated with the example of an annual holiday such as New Year's Day: if one declares that today is New Year's Day, it also brings to mind the New Year's Days that have already occurred during one's life from birth to the present date, as well as the New Year's Days that have not yet occurred because they are in the future. Ricoeur explains phenomenological time as dependent it depends upon the linear progression of cosmological time, which it overlaps. Human relationship with objects, therefore, begins in the very beginning of human lives. Human relationship to objects can be seen even in children's literature, which is rife with sentient objects, talking animals, and the like which are used to teach children and begin developing their relationship with and understanding of the world into which they will grow.

It is for all these reasons that time travel literature offers such a great opportunity for examining human relationships with objects: space and time are inextricably connected; human lived experience is the aggregation of perceptions of object images over time; phenomenological time begins in the earliest stages of childhood and persists throughout cosmological time. Time travel literature is a unique genre in that it deliberately disrupts the linear progression of cosmological time in its narrative. Other genres, such

as historical fiction and science fiction, shift the chronological placement of its narrative to either a portion of cosmological time which has already passed, or which is imagined to be in the future. Time travel fiction, on the other hand, has a narrative that includes unnatural movement between two or more disconnected portions of cosmological time. Doing so immediately affects phenomenological time – the effect of time is no longer part of a strictly linear progression in which phenomenological time maps to chronological time. One can easily get lost in the nature of time and the variety of terms used to discuss it in time travel literature and associated scholarly works, in which it is said not only to flow but to fold, bend, warp, loop, branch, or take on other shapes entirely. However, the thesis tries to avoid this digression, maintaining focus upon the object. To explore the shape of the non-physical concept of time is enticing, and has led to much work on time-travel related issues such as paradox or the butterfly effect.

Yet even these time-oriented oddities are detected specifically through their effect on physical things – one of the most famous examples is in fact the butterfly effect as seen in Ray Bradbury’s “A Sound of Thunder” wherein the main character Eckels crushes a butterfly while on safari in the chronological past. The safari guide, Travis, earlier in the story discusses the potential of small changes multiplying exponentially over the course of hundreds of thousands of years by stepping on a mouse, and that supposition is borne out by the changes Eckels, Travis, and the rest of the hunting party observe upon their arrival in the future from which they had ostensibly traveled – changes observed in such physical things as the spelling upon the sign in the Time Safari office, which changes from “Time Safari Inc.” to “Tyme Sefari Inc.” To travel in time is to perceive objects out of order according to chronological time, and so to alter the phenomenological time of the object.

It is in order to carefully explore the effect of time travel on objects that I have chosen to look specifically at time travel short fiction, rather than novel-length works. Time travel fiction involves multiple lengths of works, from flash fiction to full novels. Short stories are topical, and by the very fact that they are short are required to be succinct. The more extensive length of a novel allows for sweeping descriptions and extended narration, and giving rise to character development through the use of dialogue.

As a result the short story highlights the time travel but is stripped of elaborate character development, of extensive dialogue, and of a complex plot arc. The absence of these devices serves to frontline the importance of what remains. Due to its brevity the short story lends itself to immediacy in its detail and exploration of the subject at hand. The action-oriented, thing-oriented nature of short stories in comparison to the slow, dialogue-oriented development of longer works is what makes them ideal for consideration of objects in time travel literature. Additionally, considering short stories rather than longer works allows for the exploration of this subject in a larger number of stories, and therefore a varied swath of narratives.

Though it could be argued that the long, slow development of a novel might track more closely to actual human experience, the focus of the short story upon strictly relevant actions and objects directs the exploration toward microportions of experience which can then be extrapolated to a greater whole. As mentioned previously, human experience is a matter of perception, which comes to the mind by way of the senses. All the senses operate continuously, taking in sights, sensations, sounds, flavors, and smells, which the mind weaves together into the fabric of interpreted experience. Yet human attention can be brought into play – one can choose to focus upon the input from any one of these senses, even going so far as to shut out others. One could put on a blindfold and insert earplugs, for example, the better to concentrate upon smells or the touch of objects upon the skin. Zeroing in on any one sense allows one to explore more fully the multiple facets of it: one does not merely smell the freshly baked bread, but one can consider the smell of yeast, salt, and flour; one can detect that it is hot by the smoothness of the smell, whereas cooled bread is duller smelling, less fully fragrant. The smell considered without visual or audible input can evoke the memory of other experiences involving a similar smell of hot fresh bread, experiences from which the sights or sounds of the current setting might be divorced. Focusing in upon one portion of experience allows for a broader exploration of its phenomenological time. Because human understanding of the natural chronological passage of time informs our lives – routines, habits, short and long term plans – an understanding of the effect of time on the objects through which we experience time

is vital to understanding how are lives are shaped thereby. Ultimately, in exploring the phenomenology of objects in time travel short fiction, we can increase the understanding of human perceptions of time and in turn our understanding of our own humanity. No one has all the time in the world, because chronological time both predates and carries on beyond the projected lifespan of all humans. However, we convey our experiences and understanding of our own humanity and our relationships through the literature that lasts beyond the limitation of any single human life, allowing phenomenological time to continue building upon the experiences of humans who came before. Committing the phenomenological understanding of objects to the page gives readers an already-developed understanding of an object and what that object means to, and says about, humans.

Here, a question arises: why do we search for object-oriented truths? What we are actually examining is our attitudes toward them, born of our experiences of them, the truths being sought are actually in regard to humanity. Living in the world of posthumanism, wherein we no longer operate upon the assumption that we are the chosen creation of a divine being, we seek not only our interconnectedness with other human beings, but also the essence of what it means to be human, to be as humans – the Heideggerian *Da-sein*³. We are seeking evidence of our humanity in our relationship with the non-human in our lives. Time travel narratives allow us to explore that relationship by offering a multitude of ways in which those narratives defamiliarize objects. Considering previously familiar objects from a new perspective or examining unfamiliar objects in an otherwise familiar setting allows for a changed perception of those objects. In other words, time travel is a way of allowing objects to become alien or other and, therefore, open interpretations thereof previously not found in the phenomenology of those objects. It does well here to note that while the thesis does not delve into the experiences of objects themselves on the same level as humans, this should convey neither ignorance nor a rebuffing of Object-Oriented Ontology as developed by Graham Harman and furthered by Ian Bogost. Indeed, the OOO work

³ I spell *Da-sein* thus throughout for the sake of consistency of the term with Heidegger's origination of it, except within direct quotations wherein the source author has stylistically omitted the hyphen.

of both philosophers influences much of the thought in the chapters to come. However, for the purpose of the thesis, the human point of view is the lens through which to I choose to consider the impact of time travel upon the objects discussed in each chapter, as the very idea of time travel is synthetic, created and speculated upon by humans.

Each story selected for interpretation in the thesis is included as being exemplary of some aspect of the genre and contains objects worthy of interest for phenomenological exploration. The significance of these objects means their inclusion in the category of the machinery for time travel, their personal significance to the time traveler, the way they illustrate the contrast between familiarity and defamiliarity or a sense of otherness, or the way they attach to certain dialectics such as inside/outside, then/now, male/female, and ultimately to human/inhuman. An inherent element of all time travel narrative is the mechanism which allows the Traveler to move through time. Chapter 1, *The Machine*, discusses the presence of The Machine, examining it largely after the space-focused exploratory fashion of Gaston Bachelard. That is, the Machine poses great interest in terms the facts and perceptions of its physical presence, which therefore are facts and perceptions of a piece of space – for of course all objects are space – that time travels. In some stories the Machine is secondary to the function it serves, as in “The Gentle Assassin” and “The Anniversary Project.” In “The Gentle Assassin” Ballard merely mentions the machinery of time travel in passing, referencing the cyclotron. Contrasting with these, the Machine in “And It Comes Out Here” is not only the conveyance but also its own purpose. In others such as “Wikihistory” and “Fire Watch” the Machine is notable by its conspicuous absence; the use of a time machine is so a part of the fabric of those worlds and habits that the mechanisms are not worth discussing. Yet both stories require the presence of some type of machinery – the former takes place on the Internet, which involves computers, servers, and networks, and the latter discusses the use of a Microfiche OED, Revised, With Historical Supplements. Microfiche has been surpassed as a technology for the reviewing of information from a large source.

Because the time machine itself is a purely created object, there is the attendant question of the extent to which the machine is merely a pretext. The pretextual nature of the time machine is that it is ostensibly a working of science but, in fact, is in our world a pure fantasy. Such machines are manmade items meant to control and manipulate the pure, non-physical concept of time also developed by humans. The fantastic basis for the scientific object gives rise to the question explored in Chapter 1 of just how contrived – how ridiculous – is that object as a product of science? How much of the machine is chalked up to the aesthetic of its world? The form of the machine and the attitudes of those who use them (or the lack of them) to travel through time relay much information about the fabric of the worlds in which the stories take place. Some of these machines are formed like rooms or conveyances, while other take the shape of nets, or even static locations that need to be moved through rather than traveled in or on like a vehicle. Aside from their form, machines function in a new way in relation to the phenomenological problem of the multitudes of object being, as they provide access to not just the continuing progression of cosmological time, but to all potential points of phenomenological time as well.

Indeed, in the earliest and latest stories in the selection - “Rip Van Winkle,” “Fire Watch,” “The Price of Oranges,” and “Wikihistory” – there is no machine at all. Rip Van Winkle’s method of time travel is explained at best as some form of supernatural means, most likely centered around the flagon from which Van Winkle drinks and the men with whom he drinks, posited to be the ghosts of Henry Hudson and the crew of the Halfmoon. This is the only tale in which the means of time travel are both non-mechanical and stated to be supernatural or fantastical. Rip Van Winkle is, moreover, the only story that predates the Industrial Revolution, during which time it is natural to chalk up such an unusual occurrence to fantastic means such as ghost, gods, or fairies, rather than to the workings of science. Due to this absence of a machine, as opposed to those time travel stories in which machinery is the expected mechanism but a machine is nonetheless absent from the story, “Rip Van Winkle” is largely discluded from discussion in this chapter. In contrast, the post-Industrial Revolution stories all stick to more man-made methods of time travel. Even in “The Price of Oranges” the time travel occurs by moving through a

fixed spatial point described as little more than two disparate locations in both time and space that nevertheless somehow connect – the back of the closet in 1989 and the corner of a warehouse in 1937. This apparent portal is not explained as being either a scientific or supernatural phenomenon. It simply exists, but it does so within manmade structures, intimating the likelihood of a synthetic origin.

“Wikihistory” in comparison leaves out mention not only of the machinery of time travel, but of physical space entirely. The entirety of the story takes place in the constructed space of the internet, which is itself a collection of machines.

Unthahorsten’s time machine in Lewis Padgett’s “Mimsy Were the Borogroves” is a childish thing to experiment with. Nonetheless, the experiments give the scientist difficulty. The time machine in “A Sound of Thunder” is a room which allows for only the faintest sense of motion; if anything, it is similar to a well-traveled minor mass transit, carrying several people at once in relative comfort. In stark comparison, the time machine in “The Skull” is called forthrightly *The Cage*, and is described as being made of crystal wire with tracking meters and a control wheel. When in use, there comes no sensation of an outside world whatsoever – no light, no sound, no movement of air. Considered from the perspective of lived spaces explored in Bachelard’s *Poetics of Space*, this suggests a safe and secure space fully protected, like the hut, from outside elements, a sanctuary. However, the machine is named in such a way as to keep in mind a jail cell, the time machine which normally one might consider a vehicle for freedom is in fact portrayed as a continuing if more elaborate form of imprisonment for the felon made to use it – and he is told that it is tracked and retrievable, thereby forestalling even the consideration of using the technology to find a where and a when in which he might be free.

While in “And It Comes Out Here” the narrator’s bewilderment focuses upon the issue of his own movement through time, it is the atomic generator that bears consideration – it is what is referred to in scholarly discussion of the genre as an Impossible Object, whose genesis and continued existence seems situated within and predicated upon the continuation of the narrator’s looping lifetime, the interaction of his thirty years older self with his thirty years younger self. This Impossible Object seems to require

already having existed in order to exist – for a tool that is the focus of the Traveler’s journey, it does not function properly within its world. Harman would call it a broken tool, as in its impossibility it simply cannot recede into the level structure of all things. There is no gauging from this narrative who built what. Moreover, except for the purpose of the paradox, it seems ultimately not to matter, so long as the traveler continues to perform his narrative function of retrieving the object to allow it to carry on its place in the cycle. This object is essentially tautological; it exists because it exists. This is not entirely dissimilar to the time machine in “The Anniversary Project.” In that story the machinery of time travel exhibits the paradox of no longer existing at the time it is being employed, and yet always existing because it existed at some point in time.

Any one of the machines used for time travel in the stories are, on their own, of relatively limited phenomenological interest. It is simple enough a task to observe the characteristics of each machine and to consider its import within the confines of its own story – and the chapter does, in fact, do this. Yet it is not only the static physical description of an object in the stories that is of interest to a phenomenologist, but the effect of time upon the objects in question, the machines. Because the time machine is a a fantastic object, present in literature and other media but as yet unrealized in the non-fiction world, to not only observe it in one story but among multiple stories written over a period of time allows a phenomenologist to develop an understanding of what aspects of a time machine, if any, are common to the machines, as well as to consider the evolution of the physical aspects of the machines and how that evolution relates to the human attitudes toward the machine capable of controlling and manipulating time. As the chapter will show the physical state of the time machine, its size and associated impressiveness, its demanding of attention as a tool all diminish over the course of real-world time. Whereas in the earlier stories the machine is enormous and room-like, enveloping and containing the human or humans who use it, in later stories it shrinks in stature and impact to the size of a small vegetable, or vanishes from the physical space of the world altogether – a fascinating progression when considered in terms of the Bachelardian

exploration of the inside/outside dynamic of lived space, as well as Harman's concepts of objects as tools in the world.

Chapter 2, *Objects In Time Travel*, leans heavily upon Harman's work, focusing upon the objects that undergo time travel in each of the stories. Many of the Travelers carry something with them – the skull in “The Skull,” the guns in “The Gentle Assassin” and “A Sound of Thunder,” the eponymous fruit in “The Price of Oranges.” Sometimes the Objects seem at the outset to be more incidental to their narrative, such as the money in “All You Zombies” and “Fire Watch,” or the container in which the toys travel in “Mimsy Were the Borogroves.” Yet taken in terms of Graham Harman's philosophy, particularly as espoused in *Guerilla Metaphysics*, every one of the objects carried through time travel are tools, part of the larger encompassing system that is the world – or more accurately the universe – as a whole.

“All You Zombies,” “Fire Watch,” and “The Price of Oranges” all concern themselves with the question of currency and its changed nature when carried through time travel, employing currency in the narrative and demonstrating each in a particular way that time travel, by uprooting money from the normal chronologically-bound economies that include it, alters the fundamental nature of money's value. In “All You Zombies,” a certain portion of the Unmarried Mother's looping lifetime is dependent upon the bartending Time Traveler being able to dazzle his younger self with a wad of hundred dollar bills. The money's value to the Traveler is its ability to shock his younger, not-yet-Traveler self, for whom the money still retains the basic function of economic access. The money used in “Fire Watch,” in contrast, retains that function in a very limited way, being earmarked for such a specific access that is so crucial to the Traveler that the money is nigh unto meaningless or valueless in terms of providing access to anything else. “The Price of Oranges” takes another tack entirely, the Traveler focused so heavily on getting the most economic access for his money in the past that the value of all other things, including people, are calculated in terms of little other than their cost, thereby objectifying them. In all these stories, money involved in time travel becomes a broken tool in a variety of ways, taking on strange new functions and values according to the Travelers' anachronistic needs.

