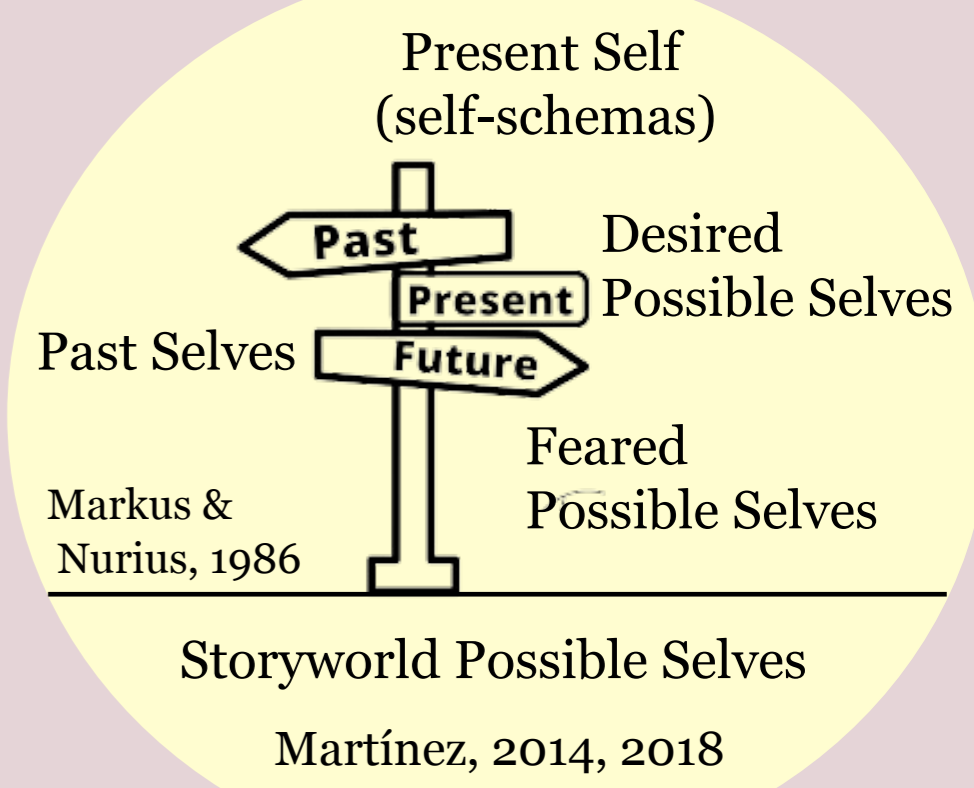


ON HOW FICTION IMPACTS THE SELF-CONCEPT

Contemporary Reading Practices and Storyworld Possible Selves

Reading fiction expands and shapes our sense of self (Sestir & Green, 2010; Shedlosky-Shoemaker et al., 2014; Johnson et al., 2016). This doctoral project contributes to this line of research by mapping specifically which **temporal dimensions of our self-concept** are activated and transformed by reading fiction.

This research is articulated in four studies, and it is grounded in a panorama of **contemporary reading practices**.



Books
in print and ebooks

Digital Fiction
Interactive fiction
Hypertext,
Visual novels

Wattpad
Digital Storytelling Platform
(user-generated stories)

1

N= 814

Comparing Contemporary Reading Practices:
Which combinations of reading motivations and genre preferences predict the occurrence of transformative reading experiences?

Paths to Transformation Across Contemporary Reading Practices: The Role of Motivations and Genre Preferences
Loi, Kuijpers, Ensslin & Lauer.
Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts (forthcoming)

