HYPERFICTIONAL LANGUAGE IN MICHAEL JOYCE'S *AFTERNOON, A STORY* AND MEGAN HEYWARD'S *OF DAY, OF NIGHT*

BY

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in memory

of a loving father

Solomon Bola Oke

whose hands laid its foundation

loyalty to his passions ensured its completion

ABSTRACT

The hypertext, a relatively new digital genre, structures texts into links and nodes. This results in textual plasticity which gives room for different forms of stylistic experimentations by the authors of the texts. While scholars have focused on the structural composition and general nature of hypertexts, they have not adequately attended to their distinctive features. This study addresses this neglect by examining the style of the language of hyperfiction.

The study adopts Hallidayan model of Systemic Functional Linguistics, complemented with Postmodern Literary Theory and Applied Media Aesthetics, which respectively account for grammatical categories, stylistic experimentations, and audio-visual effects. Two CD-ROM-based hyperfiction texts, namely, Michael Joyce's *afternoon, a story* and Megan Heyward's *of day, of night*, available only in the United States of America, are purposively selected and their verbal and non-verbal levels are explored. The data are subjected to content analysis.

At the stylistic experimentation level, both hyperfiction texts exhibit similar stylistic features in terms of fragmentation of text units, playfulness in presentation styles, and deconstruction of linear temporal deixis. Beyond these features, the authors explore the architecture of nodes and links in providing the texts with alternative reading paths that resist the sense of definite closure in meaning-making. In Joyce's *afternoon, a story*, the alternative reading paths locate meaning within unstable contexts of situation, with the paths, sometimes, negating one another. This situation gives way to contradictory narrative turns which project a resistance to the sense of closure and accomplish postmodernist aesthetics of self-cancellation and projected-world erasure. In Heyward's *of day, of night*, the existence of multiple endings and the highly interactive nature of the narrative facilitate the text's resistance to closure. At the grammatical level, Joyce's *afternoon, a story* is categorised as a complex text because of the vast employment of word and group nexuses, internal nesting and rankshifted, verbless, and complex clauses. The grammatical complexity in the text depicts postmodernist attempts at foregrounding the processes of meaning construction and the writtenness of the text. In *of day, of night*, though Heyward mainly employs simple clauses, her employment of incomplete clauses as node titles in the "night" part of the text indicates a resistance to closure as well as an attempt at problematising meaning. In terms of audio-visual effects, *afternoon, a story* does not engage any media aesthetic effect because it is basically alphanumeric. However, Heyward appropriates media aesthetics such as saturation/desaturation, superimposition, imbalance screen resolution, and music/sounds for advancing and intensifying the narrative of the multimodal *of day, of night*. This multimodal nature of *of day, of night* portrays collage and the carnivalistic tendencies in postmodernist aesthetics.

The hypertextual stylistic resources deployed in Joyce's *afternoon, a story* and Heyward's *of day, of night* define the postmodernist nature of the texts. The creative manipulations of linguistic and non-linguistic elements in the two texts draw attention to how hyperfiction writing is expanding the concepts of text and language. Stylisticians need to investigate digital texts in order to understand how digital writing tradition is redefining linguistic and literary representations.

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Mrs. B. O. Idowu-Faith in the Department of English, University of Ibadan

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER SIX: TEXTURAL DESIGN

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF PLATES

xiii

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

&	-	Ampersand (conjunction)
[ ]	-	Rankshifted Group
[[ ]]	-	Rankshifted Clause
|	-	Group Boundary
||	-	Clause Boundary
"[ ]"	-	Specific Node in a hyperfiction Text
<>	-	Embedded Group
<<>>	-	Embedded Clause
=	-	Apposition
A	-	Adjunct
Adj	-	Adjective
Adv	-	Adverb

AdvG	-	Adverbial Group
afternoon	-	*afternoon, a story*
AMA	-	Applied Media Aesthetics
C	-	Complement
D	-	Deixis
E	-	Epithet
H	-	Head
IRL	-	In real life
NG	-	Nominal Group
O	-	Ordinal
Ø	-	Elision
of day	-	*of day, of night*
P	-	Predicate
p	-	Preposition
pG	-	Prepositional Group
PLT	-	Postmodern Literary Theory
POV	-	Point of View
Q	-	Qualifier
S	-	Subject
SFL	-	Systemic Functional Linguistics
S-POV	-	Subjective Point of View
VG	-	Verbal Group
WWW	-	World Wide Web
XCU	-	Extreme Close-up
α	-	Alpha clause - Independent clause
β	-	Beta clause - Dependent clause
γ	-	Gamma clause - Dependent clause of a beta clause
δ	-	Delta clause - Dependent clause of a gamma clause

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Anchor: A visible region in a hypertext which must be selected to activate the link

Block: See **Node**

Branch: See **Forking**
(branching)

Chunk:
1.   The activity of parsing hypertext into nodes and links
2.   Text **chunk**, same as node(See **Node**)

Cue: The visible clue in the anchor in a hypertext that indicates the availability of a link to other nodes

Cyberspace: The conceptual place and world of the computer where digital codes and activities are located

Fork: The indication that there are alternatives routes for traversing the digital text

Forking (path):   Different traversal routes forming from the alternatives links that a particular node has. The ability of a hypertext node to have different traversal routes shooting out from it