Money of course is simply part of a network of systems, a tool functioning as a piece of a greater whole. This theme of the part/whole dynamic continues with the skull in “The Skull,” wherein that object is also part of multiple systems. Not only is it a part of the body of the Traveler, but it is also a part of the Founder’s skeleton and, ultimately, a part of the legend of the Founder. In being available by way of time travel for the Traveler to hold and contemplate, his skull or death’s-head serves to spark first the Heideggerian angst and then the acceptance of the Traveler’s Being-toward-death. Consideration of the skull also leads to consideration of the several dialectics represented thereby – not only living and dead, but also how the skull functions in terms of inside and outside particularly in terms of its effect as a container. In following Bachelard, this chapter exposes the skull as a kind of casket of memory, and therefore a site of non-chronological temporality that hosts the past and future, in memory and in potentia, as well as the present.

Several other stories also include time traveling containers, tools worthy of similar Bachelardian exploration. The Box in “Mimsy Were the Borogroves” in particular begs consideration not only for the container itself, but for the way meaning is conferred upon this otherwise generically-named object by not only its trip through time but moreso by what it carries. The contents impress themselves upon their container, causing it to be not merely a box, but a toybox. Similarly, the gun in “The Gentle Assassin” impresses aspects of danger and weaponry upon the gunmetal suitcase that carries it. Both the Box and the Suitcase are locked or otherwise difficult to open; that difficulty confers an especial allure upon the containers, exciting in one who encounters them a heightened desire to access their contents. Indeed, like time capsules, the meaning to be found in the containers themselves always seem to recede over time in comparison to their contents.

All objects that travel through time of course end up disrupting the world of their destination time to some degree. Guns in particular have the specific effect of violence, a quality that Harman would refer to as awaiting. In other words, guns can potentially a deliberate and destructive kind of change to visit upon the destination time. There are several guns in “A Sound of Thunder,” and they develop qualities

reflective of the men who carry them, particularly once some of them are used, and one of them is not; the used guns, like the men who shoot with them, are described in violent terms, while the one that is never fired and the man who carries it are described as ineffectual. Thus, the potential violence-effect remains in a state of awaiting.

The objects in all these stories carry with them their own phenomenological time as they move out of order through chronological time. Being out of place in time allows them to serve by contrasting as familiar things with the unfamiliar, functioning to help find the familiar in the unfamiliar – and sometimes to introduce the unfamiliar previously unnoticed in the familiar. Evoking unfamiliarity and therefore fresh consideration allows in turn for reconsideration of the human relationship with those defamiliarized objects, and therefore a new understanding of the significance of those objects for the humans. Ultimately, every story involves objects carried through time that bring with them some effect that is somehow altered or exposed by the journey. The objects require cosmological displacement to attain a new degree of phenomenological import.

Chapter 3, *The Body*, shifts the focus from inhuman objects to that particular object that is the body. As mentioned earlier, Da-sein depends upon the body to exist, and all human consciousnesses experience and interact with the world through the filter of the body. The effect of time travel upon the body is, therefore, of great human interest. “Wikihistory” is of particular interest for this chapter in that it has a conspicuous lack of actual, physical bodies anywhere in the story. On the other hand, in “Rip Van Winkle” the direct effect of time travel upon the body is conspicuously exaggerated. The Traveler’s body ages through time while his mind is disconnected through magical sleep, and so arrives in the future in a state of knowledge and attitudes typical of the time period prior to the trip, unlike other stories, the body and consciousness travel in synch to their destination time. The disparity in the Traveler’s mind/body development in his time travel event highlights the imbalance of dependence in all mind/body relationships, and for Van Winkle leads to a crisis of identity.

“The Skull” also employs the disparity of body and mind through the exposure of the Traveler to the literal bare bones fact of his own skull. While he navigates the unfamiliarity of his destination time by wearing clothing strange to him, and pushes back against authority that seeks to control his body even after he travels, it is that externalized part of his own body that presents to him the inevitable nature of his own mortality, his Being-toward-death.

In contrast, the body in “All You Zombies” is a site of constant change and shifting dialectics. Old and young, male and female sex, masculine and feminine gender, authority and victimhood are all dialectics that play out in the Traveler’s body over the course of his looping, self-overlapping life. Time travel becomes a tool to retain the integrity of that overlapping timeline, but once the Traveler navigates beyond that period of overlap he also suffers a crisis of self, trying to understand who he really is inside his much-changed and aged body, adapting a new and authentic mode of living – beyond the angst presented by the necessity of living a prescribed order of life.

External expression of internal self is apparent in “The Gentle Assassin” as well. The clothing and physical expressions of Dr Jamieson⁴, at both a young age long before time travel and also several decades older having traveled back to the same time, offer a sharply contrasting side-by-side visual of a solitary man separated from himself by three decades of aging, a time travel event, and a grievous personal tragedy. The change in clothing and demeanor from Young Jamieson to Old reflects the Heideggerian angst that consumes his attention and shapes his entire life in the wake of that tragedy, wherein he refuses to accept Being-toward-death until he experiences the event of his fiancée’s death once again from a new perspective that demonstrates to him death’s inevitability.

Confrontation with mortality and the understanding of how little control one has over one’s own life is also an issue in “A Sound of Thunder” as well. However, the crisis therein is not instigated by the Traveler’s own body but a completely different body in the destination time. There (and then, as it were) he confronts a dinosaur, the parts of which all work in biological tandem, allowing the parts to therefore

⁴ The English edition style of punctuation

recede invisibly into the unified whole of the dinosaur body. Eckles's human body, in contrast, fails more and more to function as a whole as his parts are distinct and disobedient tools. Additionally, the dinosaur body displays a complex combination of dangerously inhuman and unsettlingly human characteristics, inspiring violence from the other human Travelers.

The question of humanity comes even more clearly to bear in "The Anniversary Project," in which Three-phasing is gaunt, toothless, and considered young among his people at two centuries old. He is a human as conceived of many years in the future – not just many years, but hundreds of thousands of years. Three-phasing is presented in stark contrast to the Dawn Humans not only in terms of his appearance but in the stated differences in perception of the world. Harman discusses human physical bodies as being representative of communication, calling his body "a universal translation tool" and discussing thereafter not only the ways in which his body allows him to sense and perceive, but also the limitations his body places upon him: "Too tall to be a jockey, too soft to be a Special Forces Commando, too male to give birth," and so forth (49). The unfamiliarity of the Anniversary People when placed side by side, so to speak, with the Dawn Humans offers an opportunity for speculation upon not only the implications of extended lifespan and the aging that imparts on the physical form but also the attendant shift in world perspective, particularly amongst people for whom death is no longer an ultimate and inescapable cessation of being.

"Wikihistory" moves another direction, stepping back from the physical body almost entirely – concerning itself primarily with one body, and from a distance. On the particular discussion board in "Wikihistory" the most frequently referenced topic is Hitler, whom "everybody kills ... on their first trip." Scholarly discussion of the genre often comes around to Hitler much the way this story does, positing the potential use of time travel for his removal from history, the obliteration of his body, as being of historical benefit. However, IATT Bulletin 1147 which nobody ever reads thoroughly explains that without Hitler, his historic atrocities, and the scientific developments that sprung up as a result of World War II, there would be no development of the time travel technology. Hitler's body occupies an

uncomfortable space of being almost universally reviled, and yet necessary to the development of many tools and comforts afforded to much of humanity in the years following his immediate influence.

In all of these chapters, the examination of the objects – the machines, the carried items, and the living bodies – provides ways to find greater understanding of humanity. In considering humanity and the being of human, these objects are a function of time, and of change. As part of the process of attempting to understand humanity, we frequently confront the big question of what, precisely, is the purpose of humanity. What is the point of human beings? Castle notes how William Godwin wrote about the ideal of humans not only as a better class of being, but as perfectible beings (Castle 266). To humanity of the Enlightenment period and eras that follow, Utopia is always the goal. However, in line with Posthumanist understanding these stories seem to suggest Utopia is always just out of reach. Whether or not perfection – for the individual – or Utopia – for society – are achievable, to strive for them requires time through which humans can act: growing, learning, failing, and thus changing as the result of actions and events, of interaction with other humans and with the objects that populate our world. The essence of humanity will be highlighted as instead existing not in attaining that state of perfection, but in striving eternally for it; humanity never gives up on attempts at betterment.

Chapter 1: The Machine

An inherent element of all time travel narrative is the means by which one moves through time. Since the publication of H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, in 1895, that means has existed in the genre almost exclusively in the form of a machine. Yet how necessary is the machine to the genre? Is there a defining characteristic among time machines beyond their hearkening back to *The Time Machine* that makes their inclusion crucial to time travel stories? The important issue is to what extent can the pretext of a time machine be taken seriously.

Of the selection of stories for this thesis, only "Rip Van Winkle" predates Wells' seminal work; moreover, it predates the Industrial Revolution and the rise of complex and common machinery proliferated through the world. "Rip Van Winkle" is notable in that its means for time travel, as best the people in Rip Van Winkle's village explain it, is at once both supernatural and purely natural; whether it was drink, or ghosts, or both that made Rip Van Winkle sleep and sustained his life for twenty years, it is the long sleep and the accompanying natural progression of time and aging that carry him to the future. This story is evidence from the outset that while The Machine is nearly ubiquitous to the genre, it is not a required element. Time travel narratives can and do exist without The Machine as the mechanism of time travel, yet the fact remains that time travel narratives absent of a machine are the exception rather than the rule.

Few of the remaining stories do not take care to manufacture some scientific method by which to explain traveling through time; the other three stories in the selection for this thesis that do not do so are "Fire Watch," "The Price of Oranges" and "Wikhistory." This group comprises the most recently published of the selection, and can be supposed to have left out discussion of the mechanism responsible for time travel due to an accompanying chronological distance following the height of the Industrial Revolution. That is, machinery has become such a part of the fabric of daily life contemporary to the publication of these stories that the inclusion of specifically-described mechanisms would be similarly unnecessary as describing the mechanism of a car might be in the narrating of a high-speed chase. That is,

unless there is something broken, something extra, or something otherwise unusual in the machine, then the function of the machine and its success are more important to the stories than the object itself.

The specific set of stories in the selection which contain actually present time machines is composed of “A Sound of Thunder,” “The Skull,” “And It Comes Out Here,” “All You Zombies,” “The Gentle Assassin,” “Mimsy were the Borogroves,” and “The Anniversary Project.” The time machines in these stories have no common physical form. Their commonality is in nothing more than name and function, which runs counter to Graham Harman’s claim about object naming: “to name an object is to point to some kind of unifying *form* that binds together many distinct properties; a name is never just a shorthand alias for the total list of these properties. Sensual qualities are always qualities *of an object*, even when we fail to distinguish these objects correctly amidst all the confusions of the senses” (29). To name a time machine initially, therefore, is problematic. Time travel is not yet an actually-developed technology beyond the possibility of time travel via the relative aging of space travel, but even that only progresses one way in time. There is also no actual object in the non-fictional world that can be called a time machine. A time machine is, regardless of scientific trappings, a fantasy element left to be variably described by authors. Ultimately it is a narrative pretext defined not even by a specific sensual quality but by its function. It is the function of time machines alone that does not vary – The Machine moves someone(s) or something(s) through time.

Therefore, we must consider the variably-presented time machines and, in considering their different forms, explore how they relate to (and why they relay about) the humans who build and use them. Time machines are purely synthetic, created by humans to manipulate Time, which is not an object at all. Time has no inherent physical form, and is observable only in the effect of its progression on the world. Manmade items, as Ricoeur points out in *Time and Narrative Volume III*, attempt to partition, account, and record time (104). They are an attempt to put a physical aspect on an intangibility, to make it something that we can, in a sense, grasp. The way to grasp Time is not to attempt to crystalize it into an

object form of its own, but rather through observation of the effect it has upon the objects already present in the world and the images those objects present to us:

The poetic image is not subject to an inner thrust. It is not an echo of the past. On the contrary: through the brilliance of an image, the distant past resounds with echoes, and it is hard to know at what depth these echoes will reverberate and die away. Because of its novelty and its action, the poetic image has an entity and a dynamism of its own; it is referable to a direct ontology. (Bachelard xvi)

As stated in the Introduction to the thesis each perception of an image of an object adds to all previously collected images of that object. Every image of every object that undergoes change (which is, of course, all objects, because nothing is perfectly static) adds to our perception of time. Therefore, the perception of the shape of time machines adds collectively to our perception of controlling the intangible through a physical object.

There are certain themes to the shape of time machines: some are written as rooms into which one or several people can walk; some time machines, after the fashion of Wells' creation, are smaller and more vehicular; a third commonality among time machines has them shrunk to a handheld size, sometimes employing a dynamic secondary apparatus, such as a net. There are examples of each of these in this chapter's selection, through which we shall proceed with the largest to the small. "A Sound of Thunder," whose fame centers primarily on the paradox of a tiny butterfly, has the largest-described machine of the selection:

Eckels glanced across the vast office at a mass and tangle, a snaking and humming of wires and steel boxes, at an aurora that flickered now orange, now silver, now blue. There was a sound like a gigantic bonfire burning all of Time, all the years and all the parchment calendars, all the hours piled high and set aflame. (Bradbury 75)

Even this description is incomplete, offering the reader a portion of Eckles' perceptions of the Machine as a general impression rather than as whole a picture as possible. An impression of any object is, Harman

asserts, more than “mere sense data” and that “to perceive is always and everywhere perceive *things*” (47). The initial impression of this thing, the Machine, is an impression of size. A vast office is required to house the Machine, and it is a mass of many disparate parts. This impression of size is useful for exploring the import of the Machine even without lengthy detail of the object’s shape, for as Gaston Bachelard supposes:

If we could analyze impressions and images of immensity, or what immensity contributes to an image, we should soon enter into a region of the purest sort of phenomenology – a phenomenology without phenomena; or, stated less paradoxically, one that, in order to know the productive flow of images, need not wait for the phenomena of the imagination to take form and become stabilized in completed images. (184)

This supposition and Harman’s assertion of the perception of things together support the observation that this machine is big in both a physical and a metaphysical sense. It is so large that Eckels is able to perceive it not fully but only in parts. Its snaking wires and humming steel boxes are scientific constructs created and manipulated by humans, yet these parts are described like living things. The Machine also has an aurora, which is normally a thing beyond the reach of Earth entirely, appearing in the sky.