Read the preprint

Predictors of transformative reading experiences across reading practices

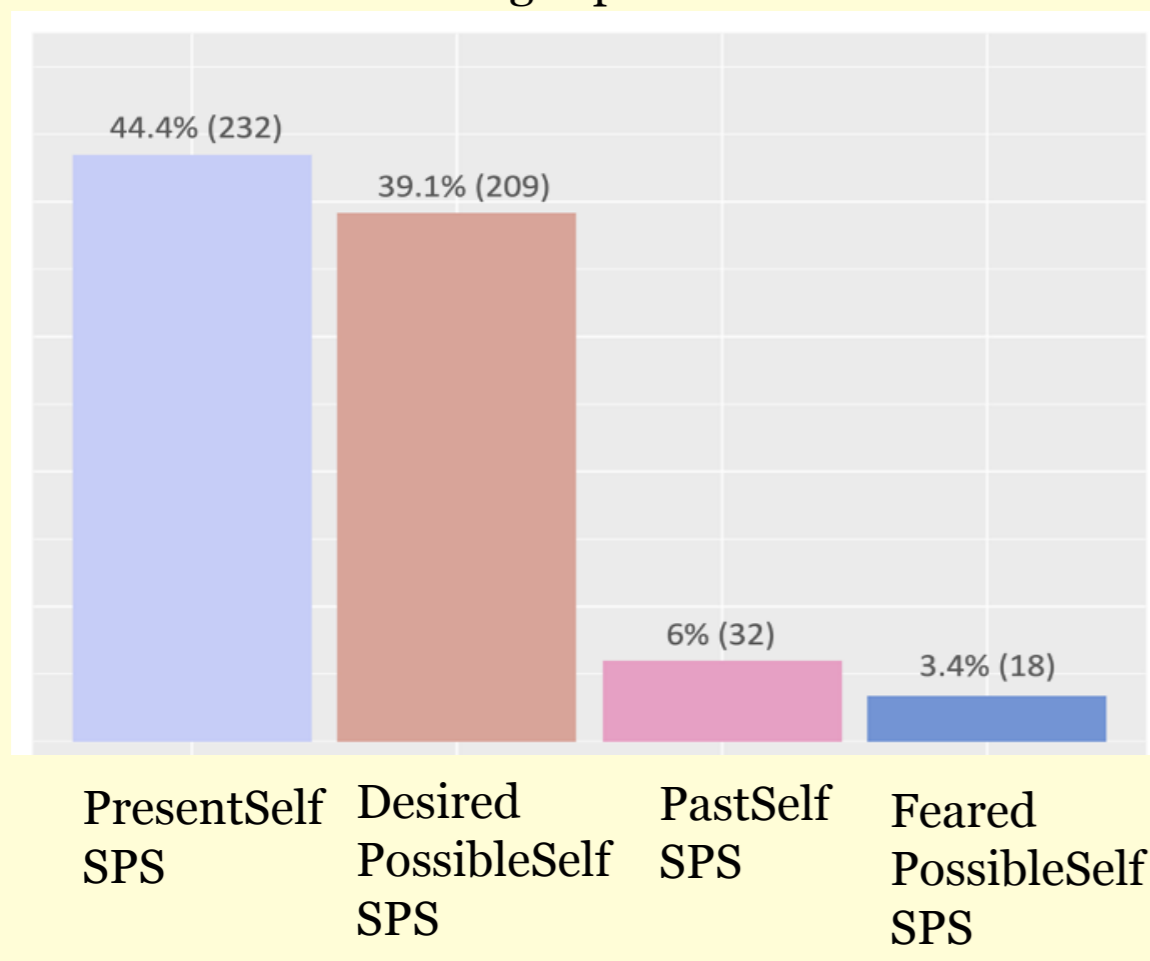
Eudaimonia (search for meaning) Eudaimonia (search for pleasure)

Books	Digital Fiction	Wattpad
Literary Fiction Poetry, Short Fiction, Classics	Dramatic Fiction Romance, Drama, Horror, Psychological Thriller	Romantic Fiction Romance, Young Adult/ Teen Fiction, Chick Lit, Drama
Serious Fiction Historical Fiction, Drama, Non Fiction, Classics	Activist Fiction Non Fiction, Comedy/Satire	

Predictor in common across groups: Drama (focus on characters' inner lives, emphasis on psychological insight)