Stacked upon these visual impressions of immensity beyond human measure is the aural impression, the sound of the object, “like a gigantic bonfire burning all of Time ... all the parchment calendars” (Bradbury 75). The Machine is not only enormous, but contains such destructive power as to be able to obliterate the very non-objective concept it is meant to manipulate, not to mention all human instruments thereof. The sound of the Machine is mentioned repeatedly thereafter: “They moved silently across the room, taking their guns with them, toward the Machine, toward the silver metal and the roaring light” after which it roars, the howls, before a scream that falls to a murmur as it slows (76-77). Roaring, howling, screaming, murmuring – each and all of these are the descriptions one gives not to a mechanical object so readily as to a living creature. Indeed, the same kinds of sounds and the same impression of bigness are assigned not long after to the dinosaur. Bradbury’s Time Machine comes across as anything

but mechanistic: it is described in a multitude of terms attributable to the natural world and living, biological beings, and in such a way as to be a potentially destructive force beyond the ability of humans to control. The Machine exemplifies that “however exaggerated in size nature’s creations may be, man can easily imagine things that are bigger still” (Bachelard 123). Bachelard is referencing simply the power of daydream and the hypertrophy enabled by the non-physical. However, the incompletely outlined Machine with the qualities of living creatures stands as an example of the bigness of human imagination. To build a thing, it must first be conceived, and this machine is at least as large as a room and as intimidating as a carnivorous dinosaur. Time might be a vast concept, but mankind insistently conceives of a way to control and manipulate it.

As the time machine is not an actual physical object outside of time travel stories, it can potentially come in any shape or size – and throughout the stories comes in many of both. Bradbury’s, as mentioned, is immense to the point of intimidation, and as discussed later in this chapter other iterations of the time machine are handheld objects little larger than the size of a pen. Even the large versions of time machines are not comforting things. The traveler steps inside it to make the journey through time, but the room-like interior of the machine is more vehicle than habitation. As Bachelard writes regarding houses, “A house that has been experienced is not an inert box. Inhabited space transcends geometrical space” (Bachelard 47). While a time machine is not meant to be lived in the way a house is, it is often constructed to include a space to be inhabited. The earlier-written stories discussed in this chapter, including the preceding “A Sound of Thunder” and the following “The Skull,” utilize time machines with large and transitionally habitable spaces. Later machines (both within the scope of this chapter, and later in the genre) tend to have smaller machines – vehicular, or even handheld devices. Eventually, machines as the means for time travel cease to be mentioned at all. This reflects on the human capacity to imagine an object to allow control over the intangibility of time; initially, the task seems enormous, and so the machine matches to that in size and sensory impression. Later, the idea is more worn in, more comfortable, and machines shrink accordingly, ceasing to loom over humans, and then gradually

shrinking to slight and easily manipulated items, if they are mentioned at all. Humans can think big, and then can comfortably shrink an object of great power to miniaturized size and shape, thereby emphasizing human control over both the object and its power regardless of its shape.

In Dick's "The Skull" the first glimpse of the time machine is presented under not dissimilar circumstances. It is described initially in terms of a first and physically distant impression from the main character, Conger, who has not seen a time machine before: "They went across the room to a door. The Speaker pushed it open. Technicians looked up. Conger saw machinery, whirring and turning; benches and retorts. In the center of the room was a gleaming crystal cage" (Dick 5). Just as with Bradbury's Eckels, the character's first impressions guide those of the reader, who has also never seen a time machine. In other words, the reader's imagination is meant to follow the progression of the incipient time traveler's perception. The machine is first described more in terms of its surroundings than its immediate shape: the mention of benches and retorts impress the sense of a laboratory, in which the machine stands. It is not an amorphous monstrosity of half-alive wires and boxes, however, but instead it is a cage. A cage is an object constructed of bars, with a way to get in and out, and is meant to keep something captive. This cage is made of crystal, whereas cage is usually made of a substance the captive cannot break in order to escape. The bars of a cage obscure and constrain, usually employing wood or metal material. Yet his cage is constructed of matter noted for its clarity and delicacy, and moreover it gleams. It initially sounds like a sculpture of art rather than a time machine.

The object is a time machine, but it looks like a cage. As soon as the machine is called a cage the object elicits from the reader the reader's own context and experience of a cage. Only when the traveler is inside the machine does this impression change:

Conger entered the crystal cage and sat down, placing his hands on the wheel. [...]

Conger said nothing. The cage was sealed. He raised his finger and touched the wheel control. He turned the wheel carefully. He was still staring at the plastic bag when the room outside vanished. For a long time there was nothing at all. Nothing beyond the

crystal mesh of the cage. [...] He put the gun down and adjusted the meter readings of the cage. The spiraling mist was beginning to condense and settle. All at once forms wavered and fluttered around him. [...] Colors, sounds, movements filtered through the crystal wire. He clamped the controls off and stood up. (Dick 7)

Once again the reader is granted no holistic description of the machine, but instead bits and pieces, impressions of its interior and workings. The cage (with a captive inside to observe and manipulate) has a wheel, and a place to sit. Initially the cage offered the impression of a jail cell, but now has elements less like a static room and more like a vehicle with hand-operated controls and meter readings. Unlike a vehicle, however, looking out through its transparent structure does not show the world passing. There is, quite simply, nothing. While in use, the machine forces the world, the universe occupied by its captive to shrink down to nothing more than the interior bounded by the crystal mesh. The machine becomes, in a sense, the entirety of the universe until it comes again to occupy a single part of the time-space continuum. This shrinking of the universe to be encompassed within the cage highlights the peculiar inside-outside dialectic of the time machine. In part it is the obvious dialectic that Bachelard calls the geometric: there is a physical interior and exterior to the cage (12, 47). Yet all time machines in operation have an interior that remains constant (Bachelard would call it concrete) while the previously vast exterior becomes indistinct or even vanishes utterly. To use a time machine is to, at least for a moment, destroy all the universe except for that portion that is contained within the machine and therefore directly relevant to the traveler.

This destruction, however, is impermanent, and this particular machine has a quality that supersedes the separation of time traveled: the machine, Conger is informed, can be tracked and retrieved to the time from which he came, which makes it even more so a cage in intentionality than in mere shape. Therefore, he is bound to act in a prescribed way rather than seeking freedom in an unexpected part of time and space: “He brought a thin rod from his waist and turned the handle of it. For a moment nothing happened. Then there was a shimmering in the air. The crystal cage appeared and settled slowly down.

Conger sighed. It was good to see it again. After all, it was his only way back” (Dick 20). The cage serves to bind the traveler to his duty, but it also serves as a route from the strange world of his past back to the familiar, if controlling, world of his future.

The machine as a tool connecting one’s own past and future appears as well in “And It Comes Out Here.” Given the nature of the story’s familiar first-person style, and the way the narrator is speaking to his younger self about his own future and past, the image we are given of the time machine is not as immediate as the previous stories. The narrative of “And It Comes Out Here” is essentially the extended retelling of a thirty-year-old memory – it is purely recalled perception filtered through the shifting coloration of the recollection over intervening time:

You’ll take a closer look at the machine, then. Yes, it’ll be pretty obvious it must be a time machine. [...] just a small little cage with two seats, a luggage compartment, and a few buttons on a dash. [...] I snap on a green button, and everything seems to cut off around us. You can see a sort of foggy nothing surrounding the cockpit; it is probably the field that prevents passage through time from affecting us. The luggage section isn’t protected though. You start to say something but by then I’m pressing a black button, and everything outside will disappear. [...] You can’t feel any motion, of course. You try to reach a hand out through the field into the nothing around you and your hand goes out, all right, but nothing happens. Where the screen ends, your hand just turns over and pokes back at you. Doesn’t hurt, and when you pull your arm back, you’re still sound and uninjured. But it looks frightening and you don’t try it again. (Del Rey 64)

Already the shape of the object, the time machine, is decreasingly worth describing. The presumption is that surely the shape of the object should be known and obvious. In many respects, it is described incredibly similarly to The Cage in “The Skull:” it must be entered; it has a cage exterior; there is a place to sit inside; the machine has hand-controls. In the hand controls this machine differs from the cage, as there are buttons rather than a wheel, and there is no sense of fine, adjustable control to the machine. It

has set trajectories through time and space throughout the story. Greatly restricting the access of all the possibility of time and space in turn diminishes the intimidating natures of this machine. Another differentiation of this machine is that the characters present make functional inquiries about it:

“Where are we getting our air?” you ask. “Or why don’t we lose it?”

“No place for it to go,” I explain. There isn’t. Out there is neither time nor space, apparently. How could the air leak out? You still feel gravity, but I can’t explain that, either. Maybe the machine has a gravity field built in, or maybe the time that makes your watch run is responsible for gravity. In spite of Einstein, you have always had the idea that time is an effect of gravity, and I sort of agree, still. (Del Rey 65)

This explanation is certainly no explanation at all. It is the kind of explanation that pop culture critics and scholars call handwaving, or lampshading – in the latter the creator acknowledges an obvious question regarding their story in a direct manner, pointing out the problem as a known issue without actually explaining it. The former is a subset of lampshading in which the problem is pointed out but explained away with a bit of airy pseudoscience as shown here, in the manner of someone waving a hand in the air to dismiss a problem without fully addressing it. More simply put, it is a piece of *deus ex machina*. The suppositions that machine either might have a gravity field or it might have gravity because time is passing inside its cage both run counter to the understanding of gravity as a force of attraction between two masses. This problem serves to highlight one of Harman’s statements about the wholeness of an object: “the currently accessible features of a thing do not tell the whole story about it. The [object] is more than an appearance, because it is many different appearances at once to many different creatures. Beyond that, it is even more than all of these appearances put together, because it might harbor qualities that no current observers are equipped to detect” (17). This machine clearly harbors qualities undetected to the man observing it at either end of the thirty-year span separating him from himself, for he discusses the observed and unexplained effects of those qualities.

“All You Zombies” follows suit in echoing certain aspects of the last story; the time machine still holds multiple people and one of the travelers did not anticipate making the trip. However, this one is given a name beyond time machine, and several of its qualities describe the machine thus:

I opened a case, the only thing in the room; it was a U.S.F.F Co-ordinates Transformer Field Kit, series 1992, Mod. II – a beauty, no moving parts, weight twenty-three kilos fully charged and shaped to pass as a suitcase I had adjusted it precisely earlier that day; all I had to do was shake out the metal net which limits the transformation field.

Which I did. “What’s that?” he demanded.

“Time Machine,” I said and tossed the net over us.

“Hey!” he yelled and stepped back. There is a technique to this; the net has to be thrown so that the subject will instinctively step back onto the metal mesh, then you close the net with both of you inside completely – else you might leave shoe soles behind or a piece of foot, or scoop up a slice of floor. But that’s all the skill it takes. Some agents con a subject into the net; I tell the truth and use that instant of utter astonishment to flip the switch. Which I did. (Heinlein 410)

For the first time in this exploration, a time machine is in a form smaller than the travelers who use it. It, like *The Cage*, is granted a name other than simply Time Machine, but this name is far more complex. The combination of acronym, year, and modification number name the machine in much the same way military issue objects are catalogued and itemized. The part of the machine that directly affects the travelers maintains a similarity to the other machines, in that it must physically surround them. This machine’s part is in the form of a metal net, a mesh that serves not to conduct, but to limit the effect of the machine to merely affect those inside it. It is called a net, and it is used as one – the subject is caught in it like a fish.

The machine in “The Gentle Assassin” is particularly problematic for phenomenological consideration in that it is barely described at all, and more in terms of its potential development than its actuality after it has been employed:

‘Why? We’re able to go *forward* in time now and no one’s throwing their hats in the air. The universe itself is just a time machine that from our end of the show seems to be running one way. Or mostly one way. I happened to have noticed that particles in a cyclotron sometimes move in the opposite direction, that’s all, arrive at the end of their infinitesimal trips before they’ve started. That doesn’t mean that next week we’ll all be able to go back and murder our own grandfathers.’” (Ballard 284-285)

The cyclotron is the most description afforded in this story, and is in fact an actual scientific machine⁵.

The behavior of the particles within the cyclotron, however, is made clear in the surrounding discussion to be the basis for the otherwise-unstated mechanism used to bring that very speaker to his own past to overhear this conversation. The use of the cyclotron (as with other elements in the story) falls in line with Ricoeur’s consideration of fictional characters set among ostensibly historical events: “From the mere fact that the narrator and the leading characters are fictional, all references to real historical events are divested of their function of standing for the historical past and are set on par with the unreal status of the other events” (Ricoeur *Time and Narrative Volume III* 129). The use of real-ish historicity in constructing the basis of this single-traveler time machine serves to cast historical events (and science) into the realm of fiction.

The use of real-ish history and science is employed as well in “Mimsy Were the Borogroves,” which opens with a character performing a scientific experiment:

He was doing the equivalent of standing in the equivalent of a laboratory. He was preparing to test his time machine. Having turned on the power, Unthahorsten suddenly

⁵ A cyclotron is a particle accelerator in which charged particles follow a circular path until a certain magnetic force is applied, at which point the particles accelerate outwards from the center along a spiral path.

realized that the Box was empty. [...] Unthahorsten left the gossatch and dumped the assortment into the Box, slamming the cover shut just before the warning signal flashed.

The Box went away. The manner of its departure hurt Unthahorsten's eyes. (Padgett 10)

Again the immediate description of the time machine itself is intensely minimalist. It requires power, it fits in a laboratory, and it includes a section (the Box) made to carry things through time. It is the Box, in fact, that is given the most description in the remainder of the story: "It was a box. It was, in fact, the Box. The gadgetry hitched to it meant little to Scott, though he wondered why it was so fused and burned" (Padgett 11). It is quite clear that whatever method by which the Box traveled through time, that method is violently destructive to the machine.

The fusion and burns, and even helical shape ascribed to the Box are the lesser of its physical oddities, however:

The angles on this thing were funny. [...]

The gadgetry would have given Einstein a headache and driven Steinmetz raving mad. The trouble was, of course, that the box had not yet completely entered the space-time continuum where Scott existed, and therefore it could not be opened – at any rate, not till Scott used a convenient rock to hammer the helical non-helix into a more convenient position.

He hammered it, in fact, from its contact point with the fourth dimension, releasing the space-time torsion it had been maintaining. There was a brittle snap. The box jarred slightly, and lay motionless, no longer only partially in existence. Scott opened it easily now. (Padgett 11-12).

Moreso than any of the other machines, the reader is afforded an external image of this machine while in use, and that use is explicit in utilizing the fourth dimension; the initial three are familiar as length, width, and height, while the fourth is arguably either time or the intersection of time and space (there is much scholarly discussion on the subject and while it is worth noting, the particulars do not bear further

inspection here). Time and space, however, are two of the three elements to which Bachelard assigns imagination: “I have also followed the imagination to a point well beyond reality, in its task of enlargement, for in order to surpass, one must first enlarge. We have seen how freely the imagination acts upon space, time and elements of power” (Bachelard 112). To imagine something is to move beyond the constraints of actual time, actual space, and even actual power; imagination allows for the examination of unreality, of possibility, of the as yet unobservable. To imagine something is to move into the realm of supposition, to take small possibilities and consider them in great detail no matter how ugly or frightening, as in Bachelard’s example of regarding the emergence of a snail from a shell in a time-lapsed video. Regardless of what exactly the fourth dimension is defined as for the purpose of this story, the fact remains that we have little to know physical description of the time machine itself. As with the many and variably shaped machines of the other stories, the time machine is here best described yet again by its function rather than its form.

The disparity between function and form is visited most explicitly in the last of these stories, “The Anniversary Project” – there is, in fact, a deliberate and matter of fact disconnect between the two:

Sarah turns around just a bit too late to catch a glimpse of Three-phasing’s father. She does see Nine-hover before Bob does. The nominally female time-caster is a flurry of movement, sitting at the console of her time net, clicking switches and adjusting various dials. All of the motions are unnecessary, as is the console. It was built at Three-phasing’s suggestion, since humans from the era into which they could cast would feel more comfortable in the presence of a machine that looked like a machine. The actual time net was roughly the size and shape of an asparagus stalk, was controlled completely by thought, and had no moving parts. It does not exist any more, but can still be used, once understood. Nine-hover has been trained from birth for this special understanding. (Haldeman 195)

The actual machine hearkens to a naturally-occurring living thing for the sake of comparative dimensions. Where Bradbury's time machine is described with deliberately incomplete poetics that give impressions of bigness and of danger, this comparison is to a small thing commonly consumed by humans, and quite harmless. Here, Haldeman hits on the lack of necessary familiar space and the sensation of the passage of time in transit while undergoing time travel. He includes description of the fake console in the description of the machine – switches, dials, even the console itself – which are all admittedly set dressing, created to suit the expectation of a time machine rather than to allow the humans brought through time by the time net to confront the fact of the machine's actual diminution. In contrast the other stories in the selection for this chapter retain familiar space and a sense of time passing during the actual time traveling. Haldeman's addressing of the need for something visually complex to express "time machine" to the Dawn Humans falls in line with the sentiment found in "And It Comes Out Here:" "it's pretty obvious that it's a time machine." This is a statement that presumes a visual understanding of a time machine, despite the demonstration of how very different the time machines in these stories all are from one another.

It is this last machine, such as it is, that really clarifies the role of a machine in the time travel genre. While the presence of a machine, a scientific creation, is far more common than not in the genre it is nonetheless little more than a pretext. In any one of these stories a machine could be replaced with fairy dust or a plant that grows backward in time or a flagon of ale or a static portal inside a city apartment closet or one of any number of contrivances that, at their core, are equally fantastical. So long as the thing is responsible for making movement through time happen, the base function of time travel as the defining element of the genre is served. There is no physical consistency among any of the machine-objects described in these stories, even where there are common generalizations to be had among small groups of them. It is perhaps the most ridiculous that none of them reach toward the one actual possibility for real time travel as previously mentioned, long-voyage space travel.

Despite the lack of internal consistency among time machines across the stories, however, the machines as discussed within each individual story displays a consistency with the world of that particular

narrative, and function as a particular insight as to the attitudes toward time and time travel in those worlds. In “A Sound of Thunder” and “The Skull” the machines are big; they encompass, they enclose. In both cases the men they carry are on a mission to kill, and in both cases they return to their machines (solitary rooms, disconnected from a house or other structure – an enclosure made of the familiar to which they cannot fully return) without success in that mission. One machine displays the attributes of a monster. The other exhibits the properties of a cell. In “And It Comes Out Here” the machine is more mechanical; that is, its physical qualities are more broadly described and deeply explored, and the machine is much like a passenger vehicle with respect to size, seating, and an array of buttons on the control console. It, along with the other two previously mentioned, bears some resemblance to manmade constructions found in daily life. Rooms, cells, cars – these are all synthetic, and they are all made for and to be occupied by humans.

The machines of “All You Zombies” and “The Anniversary Project” are also synthetic and made to be used on humans. Yet their most active component in both stories is called a net. A net, too, is made by humans, but with rare exception nets are not made to be used on humans. Nets are made to drag oceans and catch fish. Nets are made to trap animals. Nets are made to secure cargo. Nets are not generally made for the enclosing and transportation of human beings, and in making this the active portion of the time machines these stories actually serve to subtly reduce the humanity of those they transport. The machine of “All You Zombies” also stands out among the many machines as the only one admitted as being a potential danger to the traveler or the surroundings if poorly deployed, demonstrating that along with the shrinking of the machines comes an attendant diminution of the idea danger associated with them.

The time machines of “The Gentle Assassin” and “Mimsy Were the Borogroves” stand out against the background of these others. The machines of these stories are the most grounded in actual science, the one referencing a particle accelerator and the other considering forthrightly the manipulation of the fourth dimension. Both machines are used to serve a single and personal purpose. Granted, one is

murder, while the other is idle and even childish experimentation, but these machines bear the most plausibility of all discussed.

While the metallic fantasy that is a time machine is, as I have shown, not actually crucial to time travel fiction (“Rip Van Winkle,” “Fire Watch,” “The Price of Oranges,” and “Wikihistory” all function perfectly well without an actual machine serving as the time travel mechanism), it is nonetheless a beloved staple of the genre, and unlikely to be phased out. The idea of the time machine is the idea of a manmade thing that control an otherwise uncontrollable aspect of the universe, and that the time machine is so ubiquitous in the genre reveals a particular and encompassing dissatisfaction with the present, regardless of when The Present is for any given story. The time machine, though a fantastical tool, is one that through fictional depictions nonetheless allows humans to escape the present.

Chapter 2: Objects In Time Travel

Frequently time travel narratives focus their energy not so much upon the exploration and iterations of tropes and paradox as upon the basic nitty-gritty of the experience of the time travel journey. For example, the Traveler alters an object and changes the future, or The Traveler is caught in a looping timeline that allows for a single future until an older self completes the task of guiding a younger one. Each of these scenarios can apply to more than one of the stories selected for the thesis.

A major category of what sets these stories apart from one another is the objects brought along through time travel – not the time machines, nor the bodies of the travelers, but rather the items that travel with the travelers through time. This chapter explores items the Travelers carry with them, focusing on the phenomenology of those items, the way the objects change if at all through travel, and how the presence of the items highlights the familiar or underscores the unfamiliar in the new-to-the-objects time to which they travel.

Time travel stories, because they obviously involve travel, are sometimes treated similarly to travel narratives that occur strictly in regularly-progressing chronological time. The time travel stories most similar to travel narratives include a detail familiar to any traveler who journeys outside of the home country: currency. Currency functions in part as a form of communication, as pointed out by Harman: “But another such case is causation – here, two objects are brought together to affect each other despite their utter incommensurability, just as money translates food, air travel books, musical instruments and the labors of hitmen, mercenaries, courtesans, pie-bakers, and college professors into the same common language” (*Guerilla Metaphysics* 214). Currency carries an assumed value that outstrips the measurable or demonstrable value of paper notes or base metal coins. A piece of currency is a specific collection of signs and symbols constructed to convey the assumed value, which can be concretely understood as a general agreement of how much of a good or service can be obtained with a given static amount of money. In this way, money is a fine example of what Bachelard calls an image “created through co-operation between real and unreal, with the help of the functions of the real and the unreal” (Bachelard

59). It is both real, physical paper with ink on or metal with holes and raised impressions, and yet it is also unreal, existing as a shared understood value communicated by way of the signs and symbols printed on or carved in the physical object. In time travel literature, the mention of currency serves to underscore the foreign nature of time travel, particularly time travel into the past. The only stories in the selection that mention using currency in the destination time period – “All You Zombies,” “Fire Watch,” and “The Price of Oranges” – draw attention to the importance of period-accurate currency.

Money is important to the standard traveler as well as the time traveler because it is an economic tool, serving to provide access. Money grants access to engagement with objects, normally by way of exchange for goods and services. Access is obviously the normal function or effect of money. What is foregrounded in these stories is not merely the usual money-effect of access, however, but a variety of unusual effects made possible by money out of its chronological time. When Harman discusses Heidegger’s concept of indirect effects in terms of human experience of equipment, it is more in terms of effects experienced by functioning, relatively invisible tools:

We normally do not deal with entities as aggregates of natural physical mass, but rather as a range of functions or effects that we rely upon. Instead of encountering “pane of glass,” we tend to make use of this item indirectly in the form of “well-lit room.” We do not usually contend with sections of cement, but only with their outcome: an easily walkable surface area. As a rule, tools are not present-at-hand, but ready-to-hand. For the most part, they work their magic upon reality without entering our awareness.

(Tool-Being 18)

We normally use money without considering how it works its magic. It does so by providing access, and our experience or use of money is largely through access it represents, rather than the physical stuff itself. It is a ready-to-hand tool. The physical object, money, is obviously receding with the increasing shift from the use of paper and coin money to plastic cards with magnetic strips, and even purely digital payments. Money as a tool is increasingly invisible, the physical aspect diminishing as the access effect of

money remains. In these stories, however, money is a physical object and its use in time travel leads to increased visibility. Money, as what Harman calls a broken tool because it does not work invisibly as a ready-to-hand object, does not wait inertly for repair, however. Once broken and made visible through its use in time travel, money displays new effects – the paralysis effect, the restricted effect, and the objectifying effect – which the chapter explores as follows.

The narrator-Traveler of “All You Zombies” provides a large amount of currency to the Unmarried Mother as part of his process of kidnapping him temporarily to the chronological past. The actual amount of money he uses is unspecified; the money’s value to him as a time traveler is not measurable by the usual, economically-oriented method of cash valuation: “I reopened the case, took out a packet of hundred-dollar bills, checked that the numbers and signatures were compatible with 1963. The Temporal Bureau doesn’t care how much you spend (it costs nothing) but they don’t like unnecessary anachronisms” (Heinlein 411). Because as a time traveler he is not tied to the regular unbroken progression of chronological time, money is valueless to him. Instead he values maintaining object appropriateness to each lived period of phenomenological time. The value of money carried through time is based on how well it can be used in the new time without causing paradox.

Money carried through time does, however, retain its usual value to someone whose lived time has been chronological. Therefore, the large amount of money the Traveler gives to the Unmarried Mother becomes a useful tool, as the Traveler loses nothing in the giving of it but the Unmarried Mother gains much: “Hundred-dollar bills have a hypnotic effect on a person not used to them. He was thumbing them unbelievably as I eased him into the hall, locked him out” (411). The mere fact of the currency being large bills is enough reason for it to undergo immediate scrutiny rather than if it had been a wad of five- or one-dollar bills. Using the large bills is a deliberate tactic in line with the Traveler’s method of capturing the other character for time-travel: “Some agents con a subject into the net; I tell the truth and use that instant of utter astonishment to flip the switch” (410). Because the currency has no inherent economic value when used outside of regular chronological time, it is easy for this traveler to use a large

amount of money as a tool with similar purpose to, and effect of, the matter-of-fact revelation about the time machine: it carries shock value. It freezes the subject, because for the subject the large amount of money has economic value. Money is, as already established, access. For the subject, having that large amount of money represents sudden access to a large amount of goods or services previously out of reach for the subject. A large amount of money represents great possibility, or what Heidegger would have called Leaping-ahead. The sudden prospect of such increased access, such possibility, is what hypnotizes or freezes the subject, caught in a moment of Angst.

Money as a tool rather than a function of an overall socio-economic network is a theme that continues in “Fire Watch.” The only time money is explicitly discussed is as part of the protagonist narrator’s travel plans:

They handed me this journal, the letter from my uncle and ten pounds in pre-war money and sent me packing into the past. The ten pounds (already depleted by train and tube fares) is supposed to last me until the end of December and get me back to St. John’s Wood for pickup when the second letter calling me back to Wales to sick uncle’s bedside comes. (Willis 220)

Here, though the money does carry economic value, the value is represented only in strict utility. Never even physically described, this money lacks almost completely the idea of possibility or access available in the money in “All You Zombies.” The amount of money in “Fire Watch” is not only small, but it is dedicated to the particular function of paying the Traveler’s passage to and from his practicum site. It is just enough money to access a specific service, and the Traveler considers no other possibilities for it. In both stories, money is a tool. In “Fire Watch,” it is a tool employed to cause as little disruption and to attract as little notice as possible. In this story the money carries no particular function beyond its economic value, and even that value is restricted to a specific purpose. Because the money is so designated, it is a form of Heidegger’s concept of Leaping-in – possibilities are closed off to the Traveler by this money, rather than opened up.

At this point, a question emerges: what really makes money so important in these stories, especially when it is used in such different ways in each of them? We can find the answer in part in Graham Harman's *Tool-Being*, wherein he explores and expands the Heideggerian concept of the tool to be applicable to all things in the world. He collectively refers to all tool-things, from hammers to floorboards to screws to dirt, as equipment, part of the system that is the world as a whole, and puts forth that equipment's "first notable trait is invisibility. As such, the more efficiently a tool performs its function, the more it tends to recede from view" (21). Money in these stories is extremely visible, because it does not fade from view; it is what Harman calls a broken tool. Present in a large amount, as in "All You Zombies," its availability to a person unused to having money creates a paralytic effect. This is not the normal effect for money, and therefore it is highly visible, a broken tool. Present in a static amount designated for specific and restricted use, as in "Fire Watch," the money's effect as an economic tool is stunted, rendering it again as a broken tool. However, the effect of money as a broken tool is perhaps most acutely illustrated in "The Price of Oranges." In that story, money, which bears particular importance for those unused to having it, is methodically and blatantly attached to nearly every object the Traveler encounters in his chronological past. The Traveler considers the objects in terms of cost, a function of money.

The importance of money to someone used to living without is clear in "The Price of Oranges" as the Traveler, Harry, discusses the disparity of the value to be had from money in his chronological present versus the value of money in his chronological past:

When the cacophony had passed, Manny said, "Thank you for the orange. Fruit, it costs so much this time of year."

Harry still scowled. "Not in 1937."

"Don't start that again, Harry."

Harry said sadly, "Why won't you ever believe me? Could I afford to bring all this food if I got it at 1989 prices? Could I afford this coat? Have you seen buttons like this in

1989, on a new coat? Have you seen sandwiches wrapped in that kind of paper since we were young? Have you? Why won't you believe me?" (Kress 364)

Thanks to the receipt of a large amount of cash, the Unmarried Mother's access to objects increases. However, Harry's access increases by carrying cash from his chronological present to his chronological past, where the unit value of a given amount of money is much higher; that is, he can get more for a static amount of money. A comparable item costs much less in his chronological past. As the story's title suggests, this is demonstrated particularly by the price of oranges: 5 cents each in 1937, but 92 cents each in 1989. For both Harry and the Unmarried Mother, and therefore presumably any Traveler who brings money into the chronological past, time travel allows access normally denied by the process of inflation over chronological time.