Transformation of the self-concept

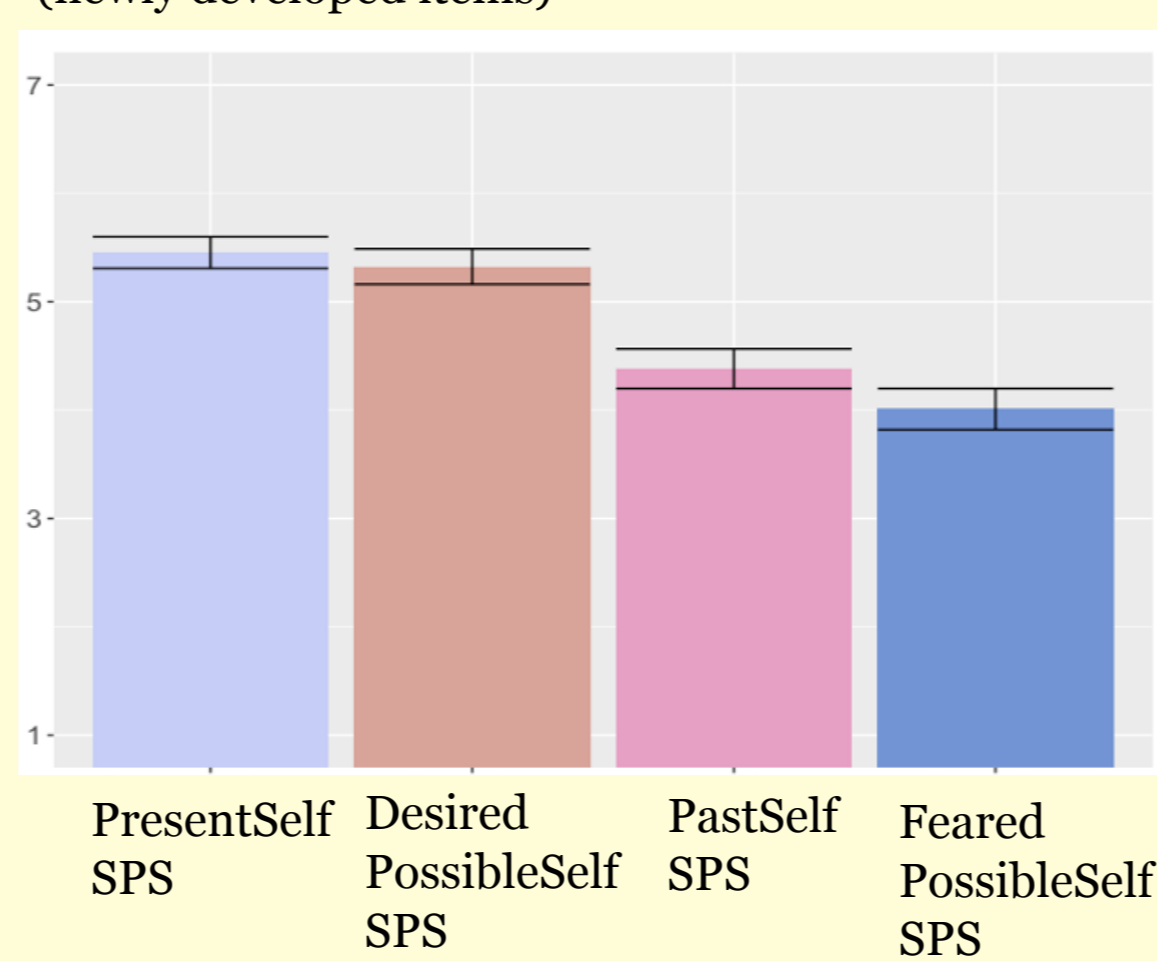
Measured with a Mixed Methods Content Analysis on the readers' reading experiences



30% of transformative effects were prompted by fictional characters (Storyworld Possible Selves)

Activation of the self-concept

Measured with Storyworld Possible Selves (newly developed items)



Transportation and Emotional Engagement are associated with higher scores on all SPSs.

2

66% of total sample. N= 543

Which temporal dimensions of the self-concept are **activated** and **transformed** by reading fiction?

A general trend across 543 reading experiences

On how fiction impacts the self-concept: transformative reading experiences and storyworld possible selves
Loi, Hakemulder, Kuijpers & Lauer. (under review)

Read the preprint

3

N= 814

Individual Differences in Reading Motivations

Is fiction a remedy for our wish to live many lives? Testing a popular assumption among contemporary readers
Loi, C. (under review)