"The Price of Oranges" is peculiar in the way it leans on the matter of money, not merely mentioning it as a tool. The story itemizes and price-marks objects according to when they are being sold, and also it often deliberately juxtaposes this cataloguing with descriptions of the people the Traveler encounters in his chronological past:

That evening, Harry went back. This time it was the afternoon of September 16. On newsstands the *New York Times* announced that President Roosevelt and John L. Lewis had talked pleasantly at the White House. Cigarettes cost thirteen cents a pack. Women wore cotton stockings and clunky, high-heeled shoes. Schrafft's best chocolates were sixty cents a pound. Small boys addressed Harry as "sir." (Kress 370)

The items and their cost are repeatedly juxtaposed with the people of the time, and both items and people are listed irrespective of where exactly they are and what they are doing: in this way the people are as objectified as the items. This cataloguing is not restricted to a mere passerby, either. In the Traveler's first encounter with Gernshon he compares the man to a magazine: "But most of all, Harry thought, he had a *glow*. A fine golden Boy Scout glow that made Harry think of old covers for the *Saturday Evening Post*. Which here cost five cents" (Kress 371). Through this catalogue of items juxtaposed with people the

qualities of those actual people are reduced to superficialities and the people are associated with the relative inexperience of items nearby. The people are objectified. Carrying cash through time has here, as with above-mentioned stories, leads to a subtle destruction of values. The deflation of item value transfers from objects to persons. They are not even dollars: in most of the accounting they are coins, collections of cents. Coins are the smallest part of modern currency, worth the least. Like a child's things, coins are small and fetching up in corners, under the cushions of the couch, let to gather in vehicular ashtrays. In aligning entire humans with items worth a few cents, human worth drops as well. This comparison of human beings to small change is part of a crucial distinction Harman makes regarding Heidegger's consideration of human *Da-sein*. Harman points out that Heidegger privileges humans as different from all other tools in the world system of equipment, even special in comparison to animals:

It must be acknowledged that Heidegger consistently mixes and even confuses two distinct senses of *Dasein* ... (1) *Dasein* is the entity whose "essence" is that it exists ... (2) In a second sense, *Dasein* is defined as the entity concerned with its own being, the entity that has an understanding of being ... Ignoring for now the thorny problem of animals, it does seem to refer to human beings alone. (*Tool-Being* 41)

Harman's argument, which I shall not retread here, simply boils down to there being no distinct reason to leave human *Da-sein* out of the consideration of tools. Humans can be considered objects, and in "The Price of Oranges" money has the effect of objectifying humans, making them things in the world just as much as cigarettes, cars, or magazines. Money instigates a levelling-off; humans are beings in the world just as other objects are beings in the world. They are tools, part of the equipment that is the world as a whole.

In a similar way, the parts of humans are also part of a whole. Organs are whole, distinct things, but they are part of the larger whole that is the body, just as (to borrow an example from Harman) a screw is a whole entire thing itself, and yet can also be part of a larger object, such as a suspension bridge. To encounter a part outside of a larger, more complex whole is to consider not only the part as a thing itself,

but the potential encompassing whole of which that thing could be part. In “The Skull,” the eponymous skull forces the Traveler into this kind of contemplation of the whole and the part. In other words he must hold it, contemplate it, and recognize it as his own before deciding to remain in his chronological past with the certainty of his impending death. Indeed, the skull is referred to as his own death’s-head (Dick 24). The skull manages to exist in two forms in the same place as well as at the same chronological time because its lifetime overlaps itself. It exhibits multiple dichotomies there and then: it is inside Conger’s head and outside of it, and it is living and it is dead.

Time travel alters the normal temporality of a skull by creating the event in which the human in whom this particular skull was grown is able to hold it in his hands, while he is cognizant of the time and method of the impending death of the person whose skull it was while still alive. In holding and contemplating the skull as *a* skull, not knowing it to be *his* skull, Conger considers it a potential deterrent. He is exemplifying Heideggerian Fallenness in the face of Being-toward-Death, in which Da-sein attempts to avoid the reality of mortality. Conger believes that to put this skull before the human of which it was part will lead that human to turn away from the historical path as Conger knows it. Conger’s presumption of the potential utility of the skull is rooted in the question of wholeness. The skull, once part of a living human body, is now wholly skull rather than skull-in-man. Its presence as an entire, whole thing portrays the inherent impermanence of human Da-sein. Harman takes the time to examine the question of wholeness versus parts in *Guerilla Metaphysics*, stating “the question here concerns the relation that any object has to its own parts. This question might refer either to the traits of a thing’s inner consistency, *or* to the actual component substances from which it is pieced together. At the same time, there is also a sense in which no substance has any parts at all” (93). Here he is discussing tools, affirming his argument from *Tool-Being* that humans are part of the equipment that is the world, and therefore considerable within the scope of this question just like any other object that is part of the world system. From one perspective, the skull has undergone a destructive change from the time travel – the part, the skull, has been removed from and lost the remainder of the whole skeleton. Yet from another perspective,

the skull is in fact a whole thing in and of itself, separate from not only the skeleton, but also from the human of which both skull and skeleton are part in Conger's living body. The skull is part of a not one, but several larger and more complex wholes, yet it is also distinct and recognizable as a whole entire thing itself.

A skull is a very common thing. Everyone has one. But the one handed to Conger is distinct enough to be used as an ultimate form of identification for the man he is sent to the chronological past to kill: "the skull must be saved and brought back – for comparison and proof," he is told, "the only means of identification you have will be the skull. There are visible characteristics of the front teeth, especially the left incisor—" (Dick 6). Unsurprisingly, Conger spends some time in solitary contemplation of the skull, wondering about the man of whom it had been part: what if anything would that man say, and would being presented with his own skull deter him from the actions and pronouncements that lead to him becoming the Founder. It is not unlike the way one might stand in contemplation of the corner of a room in an abandoned building – exposed beams and wallboard like skinless bone, glassless windows like eyeless sockets – and wonder about the people who had passed some of their lives in the room of which that corner is but part. As Bachelard suggests of corners as being "the germ of a room, or of a house," from a corner of a forgotten room one might grow an idea of an entire room and lives to fill it (136). Similarly, with this singular skull Conger tries to build the idea of the man of whom the skull was part, and the mind that filled it.

There is an undeniable intimacy in the relationship of the skull to the man. There is a sense of attachment to one's own body parts that is figurative, not just literal. Conger's awareness of the skull as a skull leads him to consider the person of whom it had been part when it was still part of a living whole. He considers instinctively that the raw presentation of human mortality could be a tool to convince the Founder to change the course of human events:

What if he could see this, his own skull, yellow and eroded? Two centuries old. Would he still speak? Would he speak, if he could see it, the grinning, aged skull? What would there be for him to say, to tell the people? What message could he bring?

What action would not be futile, when a man could look upon his own aged, yellowed skull? Better they should enjoy their temporary lives, while they still had them to enjoy.

A man who could hold his own skull in his hands would believe in few causes, few movements. Rather, he would preach the opposite— (Dick 21)

Conger holds the skull in his hands, but it is also in his living body. It in turn holds the mind which Conger *is*. The iterations of man within mind within skull within head of man echo and amplify Bachelard's poetic consideration of how honey in a hive manages to be more than the physical space it occupies: "In the realm of images, honey in a hive does not conform to the dialectics of contained and container. Metaphorical honey will not be shut up, and here, in the intimate space of the tree, honey is anything but the form of marrow" (202). The skull is perhaps the most intimate of the containers that any of the Travelers bring with them on their journeys, as its being is for a portion of its existence as an actual part of the Traveler, and because its honey – the mind – is inarguably vast in comparison to the physical container that holds it.

The skull is a particularly unique object, carried in both living and non-living states during a single trip. In that trip, it is outside of the Traveler as an empty object. Inside the Traveler, it is contained and it is also a container. The skull holds the Traveler's brain, and therefore his mind and memory as well. This leads to consideration of the role of containers in these stories, beginning with Gaston Bachelard's poetic assertion regarding caskets that "the casket contains the things that are unforgettable, unforgettable for us, but also unforgettable to those to whom we are going to give our treasures. Here the past, the present and the future are condensed. Thus the casket is memory of what is immemorial" (84). Conger's skull proves to be, as a casket, a site of non-chronological temporality. The skull, a part of

Conger's body that lasts beyond his own human lifetime, is a part of his future. It is simultaneously part of his past, both within his lifetime as a part of his body that grew with him from birth, and also as skull-as-entity that existed for many years before he was born. Concurrently the skull is in his head as skull-as-bodypart, serving as the container that holds his brain and therefore his mind. His skull is literally the casket of his memory, in which his past, present, and future coexist.

In contrast to the skull-container, which travels in two forms at once with its Traveler, "Mimsy Were the Borogroves" depicts a container that travels without the presence of a Traveler at all. In the story, the container is a Box attached to the time machine. There are two iterations of this Box, each of which is sent with a time machine to different times, and neither returns. These Boxes are distinct among the Artifacts for being sent as an experiment in and of itself, rather than the trip having a further goal in the destination time: "Unthahorsten couldn't tell, on the machine's return, where and when it had been. Whereas a solid in the Box would automatically be subject to the entropy and cosmic ray bombardment of the other era, and Unthahorsten could measure the changes, both qualitative and quantitative, when the machine returned" (Padgett 10). The Box is constructed to travel between past and future and withstand the deleterious effects of time travel that have already been noted in this chapter with regard to other Artifacts. Unthahorsten expects to see those effects in the Box's contents. Those contents, for Unthahorsten, are the things of memory in that they will retain the effects of their destination era. Thus, the Box as casket however is expected to be immune to the passage of time and free from the attachments of memory.

The story focuses largely on the contents of the Box that Scott Paradine discovers. First, however, he must contend with the problem of the Box itself. Being a closed and initially inaccessible container makes the Box all the more enticing to an already curious young mind, as "the lock doesn't exist that could resist absolute violence, and all locks are an invitation to thieves. A lock is a psychological threshold" (Bachelard 81). This locked box, this natural challenge, at first appears as if it might be too difficult for the young man to handle, however. Somehow the Box is more stable than the machine that

moves it. The Box is described sparingly, a “helical nonhelix” until it is jarred out of space-time torsion (Padgett 12). At this point, a question emerges: how does this description of this Box compare to the idea of a box? If instructed to picture a box, just about anybody would imagine a hollow three-dimensional object made of three connected pairs of parallel sides, one of which opens by lifting off or on a hinge. A box is all edges and corners, lines and planes and sharp angles – the geometric essence of masculinity, according to Bachelard’s gendering assessment of lines as masculine and curves as feminine (146). A helix, in contrast to a box, is a constantly curving shape – nearly a spiral. That the Box, ostensibly masculine at rest, is altered to a feminine-oriented structure while in transit speaks to the ability of time travel to alter the fundamental essence of an object while in transit as observed from outside said journey. In the face of this fundamental alteration, it takes a boy with a rock to jar the sophisticated machinery back into its proper shape: “He hammered it, in fact, from its contact point with the fourth dimension, releasing the space-time torsion it had been maintaining. There was a brittle snap. The box jarred slightly, and lay motionless, no longer only partially in existence. Scott opened it easily now” (Padgett 12). Restored to its original shape in this new time and location, the Box and its unforgettable contents become immediately accessible. It is left to Scott, through the remainder of the story, to slowly work out (with his sister’s help) the meaning of what they pull out; the contents are someone else’s memories, not their own.

The contents of the Box have less bearing on the Box than the contents of the skull do to that container. A skull’s contents are predictable: it contains a brain for the lifetime of the living being and perhaps a short while thereafter, and then contains nothing. A box, let alone the Box, is such a non-descript thing that its contents could be nearly anything. It could contain a kitten, some books, plumbing parts, files, or as is actually the case a bunch of toys. Whereas the shape and purpose of many containers largely dictate its contents (the keg in “Rip Van Winkle,” for example, could hardly be expected to contain anything other than liquor), the shape of the Box dictates nothing; it imposes no strictures nor expectations upon what it contains except perhaps restrictions of size, and therefore could contain

anything. In other words, a container does not exist entirely independently of its contents. The exterior – the container – and the interior – the contents – coexist, and the mind builds connections between them while they coexist as container and contents; Bachelard expresses this in terms of space, rather than of objects, stating, “The two kinds of space, intimate space and exterior space, keep encouraging each other, as it were, in their growth” (201). The skull, once emptied of the brain it grew to house, retains the interior shape of that organ. A new brain cannot be grown there, but the memory of the brain remains; the space can be measured. The Box, however, gains definition from its contents: once filled with toys, becomes in a way a toybox. It even gets opened by a child. Once opened and emptied, however, the secrets of the Box are entirely discharged. While an empty skull invites contemplation of the human of whom it was part, and the mind in the brain it housed, the empty Box invites no such contemplation. It is disregarded, hiding nothing, holding no objects and no secrets.

Another story in the selection has a container that defies its contents (or contents that flout their container). In “The Gentle Assassin,” Dr Jamieson, the story’s Traveler and the eponymous assassin, carries a suitcase. A suitcase can carry a variety of things, but, as a more specific kind of container than a box, the expectations of its contents are much narrower. Particularly in the hands of someone traveling during a holiday event, the expectation of its contents is items for an overnight trip: a change of clothes, pajamas, a toothbrush, and other assorted mundanities of personal hygiene. However, this is not quite a usual suitcase for a (non-time) traveler. It is not made of lightweight, durable canvas, nor is it tough, long-lasting leather. This suitcase is “heavy gun-metal” (Ballard 279). It has “intricate metal clasps to make sure the lid held securely” (280). Rather than luggage for an overnight trip the suitcase is like a briefcase for the protection of important business documents or the transportation of expensive gems. Whatever is inside such a case is important and valuable; aside from the durability of the case itself, it also a set of actual locks on it: “Dr Jamieson went over to the bed and pulled out his key-chain. Both locks on the case were combination devices. He switched the key left and right a set number of times, pressed home and lifted the lid” (282). If a lock is an invitation to thieves, twice as many locks may be all the moreso. If

contents are worth locking up, than curiosity about the contents is piqued, and so something worth twice as many locks must be twice as interesting to the curious mind: “Lying inside the case, on the lower half of the divided velvet mould, were the dismantled members of a powerful sporting rifle, and a magazine of six shells” (282). The contents, therefore, are actually hinted at by the exterior of the container – not only it is gun-metal, but it actually contains a gun. It is the sort of suitcase that looks as if it might be used to transport valuable gems, and the contents lay upon a velvet mould as such gems would. The contents of the case do not dictate the shape of the case, and yet this case hints at the contents as being of great value to the Traveler.

This story has a second, smaller container in play as well: an envelope. After the first container has been opened and emptied, the second container is revealed: “From his pocket he withdrew a small plastic envelope; he held it away from his face and broke the seal. There was a hiss of greenish gas and he drew out a large newspaper cutting, yellowed with age, folded to reveal a man’s portrait” (286). Already this container is unusual, its description deviating from the expectation of an envelope. An envelope is relatively fragile, easily destructible, usually made out of paper. It is usually a container meant to carry some sort of correspondence or communication – a personal letter, a business invoice, or even a check or money. This envelope is a sturdier container, however, made of plastic rather than paper. The envelope does contain a communication of a sort, but not one sent between two entities. The information is sent from Dr Jamieson to Dr Jamieson, preserved in his possession through the course of his natural lifetime and traveling with him to his chronological past. The contents of the envelope, known to him, are secret to the reader.

The envelope container and the suitcase container are different in size, shape, and physical makeup – pocket-size versus hand-carried, slender versus thick, plastic versus metal. Both containers, however, are sealed, protecting their contents. Dr Jamieson keeps them both close and secured, preventing them from becoming overt and, therefore, enticing to thieves. Each container holds something also secondary to protect the contents as well. The suitcase has the velvet mould to hold the gun pieces, while

the envelope holds greenish gas. The gas is likely a chemical preservative to keep the paper cutting from crumbling, yet the fact that it is green gives it a sense of being poisonous, not unlike the insidiousness of vengeance. The main content is the newspaper cutting, which is no less important to the traveler than the gun from the gunmetal case. The contents of both containers are intended to work in tandem, rather than volatile chemicals kept separate until the time and place of use. The newspaper cutting from the envelope features an identifying photograph of the man he intends to kill with the gun from the metal suitcase. The photograph needs no massive container, but it and its container are kept carefully close to the assassin as he prepares to perform his task. When he does, the action of the rifle “jolted Dr Jamieson off his feet, the impact tearing at his shoulder, the rifle jangling up into the venetian blind” (Ballard 287). It is nearly comedic in spite of its violence, and while the gun does kill the Traveler’s target, it also hurts Jamieson and damages the blind as well. Extricated from its case and put to use, there is nothing precious nor delicate about the rifle. It is an expertly used tool, yet ends up affirming the Traveler’s chronological past rather than changing it.

It is, at least, used. Guns are a major object (and a group of objects) in Bradbury’s “A Sound of Thunder.” Initially, all the guns are easily collapsed into a group, described as a “blue metal guns across their knees” (Bradbury 77). The things are what they are, and they require nothing to encourage nor to disguise their nature. They share in common what Harman refers to as “awaiting” (*Tool-Being* 58). Before and during the actual trip to the past the rifles all bear the characteristic of potential for violence. The awaiting effect of a gun is to contain and direct an explosive force that thrusts a projectile forth. The gun *fires* the bullet, a term that references the burning nature of the explosive event. When Harman discusses awaiting, it is in terms of a different sort of tool:

In the first place, Dasein finds the shovel already available, makes use of or *retains* this object as something “alongside which” it exists. Second, the shovel-object is not encountered as a neutral datum divorced from the situation in which it is inscribed. The

shovel used in slave labor and that of the amateur gardener's pleasure-dig are vastly different objects for Dasein, and display different sorts of *awaiting*. (*Tool-Being* 58)

The men of the safari are the human Da-sein who retain the rifles; the rifles exist alongside them. The rifles, too, are not neutral. These rifles are ready-at-hand, and are not awaiting to entertain rodeo crowds with displays of marksmanship, nor are they chained to peeling plywood counters for children to shoot tin cans in attempts to win stuffed carnival prizes. These rifles are awaiting with the violence-effect specific to hunting. Initially, Eckles's gun is no different than the others in this respect.

What differentiates Eckles's rifle from the others is seen only when the time comes for the rifles to employ their effect. All the other rifles are made use of. The men who carry them point them at, and only at, the dinosaur they have come to slay. Those guns "blaze fire" and end up "smoking." These are violent, traditionally masculinized states appropriate to an object that in psychological interpretation is easily likened to a phallus (Bradbury 82, 83). They are portrayed collectively throughout the story, collapsed into the grouping of the rifles or the guns. Eckles's rifle is differentiated once they step out into the chronological past, however. He playfully aims it at the wrong creatures, and when the right one appears, "the rifle in his hand seemed a capgun" (80, 81). He treats it childishly, and it takes on a toylike aspect in the face of actual danger. It is appropriate, then, that the final description of Eckles's childish, toylike rifle is "limp" (82). This weapon, unlike the one carried to the chronological past in "The Gentle Assassin," fails its purpose utterly. While any tool has an effect, this rifle is not employed as gun by the man who retains it. It effects no change on the chronological past, despite being a crucial tool in the Traveler's narrative. Unlike the other guns, this rifle has no effect on the dinosaur and remains in its state of awaiting. In the hands of the human who fails to engage its rifle effect, the rifle seems like a broken tool. In fact, it is the human who is the broken tool because he fails to deploy his safari-hunter effect. The rifle retains its state of awaiting, its potential violence-effect.

In contrast to the objects that draw the attention with their hidden secrets or their obvious potential for violence, some objects are small things, yet whole in themselves in a way parts are not. They

are the sort of artifacts that fail to be a focal point of a time travel narrative, even as they are included, sometimes in multiple journeys. They are frequently mundane, sometimes to the point of seeming disposable or forgettable, and “who is prepared to go beyond the spider, the lady-bug and the mouse to a point of identification with things forgotten in a corner” (Bachelard 142)? Hence, for someone thus prepared, even small things have bearing on their context precisely because they were included.

Perhaps the most notable among the ostensibly forgettable artifacts the repeatedly-mentioned eponymous oranges of “The Price of Oranges.” They are so mundane that they do not even bear specific description. Presumably therefore they are orange, round, with a pocked peel and bitter white rind protecting inner sections of juice-laden flesh. Oranges, despite the reputation of the oil in the peel as a natural preservative, are not actually a particularly long-lived object. The spherical fruit flowers in any given spring and will have withered and begun to rot by the following winter. Yet in “The Price of Oranges,” men in the winter of their lives regularly consume oranges grown and purchased in (and at the prices of) the springtime of their youth. These oranges do not suffer from their jump through chronological time. Time travel adjusts their lifespan and ensures they are as fresh and juicy when consumed in 1989 as when they are purchased in 1937. No difference but for price exists between the oranges of either time, despite the effect of nostalgia to make things from a past time seem somehow better. Regardless of a value judgement of their quality, the natural lifetime of oranges would never have rendered them in the same state by the 1989 point of chronological time.

The Traveler in “...And It Comes Out Here” is attached to a loop in the progression of his lifetime. This looping progression revolves around the retrieval of an atomic generator from the chronological future. It is described as a box (and as we have already discussed, a box can contain just about anything) with plugs, controls, and a hole into which fuel is dropped. When the Traveler first views the box, a guard points out “it finally wore out one of the cathogrids and we had to replace that, but otherwise it’s exactly as the great inventor made it” (Del Rey 69). In the chronological past, that very cathogrid vanishes. The Traveler, of course, is the aforementioned great inventor, who replaces the

missing piece with “some #12 house wire ... exactly like the set on the other side” and realizes “the luggage space wasn’t insulated from time effects by a field, so the motor has moved backward in time, somehow, and is back to its original youth – minus the wires the guard mentioned – which probably wore out because of the makeshift job [the inventor has] just done” (Del Rey 73-74). That replaced piece of wire functions as a crucial part of the generator as a whole. Without it, the generator is a broken tool, literally awaiting repair. The piece of wire is not only a tool that repairs the generator tool, however. It also provides the Traveler confirmation of an objects’ physical lifetime being tied to the progression of chronological time but for the protective field of the time machine. Without the protective field, the decay of the wire reveals, the inventor would likely have aged into the future and youthened into the past. The effect of time on unprotected objects is even clearer here than in the effect on the machine attached to Unthahorsten’s Box. The wire is common stuff, and yet without it the whole machine is useless. The generator without the wire is like a room with a corner removed; incomplete and unable to function.

Money, containers and contents, guns and oranges – these are whole items. Some of them may have connotations that shift under certain circumstances (Box as toybox, for example) but nonetheless they are distinctly entire. They are complete. Some of the carried objects, however, are actually parts of a whole, like Conger’s skull – incomplete pieces that speak to the absent whole. Bachelard identifies the power of small or partial things primarily in his discussion of corners, “every corner in a house, every angle in a room, every inch of secluded space in which we like to hide, or withdraw into ourselves, is a symbol of solitude for the imagination; that is to say, it is the germ of a room, or of a house” (136). That is to say, from every small part a greater, completer whole can be extrapolated. This is supported by the relation of the wire to the generator, the skull to the Traveler, and clearly the parts of the gun that become the assassin’s rifle – each piece is part of something else. Each of these are, too, part of the overarching whole that is equipment, in Harman’s words, or quite simply the world.

The objects carried by the Travelers each have an impact in their new chronological time, though that impact is frequently localized and noticeable only to the Travelers and not the inhabitants of the

destination time. In “All You Zombies,” “Fire Watch,” and “The Price of Oranges,” the carefully non-anachronistic money functions to give the Traveler some form of access – to services, goods, or even people. Except for the Traveler in “All You Zombies,” this access is largely rooted in economic norms.

Objects that are part of some immediate whole serve to highlight the lack of that whole, as with the generator with the missing wire in “...And It Comes Out Here,” or else to guide the Traveler to contemplation of the whole, as in “The Skull,” where the whole is revealed to be at once absent and present. The very nature of a partial thing is that it shares a constant relationship with the whole, even if that whole is absent from the part’s present. A partial thing invites the imagining of what is missing. Similarly, many artifacts exist in a state of the constant dichotomy of container and contained, and each informs and alters the other – the otherwise nondescript Box becomes a sort of toybox in “Mimsy Were the Borogroves” while the metal case in “The Gentle Assassin” imbues the gun inside it with a sense of preciousness and the plastic envelope preserves the poisonous sense of revenge latent in the saved newspaper clipping. None of the artifacts are significantly alien to their destination time; that is, none of them present alienness to people inhabiting the time to which the Traveler travels. However, Eckles’s rifle, treated like a toy rather than a weapon, itself becomes an unfamiliar and powerless thing. It is as useless in the chronological past as the Traveler who carries it.

While each object presses upon the events and people of the time travel short story in which the object appears, the effect of each object does not necessarily remain consistent through the time travel event. Some of the objects retain the same effect they would enact in their usual chronology – the ring in “All You Zombies” is still simply a ring, for instance. The effect of many objects is altered by movement through time, however, as with the skull in *The Skull*, which is able to press upon people and events in a way that would have been completely unavailable to it in the progression of chronological time. Any object carried through time travel, ultimately, is a new tool presented to a system that functioned in total without it prior to the time travel event. Therefore, all objects, whether they retain their normative effect

or display a new effect, must find a place in that system, even if the object's place is such that it presses no effect on that system at all.

Chapter 3: The Body

In the posthumanist scope of object-oriented ontology, the shift of philosophical inquiry has moved from the hierarchical view of the Enlightenment that places the human above all to a flat or levelled off world structure in which all things are relational and bear a multiplicity of effects. The rejection of human supremacy might lead to a pendulum-swing in the opposite direction, placing other objects or creatures of the world in a place of primacy instead. However, this would not be a flat ontology. Instead, as Ian Bogost points out referencing Levi Bryant, “a post humanist ontology is one in which ‘humans are no longer monarchs of being, but are instead among beings, entangled in beings, and implicated in other beings’” (16-17). Thus, it is still natural for humans to find the investigation of human being intriguing. As a result, the focus of this chapter is the bodies involved in time travel, focusing upon the bodies of the Travelers in comparison and contrast to the bodies of those (both recognizably human and undeniably inhuman) in the times to or through which they travel.

The body is the focalizing interest of this chapter because Da-sein depends upon the existence of the body; consciousness resides inside bodies. An individual consciousness does not move among bodies, nor from bodies to machines, and while a body can exist as an object without an inhabiting consciousness, the reverse is simply not true. Graham Harman discusses the dependence of the consciousness on the body in *Guerilla Metaphysics*: “Rooted in the world, we depend on a surplus of reality that comes from beyond the sphere of intelligible meaning: a surplus that Levinas terms alimentation or nourishment. The lucid and dignified human consciousness is replaced by a needy or lascivious body immersed in rewards, disasters, and feasts” (36). In other words, the body is what roots someone in the world, and it is through the body that the consciousness is able to affect and be affected. The body must be fed, provided nourishment in the form of items that are broken down into component parts that satisfy physical needs. Similarly, the consciousness must be fed, and it is provided a steady stream of information through sensory stimuli -- sound, smells, tastes, sensations, and sights, all of which the mind both breaks down into component parts the better to understand the surrounding world and yet also combines together as

part of a constant search for context and meaning. Without this input from the physical world, the mind has nothing to process as part of the search, and therefore consciousness requires a physical form to be in, in order to be in the world. Science fiction loves to explore the imbalanced interconnection of the body and the mind, frequently speculating playfully by inventing ways to enhance or to upset that balance. This imbalanced body/mind connection is very relevant to the Heideggerian concept of Being-toward-death, in that the death of the body inevitably occurs, at which point Da-sein's consciousness as we understand it is lost. The progression of Da-sein's movement toward the unknown moment of death is normally tied to the unbroken linear progression of time. Time travel, therefore, disrupts the natural progression of Being-toward-Death in several different ways. In "Rip Van Winkle," "The Skull," and "The Gentle Assassin," the bodies of the Travelers encounter themselves from a different period of their own lifetime. In "A Sound of Thunder" and "The Anniversary Project," the Traveler confronts other bodies alien to his experience or even expectation. "Wikihistory" goes gives rise to the question the impact of absent bodies. These stories also allow for consideration of the body as a site of a multiplicity of dialectics: old and young, male and female, innocent and evil, violent and peaceful. Time travel offers a unique method of comparison and contrast for these dialectics, as well as the peculiar dialectic of presence and absence.

"Rip Van Winkle" is the earliest-written story in the selection. It falls into the self-encounter category of these stories and addresses the old/young dialectic and thus, ultimately, death. The story addresses this dialectic through the unique conceit of the Traveler undergoing time-travel without being aware of the travel as it occurs. Van Winkle's own body offers the first hint that he has undergone something out of the ordinary: "As he rose to walk, he found himself stiff in the joints, and wanting in his usual activity" (Irving 16). These sensations in Van Winkle's body are the first indicators of the passage of time because they are unexpected in the youthful body that precedes the time travel event. Prior to the event, Van Winkle is a comparatively young man – old enough to be a father of two, his body is regularly put to use assisting his neighbors or traveling into the nearby mountains on long hunting expeditions. This is his "usual activity" which is found wanting: his body is difficult to move as expected after the long

sleep. The body is stiff in the joints, which is an indicator of aging far beyond that through which Van Winkle has consciously lived. An additional indicator of his body's unusual aging is brought to his attention by the people he encounters on the way back to his village after the time travel event: "They all stared at him with equal marks of surprise, and whenever they cast their eyes upon him, invariably stroked their chins. The constant recurrence of this gesture induced Rip, involuntarily, to do the same, when, to his astonishment, he found his beard had grown a foot long!" (17). Van Winkle's beard should not have grown a foot in the single night of sleep he thinks he had. Its length is a physical – a spatial – indicator of the time through which his body aged in his time travel. The beard is surprising to Van Winkle, and it is also surprising to the people he encounters. His body is strange to them because they do not know his face, his beard, the entirety of his person. The changes to his body are both painful and disconcerting to him - his own body is made unfamiliar to him.

The consciousness does not exist independently of the body, and only ever in one body, and, therefore, the consciousness of a being develops a sense of identity, of self-knowledge, that includes the body. The sudden unfamiliarity of one's own body, then, leads to an identity crisis. A sudden change from the known physical state to an unfamiliar one causes the othering of the self or, as Harman would put it, it causes a breakdown between consciousness and body that turns the body into a broken tool. He writes, "Through our bodies and their extension in the form of tools, we are folded into the world in almost lascivious fashion" (*Guerilla Metaphysics* 48). While Van Winkle's body lives through the time that aged it, his consciousness does not. His consciousness is young while his body is old; time travel forces him to confront the dialectic of age and youth in himself in such a way that regular conscious temporal aging generally allows only by way of memory and nostalgia. It forces the issue of a fundamental disconnect that is inaccessible except to the rare group of the human population that are long-term coma victims who awake without mental damage. Van Winkle must confront the ties of his identity to his body and change them. As his body is a tool of his consciousness, broken by time travel, he

must repair the disconnect between body and consciousness in order to be, lasciviously and authentically, in the world.