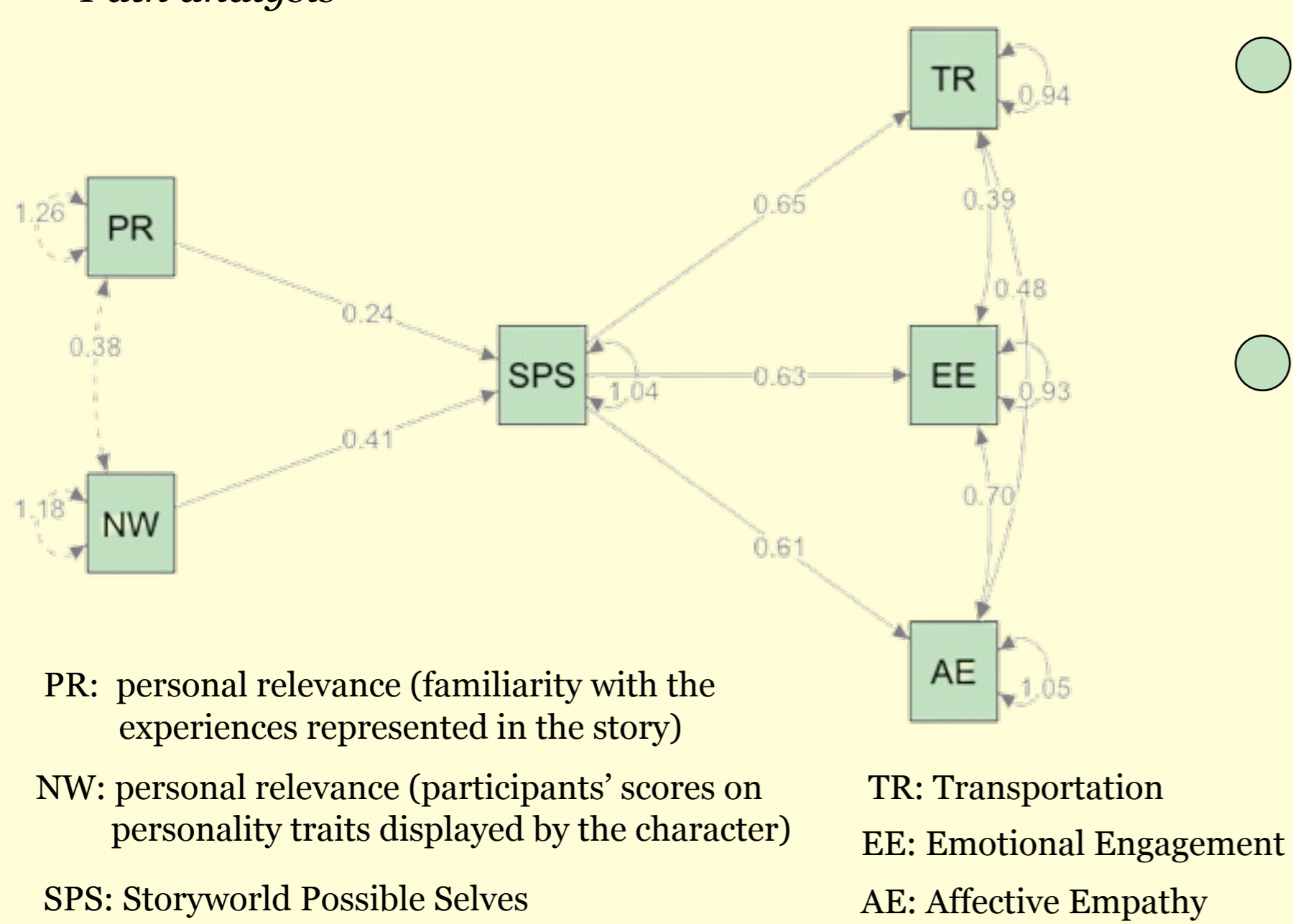
Read the preprint

- individuals with an active sense of possibility (as measured by Regret and Maximization traits) are significantly more likely to report that they regularly experience feelings of longing towards their alternative lives.
- within this subset of readers, 34.5% spontaneously mentioned that they read fiction in order to satisfy this longing because it allows them to assume alternative identities.

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Path analysis



- The presence of **SPS linguistic markers** (e.g. doubly deictic you) **does not** facilitate the **activation of Storyworld Possible Selves**
- **Personal relevance** (measured with personality traits similar to the story character + the familiarity with the story topic) **leads to activating SPSs. The activation of SPSs leads to higher Transportation, Emotional Engagement, and Affective Empathy.**

4

N= 235

Measuring Storyworld Possible Selves: Linguistic Features, Personal Relevance, and the Narrative Experience
Loi, C., Scapin, G., Alber, J., Martinez, M. (in preparation)

Between-subjects design with 4 conditions

Story A SPS linguistic markers Original	Story B No SPS linguistic markers Manipulated
Story B No SPS linguistic markers Original	Story B SPS linguistic markers Manipulated

+ measures of individual differences in personal relevance and in the narrative experience (Absorption, Identification)