While Van Winkle's time travel is an unplanned and surprising experience to that Traveler, it still begins and ends within the natural confines of his expected lifespan. In "The Skull," in contrast, Conger travels a comparatively unnatural 200 years in order to hunt the Founder. Those two centuries are sufficient time to expose the eponymous bodypart and to present to Conger, the human body from which it came, the inevitability of his own mortality, thereby prompting his contemplation of Being-toward-Death. The Part/Whole dialectic particular to Conger's skull, skeleton, and body have been sufficiently explored in the preceding chapter of the thesis and will not be rehashed here. Instead I continue to examine the dialectic of familiarity/unfamiliarity between Travelers' bodies.

In "The Skull," the general clothing style and personal hygiene of the time in which the Traveler lives prior to the time travel event are not relayed to the reader. Yet as we see in "Rip Van Winkle, clothing and physical presentation serve as part of one's interaction with the world. Changes to clothing or grooming can be indicative of change in identity, or can serve to make someone either fit in or stand out according to alignment with prevailing local norms. Conger is mentioned initially as wearing a "drab prison uniform" while the bodies around him also wear uniforms indicative of power and rank. This at least makes it clear that in his originating time he lives in an authoritarian system and, having run afoul of that authority, he is subject to its penal system. Conger's body is an imprisoned body; while the method and duration of that imprisonment is left unclear, it nonetheless means his body is no longer free to be inhabited and used purely as he directs. That his body is made to travel through time is a function of its imprisonment. The movement of his body through time and space is subject to external authority, directing the preparation of the Traveler's body for its trip through time with deliberate changes to both the body and the clothing that adorns it: "He stood before the mirror over the shelf, examining his features. He had trimmed his beard – they had not got him to cut it off – and his hair was neat. He was dressed in the clothing of the middle-twentieth century, the odd collar and coat, the shoes of animal

hide” (Dick 7). The control of outside authority over his body is not total, but this preparation is a continuation of the function of authority on his person. The part that he does refuse to change, his beard, serves as an indicator of distance through time not entirely unlike the beard in “Rip Van Winkle.” In both stories the Traveler’s beard sets him apart from the people he encounters in his destination time.

Retention of his beard functions to all allow the Traveler to retain a sense of self, of familiarity in an unfamiliar time, and also of power in a situation in which he is otherwise granted little personal agency. Rip Van Winkle deals with the question of his own entire identity, even if only for the span of an hour. The change wrought in his body by the unconscious passage of time forces him to consider the idea of self, of who he is and how his identity is tied to his body. Conger also considers his self. His skull and the mortality it represents as well as his historical knowledge of The Founder all alter his perception of who and what he is.

“All You Zombies” carries this theme of confrontation of self and of identity to a particular extreme. As discussed in the Introduction to the thesis, the Traveler in this story begins life as a baby girl and grows to an adult woman, at which point she gets pregnant. The birth leads to the destruction of her female organs, but the hospital helps her transition to fully use the male organs also present in the same body:

‘Take it easy. When I opened you, I found a mess. I sent for the Chief of Surgery while I got the baby out, then we held a consultation with you on the table – and worked for hours to salvage what we could. You had two full sets of organs, both immature, but with the female set well enough developed for you to have a baby. They could never be any use to you again, so we took them out and rearranged things so that you can develop properly as a man.’ He put a hand on me. ‘Don’t worry. You’re young, your bones will readjust, we’ll watch your glandular balance – and make a fine young man out of you.’
(Heinlein 407)

Here, the doctor seats maleness and femaleness purely in the body. Regardless of how the patient lived previously, the doctor clearly considers the present functioning reproductive organs to be the dominant determining factor of the patient's gender. The Traveler supports this close tie of biological sex and gender, the Unmarried Mother telling the Bartender, "In four months I started to grow a beard; before I was out I was shaving regularly ... and no longer doubted that I was male." He grinned wryly. "I was staring down nurses' necklines" (408). As in "Rip Van Winkle," the beard is significant in terms of the issues of masculinity, of aging, and of belonging versus otherness. This is in keeping with the way the body is a crucial part of identity, and fundamental physical change leads to fundamental change in identity. In this exchange, the close association of gender with physical sex presumes a strong binary of human heteronormativity, discounting the possibilities of homosexuality, bisexuality, or gender queerness in this physical transition. It gives primacy to the state of the body over the state of the mind in determining identity in the (here presumed) binary of the male/female dialectic.

The direct connection of gender identity to physical sex characteristics ties in to the question of identity shift over time as discussed in the stories thus far. In each, a time travel event forces the Traveler to confront the changes wrought in his or her body by the passage of time. The Traveler's body is so different that the Traveler suffers a crisis concerning his concept of self. This crisis of self is directly relevant to the impact of mind and body upon one another because it reveals an individual sense of being, or as Nagel states, "the fact that an organism has conscious experience at all means, basically, that there is something it is like to be that organism" (436). By coming into direct contact with an older or younger version of himself, the Traveler observes the differences between these two selves and develops a different understanding of himself, of who and what he is as a being: Rip Van Winkle comes to accept his advanced age and the comparatively relaxed life that comes with it; Conger realizes his place in the religious legend of The Founder and chooses to fulfill that role; the Unmarried Mother recognizes himself as the person who got him pregnant when he was Adult Jane, forgives, and agrees to work for the Time Agency. Thus, in confronting temporally different versions of their selves, each Traveler manages to

work through some of the angst of Da-Sein and reach a new, more authentic understanding of himself and a more authentic mode of living.

In the same vein, the human body in the purest sense is a biological organism: skin, bones, organs, blood, fingernails, hair, mucus membranes, and so forth. The consciousness within the body presents, through the body, a variety of non-physical characteristics to the world. Not only does it present gender to some degree, it also presents certain other social norms or divergence therefrom – and frequently both of these are presented through the clothing the consciousness chooses to adorn the physical body. Clothing is not a biological part of the body, like hair, but instead it is applied to the body, draped on the body, wrapped around the body. Its shape is informed by that of the body in height, width, and limbs, and its construction is informed by the body's needs – thick clothing to protect the body in cold climates or dangerous surroundings, thinner and lighter clothing in warmer, less fraught spaces. Clothing also functions, as the beard does, to indicate passage of time. Perhaps even more intricately than hairstyle, clothing not only responds to surroundings, but also communicates certain nonverbal messages about the consciousness inside the body it adorns. These messages are many, varied, sometimes blatant and sometimes subtle, including information about a person's personal fashion taste, political inclinations, social status, and so on.

Time travel separates the body and its adornments from the slow subtle shifts they undergo over time. This is perhaps most pointedly visible in "The Gentle Assassin." The Traveler in this story, Dr Jamieson, is described in quick juxtaposition with someone who naturally inhabits the destination time in his own chronological past to which he has traveled:

In his middle sixties, he was a small neat figure with greying hair and alert sensitive eyes. His forehead was broad, with a marked slope, which made his somewhat professorial manner appear more youthful. This was helped by the rakish cut of his grey silk suit, its ultra-narrow lapels fastened by a single embroidered button, heavy braided seams on the sleeves and trousers. As someone emerged from the first-aid marquee at the far end of the

stand and walked towards him Dr Jamieson sensed the discrepancy between their attire – the man was wearing a baggy blue suit with huge flapping lapels – and frowned to himself in annoyance. (Ballard 279)

The impression his clothing is meant to impart is easy to see in the description of Dr Jamieson: rakish, ultra-narrow, heavy. The sense granted by this collection of adjectives is one of both gravity and daring, of sharp deliberation. The description of the anonymous man's clothing – baggy, huge, flapping – indicates an untethered wildness and a lack of purpose; it is expansive and free. The contrast between them is so stark as to displease Dr. Jamieson. It marks a definite gap in his otherwise careful and seemingly comprehensive planning. Rather than allowing Jamieson to blend into the time to which he has traveled, his clothing makes him stand out, causing him to be noticeable on a day in which his interests would be best served by simply being a dismissible part of the fabric of city life.

In addition to the significance of the difference between Dr Jamieson's clothing and that of the passerby is the difference between Jamieson's clothing and that of his younger self native to this time. Younger Jamieson, as with the elder, is described initially by his age, and thereafter in terms of what he is wearing. He is "about twenty-eight, dressed in the baggy impressed clothes Dr Jamieson had found everyone wearing in London, an old tie casually hand-knotted around a soft collar. Two fountain pens protruded from his breast pocket, a concert programme from another, and he had the pleasantly informal appearance of a young university lecturer" (283). Taken in comparison to the descriptions of both Elder Jamieson and of the anonymous passerby, there are several similarities and dissimilarities among them. While his younger self is ostensibly a former version of him, there is very little to be found in common in the adornment or presentation of self of the Elder and Younger Jamieson, because their clothing and physical attitudes convey different messages to the world. Younger Jamieson's clothing has far more in common with that of the other people of his time – it is baggy, soft, comfortable, casual. The comparative clothing style of Elder and Younger Jamieson marks starkly the passage of time from the 28-year-old to the 60-year-old, and the changes in style of clothing found in those eras several decades apart, but it also

indicates the changes to the consciousness in the Jamieson body. Younger Jamieson, like his clothing, is casual, carefree, whereas Older Jamieson is hard-lined, sharp, close-cut and focused.

Not only does clothing serve as an external expression of the development of the consciousness within the Jamieson body, but it grants a lens through which to consider the development of Jamieson's Da-sein in terms of Being-toward-death. The event at the climax of the story, in which Young Jamieson's fiancée is blown up, is the source of an intense, life-shaping angst that turns Elder Jamieson into that focused, driven person in the narrow-lapelled and heavily-braided suit, the person who develops a method to travel into the past to attempt to change what happened. The entire focus of his life, from twenty-eight to mid-sixties, is the event which he travels back to which Jamieson to confront the spectre of mortality with which Da-sein must wrestle, but rather than accepting it he struggles with it. He is wrapped up in angst in the Heideggerian sense – everything else in his life is pushed back, made secondary to this mortal event over which he has no control – and falls prey to fallenness, attempting through time-travel to prevent the very event that forces him to consider the reality of death. Only at the very end of the story does Jamieson accept that his fiancée's death is outside of his control. Unable to prevent her death, in attempting to do so he actually helps cause it. He quickly accepts not only the reality of his own death, but deliberately runs, literally and figuratively, toward it. Though this could seem an act of despair, it is nonetheless authentic acceptance of the end of life rather than an attempt to avoid it as he had done for more than half his life. Thus, he comes to this acceptance of mortality through knowledge to which he would have had no access without time travel.

“The Gentle Assassin” is not the only story in the selection to involve time travel undertaken with a specific purpose of violence. “A Sound of Thunder” centers around a safari of hunters who intend to travel to the past in order to shoot the creatures who live there. The story treats the body of the Traveler in a particularly interesting way – his body parts are often described as distinct from his body as a whole. This begins before he even undergoes the trip: “Warm phlegm gathered in Eckels' throat; he swallowed and pushed it down. The muscles around his mouth formed a smile as he put his hand slowly out upon the

air, and in that hand waved a check for ten thousand dollars to the man behind the desk” (Bradbury 75). He does not simply smile and wave a check. Instead his muscles form the smile, establishing them as a somehow autonomous part of his body, and so the smile is in a sense disembodied. It is created by a part of his body, but not sited invisibly in his body. The muscles and the smile are forced into visibility, creating a sense of unnaturalness in the expression. Divorcing body parts from body continues inside the machine itself: “Eckels swayed on the padded seat, his face pale, his jaw stiff. He felt the trembling in his arms and he looked down and found his hands tight on the new rifle” (77). Again, the parts of the body do not simply act in natural concert with it. They act in their own way, and the consciousness within the body as a whole is forced to notice the action of its parts. According to Harman’s explanation of the traits of equipment, as mentioned in the last chapter, “the first notable trait is invisibility. As a rule, the more efficiently the tool performs its function, the more it tends to recede from view. . . . The next major feature of equipment is its totality. The tool is never found in isolation, but belongs to a system” (21-22). These parts of this body fail to work as invisible members of the totality of the system of Eckels’s body. They function increasingly visibly, and increasingly apart from that totality.

This failure to function invisibly continues once in the chronological past, specifically once confronted with the body of the animal the Traveler has traveled to the past in order to hunt. Instructed to return to the time machine, his body does not function: “Eckels seemed to be numb. He looked at his feet as if trying to make them move. He gave a grunt of helplessness” (Bradbury 82). The body, here, is a tool increasingly breaking down. It does not move, it does not communicate. Confronted with the reality of a beast powerful beyond his imagining thereof, Eckles is gripped by an existential self-doubt which damages the ability of his consciousness to control his body. Already the body is a collection of parts rather than an invisibly functioning tool, but the totality of the crisis in his consciousness is such that the body as well as the mind, and the connection between them, is breaking down. The breakdown of normal bodily working comes to a height once the Traveler returns to the future, where “there was a feel. His flesh twitched. His hands twitched. He stood drinking the oddness with the pores of his body.

Somewhere, someone must have been screaming one of those whistles that only a dog can hear. His body screamed silence in return” (85). Following the trip through time and the encounter with the creature that lives in what is his ancient chronological past, Eckles’s body falls into a state of acute sensory focus. It feels, it senses, it hears. It does not move, however. It does not respond.

Eckles, like Jamieson and Van Winkle, comes to a form of personal crisis by way of his time travel event. Whereas for Van Winkle the crisis is one of identity, and for Jamieson a crisis of focus and authenticity of living, Eckles’s crisis is a kind of self-doubt, and a breakdown of intracommunication between consciousness and body. Faced with the overwhelming strength and power of the dinosaur’s alien, unfamiliar form, he must reevaluate himself and his ability as a human who hunts, and finds himself wanting. His angst manifests distinctly in his body, rendering sections of his physical form – particularly his limbs – alien to himself. The awful form of the dinosaur awakens wonder in Eckles, in the Bogostian sense of wonder: “Wonder has two senses. For one, it can suggest awe or marvel, the kind one might experience in worship or astonishment. But, for another, it can mean puzzlement or logical perplexity” (121). Eckles’s anxiety is so encompassing as to force disconnect between his physical body and the consciousness that, now in crisis, is no longer able to direct its tool, the body it inhabits. The wonder that fills him in the presence of the dinosaur’s body breaks him, rather than providing increased lived authenticity.

The body of the dinosaur is described very differently from Eckles’s in both form and action. When that ancient creature appears, it is an elegant and powerful tool that works in apparent concert with the consciousness within:

It came on great oiled, resilient, striding legs. It towered thirty feet above half of the trees, a great evil god, folding its delicate watchmaker’s claws close to its oily reptilian chest. Each lower leg was a piston, a thousand pounds of white bone, sunk in thick ropes of muscle, sheathed over in a gleam of pebbled skin like the mail of a terrible warrior. Each thigh was a ton of meat, ivory, and steel mesh. And from the great breathing cage of the

upper body those two delicate arms dangled out front, arms with hands which might pick up and examine men like toys, while the snake neck coiled. And the head itself, a ton of sculptured stone, lifted easily upon the sky. Its mouth gaped, exposing a fence of teeth like daggers. Its eyes rolled, ostrich eggs, empty of all expression save hunger. It closed its mouth in a death grin. It ran, its pelvic bones crushing aside trees and bushes, its taloned feet clawing damp earth, leaving prints six inches deep wherever it settled its weight. (Bradbury 81)

This animal body is everything that Eckles's human body is not. Whereas the human body shuffles, breaking down into disparate parts that refuse to obey the orders to move in specific ways, the beast's body moves smoothly, every part in concert. The dinosaur's body is a site of a multitude of metaphors: its legs are oiled pistons with steel mesh thighs; its arms are delicate, comparable to the tools of a watchmaker; it is ropes and stone and daggers, made to bind and crush and rend. This body is a complex combination of power, delicacy, and danger, acutely unfamiliar to the human who has come to try to kill it, but it is at ease in its own time and space, and moves without trouble. That is, the dinosaur-whole functions as an overwhelming totality, its disparate parts visible only in the ways that they contribute to that totality. With its distinctly inhuman and even machinelike physical aspects, the dinosaur body with its parts moving invisibly together is stark contrast to the very human, very flawed body of the Traveler; the dinosaur body performs as expected, unfamiliar and dangerous, while the other turns out to be rebellious against itself, a danger only to itself. Faced with a more complete example of a functioning hunter identity, the human who had embraced the hunter identity breaks down entirely.

The dinosaur-whole is in fact an even more encompassing totality when presented in comparison to the human body that has travelled to its time. The human is fragile flesh, parts disconnected from the system of the whole. The striding, roaring dinosaur is not only a body working invisibly to itself, however. Its flesh is not fragile and uniform. Rather, "its armored flesh glittered like a thousand green coins. The coins, crusted with slime, steamed. In the slime, tiny insects wriggled, so that the entire body

seemed to twitch and undulate, even while the monster itself did not move” (82). The creature’s flesh is comparable to metal, an impenetrable and non-living substance, highlighting its impression of indestructibility as well as strengthening the machine-like quality of its body. Yet upon that metallic, machine-like body, it is coated with viscous, steaming moisture that hosts countless other bodies that are as small as the dinosaur is large. Its body is not merely its own body, but it is also a house and a lived space for many creatures so small that they do not even warrant description except in terms of their small size and their constant motion upon the dinosaur’s flesh. The dinosaur body is both powerfully machine-like and impenetrable, and yet it is also a space of home, nurturing a multitude of small bodies, and thus is a site for a dialectic of ongoing life and potential death, of movement and stillness.

The dinosaur is also one of several instances of a body in a traveled-to time that acts as a distinct agent, affecting and being affected by the Traveler, which is nonetheless differentiated through the presentation of the body from the concept of what is human contemporary to the Traveler. The beast is even called Monster, and in its physicality there is an unsettling mix of human and inhuman characteristics: “The Monster twitched its jeweler’s hands down to fondle at the men, to twist them in half, to crush them like berries, to cram them into its teeth and its screaming throat. Its boulderstone eyes leveled with the men. They saw themselves mirrored. They fired at the metallic eyelids and the blazing black iris” (82). So much in this description, despite it being of a dinosaur, is undeniably human. The Monster has jeweler’s hands, it rends its food, it eats, and it observes; it gazes at the men as they see themselves mirrored – both literally, their reflections in its eyes, but they also see themselves figuratively represented in a creature that, like them, is a hunter capable of wielding death with its hands. Moreover, by placing the Monster in the hunter space of the hunter/hunted dialectic, the hunters are potentially relegated to the space of the prey, the consumed: they are berries, not only inhuman but fragile, formless, apparently without the power of violent response. This is Eckles’s response, but the other hunters fight back against the dehumanizing effect of the dinosaur’s body. Too, the human aspects in the dinosaur are juxtaposed with not only the aspects of a live monster, but even the nonbiological. The monstrosity of the

dinosaur is not simply found in the otherness of its form, but in the mixture of its familiarity, its human aspects, with the extreme unfamiliarity of boulderstone eyes, of metallic eyelids, and of an unrestrained promise of violence to be visited upon their own smaller bodies.

Aside from the powerfully violent dinosaur, the unfamiliar bodies encountered by a Traveler in these stories includes the evolved humans in “The Anniversary Project,” which hearkens back to the seminal depiction from H. G. Wells’ “The Time Machine” of evolved humans living in the far future. The future humans in “The Anniversary Project” live one million years in the future from the advent of the written word. In a very general sense, these future humans are still humanoid, having a pair of arms and a pair of legs, a head situated above a central torso, eyes, mouths, hands, teeth. They even retain nominal designations of maleness and femaleness. Yet the description of one of these future humans could almost be that of a ghoul in a mid-century pulp horror novel: “His name is Three-phasing and he is bald and wrinkled, slightly over one meter tall, large-eyed, toothless and all bones and skin, sagging pale skin shot through with traceries of delicate blue and red. He is considered very beautiful but most of his beauty is in his hands and is due to his extreme youth” (Haldeman 190). This so-called extreme youth is actually an age of multiple centuries – a startlingly long lifespan from the perspective of humans from the middle of the 20th century, when a human living through a mere one century is an accomplishment worthy of celebration. The disparity in the lifespan of the future humans’ bodies versus that of the Travelers’ bodies is enough to create a gap of unfamiliarity among them. The extended lifespan of the future humans offer them a temporal perspective denied to shorter-lived humans, like the difference in perspective of someone several decades old in comparison to a child or teenager. That is, the older person in any of these dynamics has a larger amount of lived time in his personal experience, which therefore allows that person the ability to consider events in terms of a much longer temporal view. A small child, having not live very long, has a single day take up a larger percentage of her total lifetime so far, and thus a day feels much longer to that child than to her parent, for whom a single day occupies a much smaller percentage of his life. For this reason time seems to pass much more quickly as one ages. From an Heideggerian

perspective, the relativity of lifespan to perspective upon the world is the development of a personal network of knowledge and context, specifically that “in terms of temporality, it becomes intelligible why Da-sein is and can be historical in the ground of its being and, being historical, it can develop historiography” (Heidegger 217). The temporality of a lifespan and the ability of Da-sein to develop an ever-increasing historiography are inextricably intertwined. The long-lived future humans, therefore, have a perspective of the world or a historiography that is beyond the bounds of the Travelers to comprehend.

It is presumably because of the extended lifespan that leads to the obvious signs of extreme aging in the body – the loss of teeth, the loss of hair, and the sagging of the skin. Moreover, not only is death pushed off for these future humans, but is even apparently surmountable, as mentioned in relation to Three-Phasing’s father, who “looks cadaverous and has in fact been dead twice” (Haldeman 191). As has been mentioned previously, Being-toward-death continually affects Da-sein. It is a constant presence in life as the end of a life, and therefore the confrontation of that inevitable end is a source of angst and, sometimes, growth and acceptance. Heidegger writes of its inevitability and its constancy in relation to Da-sein: “As long as Da-sein is, something is always still outstanding, what it can and what it will be. But the “end” itself belongs to what is outstanding. The “end” of being-in-the-world is death. This end, belonging to the potentiality-of-being – that is, to existence – limits and defines the possible totality of Da-sein” (216). Yet in the far future time of “The Anniversary Project,” this inevitability seems to no longer be so inevitable – or at least, not so final as death is as we or Heidegger know it. In other words, if someone has been dead twice, yet lives, it stands to reason that he has managed to return from death in some way. The method and circumstances are not made clear, but the effect on the body seems to be, in that it looks cadaverous. It has experienced death more than once and looks dead, yet lives. What effect this has upon the effect of Being-toward-death is not explored in the text, but it can certainly be speculated that if one knows death to not be the ultimate and irreversible cessation of Da-sein, then what effect Being-toward-death has upon Da-sein is either lessened or fundamentally altered. If death does not stand as an untranscendable end for Da-sein – in other words, if it does not “[belong] primordially and

essentially to the being of Da-sein”(233) – then it provides no catalyst for Da-sein’s development of authenticity. Lack of permanent, inescapable death changes what it means to be in a way that a being tied to a death-ending temporal life cannot comprehend any more than a human, lacking sonar perception, can comprehend what it means to be a bat.

Desmond Warzel’s “Wikhistory,” bears upon the topic of bodies in time travel fiction by having no bodies directly present in the narrative. Too, “Wikhistory” as of this writing has only been published online⁶, which adds to its interest in terms of the question of bodies and lived spaces in a particularly metatextual sense. This gives rise to a question: what impact does the absence of a body have upon Da-sein? To begin constructing an answer, one must first understand a space in which Da-sein can communicate without the impact of a present body – which does not, however, mean that the consciousnesses in question do not reside in bodies. Unlike other stories, “Wikhistory” employs a narrative structure fashioned after the distinctive style of internet message boards. This specific message board is a means by which time travelers can discuss their travels with their contemporaries – specifically, they can discuss their travels to Europe during the WWII period of the 20th century. Throughout the entire story, all information is in the form of digital messages shared in the electronic space of the message board. Not only do no bodies come into contact with one another there, but they are unable ever to do so. However, one body in particular does serve to tie together the narrative derived from these messages. The narrative capitalizes upon the use of time travel to kill Hitler, a proposed use that appears in both scholarly and casual genre discussions of the as-yet-uninvented technology. In this story, the proposed action is played for humor: “everybody kills Hitler on their first trip” claims one poster, *BigChill*⁷, to the board (Warzel). Another poster, *SilverFox316*, points out that without Hitler, the war, and the leaps in technology advancements that follow therefrom, there would actually be no time travel,

⁶ All references to “Wikhistory” include no page numbers

⁷ Due to the message board format of the narrative style in “Wikhistory,” character names such as *BigChill*, *AsianAvenger*, *SilverFox316*, and *BarracksRoomLawyer* all appear in italics in the story as the headers for each character’s individual posts. Those character names are reproduced here in italics as well, to be faithful to the style of the text.

and that latter poster takes it upon himself to travel to the past to fix no less than four attempts on Hitler during the story. Of those attempts, two are to kill Hitler, one is to make him an art success, and another is to kill his father; in response to all attempts, *SilverFox316* posts a reminder to the board that everyone should read IATT Bulletin 1147 explaining the unusual importance of Hitler and WWII to the development of time travel technology.

There are aspects of characterization to each of the posters that make them familiar to a reader. Even a reader unfamiliar with a message board is nonetheless likely to recognize the dynamics at play in a group, connected over some common interest, who communicate under deliberately-constructed rules. The personas are familiar: the enthusiastic new members who act in good faith but without full understanding; the frustrated, patient de facto leader who fixes the situation and attempts to educate new members; the rules lawyer whose focus is on strict adherence to the group by-laws; and the group member with an axe to grind about a much-ignored facet of the group's shared interest. What is crucial in this story, with relevance to the thesis, is that all these personas exist in a digital textual medium that never allows for their physical bodies to meet. To each one of them, they encounter the others only as a collection of words. They are absent from each other, and never having experienced each other in a physical sense, they lack what Graham Harman calls allure, "the presence of objects to each other in absent form" (*Guerilla Metaphysics* 246). The lack of present bodies reflects a lack of recognition of other physical bodies as actual beings, as individuals. They are not objects to each other in a real sense, and have no allure – it is easy for the posters to ignore each other. For each of the posters, the others in the group are basically Heidegger's "the They" – a relatively anonymous collective who instruct Da-sein, explicitly and implicitly, how to live. Yet beyond each persona is an individual, a Da-sein, who has come to the community of the message board as part of the attempt to live authentically by pursuing their interests. Unable to experience each other's bodies or each other as anything other than a collection of words on a screen, however, causes each of the members of the message board to disregard each other as people.

The only person, or body, upon whom they do focus is that of Hitler. He is widely reviled, and the members of the message board repeatedly try to either destroy his body or divert his interests. However, his treatment by the posters is not unlike their treatment of each other. Physically and, moreover, temporally removed from them, the board members that bother to consider him at all only look at him as part of a historical network, and either attempt to eliminate him (and by extension, World War II and all the pain, death, cruelty, and suffering that go therewith) or to rescue him (and by extension the developments and technology that lead to the development of time travel). Yet while the posters fail to recognize each other's and even Hitler's Da-sein, that lack of recognition does not mean that Da-sein is absent. Bodies still have impact even without immediate presence because of Da-sein's ability to communicate over distance and over time. Phone, internet, letters, books, and historical documents are all methods of communication from a physical or temporal remove, and communication even without a present body has the possibility for impact. This potential for distant or asynchronous impact is, in fact, what makes Hitler of such interest to the posters on the message board. The posters who want to eliminate him seek to alter the negative impact he has on history, while the ones who negate those attempts seek to maintain the positive impact that has been demonstrated.

In all of this, however, the attempts to kill or rescue are related with an air of triumph or frustration that demonstrate the lack of recognition of Hitler as a person, as Da-sein, rather than as a body that symbolizes the instigation of wide-spread horrors. The posters demonstrate that lack of understanding of each other's Da-sein, which is proved out in the end of the story. *AsianAvenger*, grinding his axe about the racism of focusing on Hitler and the deaths he caused rather than on Hong Xinquan and the millions more deaths he caused, posts:

What gives is everyone's repeated insistence on a course of action which, even if successful, would only save a few million Europeans. It would be no more trouble to travel to Fuyuanhui, China, in 1814 and kill Hong Xiuquan, thus preventing the Taiping Rebellion of the mid-nineteenth century and saving fifty million lives in the process. But,

hey, what are fifty million yellow devils more or less, right, guys? We've got Poles and Frenchmen to worry about. (Warzel)

In the ensuing conversation, it is determined that eliminating Hong Xinquan would have relatively no historical impact, and the posters encourage *AsianAvenger* to travel through time to kill him. Only afterward do they discover that *AsianAvenger* is a descendent of Xinquan, and in killing him has eliminated himself. Despite this discovery, and pointing out that someone should go save him, no one actually does – *SilverFox316*, who is in the habit of rescuing Hitler, and *BarracksRoomLawyer* points out instead that any discussion of Xiuquan belongs on a China-oriented portion of the board rather than an European one. *AsianAvenger's* death has little to no real impact on the members of the board, despite him (and his rant about Nagasaki and ethnocentrism) apparently being a known and familiar part of the community. His death is not objectively present for the other posters. Heidegger writes of death and its presence for oneself as opposed to others:

The analysis of “one dies” reveals unambiguously the kind of being of everyday being and death. In such talk, death is understood as an indeterminate something which first has to show up from somewhere, but which right now is not yet objectively present for oneself, and thus no threat. “One dies” spreads the opinion that death, so to speak, strikes the they. (Heidegger 234)

AsianAvenger's death is a death that is striking the they. Though the other posters have communicated with him, they do not care about him. That is, all the members of the board interact because of the care that they have for something in common – time travel to WWII-era Europe – but they have developed no care for each other. This common interest fails to shift them from The They to a state of authentic interaction. The medium through which the posters communicate allows them to consider each other as Other, or even as non-persons. Without physical presence or care for one another as people, rather than care for their shared interest, they ironically do not suffer an appreciable loss by the death of one of the board members in the way that they do if Hitler is killed.

Not only in “Wikihistory,” but in all the stories the body is shown to be inextricably connected to its own eventual death. Even when a life is shifted out of its natural chronology, the progression of life toward its eventual end continues. In all time travel narratives, whether the Traveler goes to another time in his own life, a time long before his own birth, or a time long after when he would have died had he lived out a natural lifespan without time travel, the body continues toward its end and the consciousness within the body is aware of it. With or without time travel, Being-toward-death remains.

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