Frame: See **Node**

Hyperfiction:	A literary hypertext
Hypermedia:	A hypertext that links nodes with other media beside text (for example, sound, graphics, video, etc.) together. Some hypertext theorists believe it is superfluous to differentiate between hypertext and hypermedia
Hypertext:	A digital text, readable only on computer screen or e-books, that exist as a network of nodes and links which readers are free to navigate or traverse in any order they choose
Hypertextuality:	The characteristic textuality of hypertext
Interactivity:	Hypertext property that indicates that a reader can interactively control and/or manipulate links among information units (nodes) in a way that radically changes the experience of reading and writing.
Link:	The traversal connection between nodes
Multimedia:	The indication that a hypertext contains various media within it
Multimodal:	Same as multimedia (see multimedia)
Node:	The unit of the hypertext which comes up to the screen and occupies its centre when a link is activated by the reader (also block; chunk; text chunk; frame; page; screen; etc.)
Nonlinearity:	The property of hypertext that enables readers to choose their own reading orders while exploring a hypertext since there is no preprogrammed order for exploring the text. Other terms used in relation to nonlinearity is nonsequentiality, multilinear, multisequential, and multicursality
Page:	See **Node**
Path:	The chain/sequence of nodes and links a reader traverses in the network of a hypertext. In hyperfiction, a path may be viewed as the storyline that forms from the reader's traversals
Screen:	1. The computer display device where the computer user can view information and negotiate digital activities
	2. Also refers to a node (see node)
Traversal:	The purposeful movement through a hypertext
User:	The individual who traverses a digital text. The term is preferred over the term "reader" since a digital text can contain other media resources like sound, music, video, and graphics
Wreader:	The active reader of the digital text who has the ability to intervene in the textuality of the text to the extent that s/he can be viewed as a "versioner" and co-author with the author of the hypertext

CHAPTER ONE
PRELIMINARY ISSUES

1.1 Background to the study

With the advent of the computer, the Internet, and the World Wide Web (WWW) and their attendant potentials and possibilities, it is obvious that an overwhelmingly mighty wind has blown on the materials of the traditional world and blurred all previously perceived boundaries such that the description of the world and its constituents have changed entirely. The eventual realities calledforth by these seismic changes demand new methods for characterizing, describing, and theorizing the contents and materials of the world. The contemporary is therefore not just a digital culture but, by most accounts, a new intellectual age; a new historical epoch with new cultural products that demand new models of theorizing.

Technology is usually a major player in the process of shaping or re-shaping of human attitudes and culture. Reactions engendered by the advents of electricity, telephone, and television and the results of those reactions on culture bear witness to this claim. The digital technology, in much the same way, is presently making high waves and effecting new cultural realities. From philosophy to physics, theology to politics, arts to architecture, science to literature, the digital technologies continue to roust the foundation of every discipline. As Edward Barret, the editor of MIT's Technical Communication and Information Systems series, notes in the Series Forward in *The Digital Word: Text-Based Computing in the Humanities* co-edited by Delany and Landow, the digital "is one of the most rapidly expanding fields of study … as witnessed by the growth of professional societies and degree-granting programs in colleges and universities as well as the evolving status of documentation specialists in industry." Indeed, no one wants to be left behind or left out of the digitization. The current mode and pace of the dispersion, integration, intrusion, and penetration of the digital into our daily lives, therefore, call for immediate attention and investigation by academics at the cutting-edge of every field and sub-field.

The rate at which institutions employ and explore Information and Communications Technologies(ICT) gives credence to the fact that the digital is unprecedented and that anyone who would stay relevant in the contemporary culture must be technology compliant: such a one must be fully aware of the possibilities and the products of the digital culture. Now that many institutions have migrated either fully or partially to cyberspace (the conceptual context and location of digital technologies) for the transaction of their businesses, it implies that the clients/customers of such institutions must equally be technology-competent. Thus, both 'technology compliance' (adaptive and exploratory association with the products and potentials of digital technologies) and 'technology competence' (deconstructive and manipulative knowledge of the products and potentials of digital technologies) are essential for maximal functioning in the contemporary culture. In essence, in addition to "literacy," a Subject existing in the present digital culture needs to attain "electracy," using Gregory Ulmer's term. Aptly, Mark Amerika, in "The Rival Tradition: Writers into the 21st Century," one of his online articles, cited Ronald Sukenick who describes the contemporary culture as a 'technological culture [and] not a traditional culture.' Indeed, various technological products like digital games, CMC, MUD, MOO, MMS, SMS, email, e-zine, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Fansbook, Weblogs and newsgroups which techno-savvy users have to explore and demystify everyday all corroborate that the contemporary digital culture is an era of technological explosion!

Today, the digital penetrates every aspect of our lives in an unprecedented way. These penetrations are noticeable in Education, Arts, Philosophy, Architecture, Science, even conservative areas like Religion and Theology. Literature too has not been without interferences/influences from digitization. One, computers came with Word Processing Software and Layout Programmes which enabled and encouraged individual and desktop publishing. Unlike the previous ages where presses and publishing houses mandated and ensured that texts were created and produced within the strictures of identifiable norms, Word Processors and Layout Programmes give experimental and/or quasi writers the freedom they need for the creation of that type of text they wish, in the structure they want, and using language in a manner pleasing to them. Invariably, this situation gives writers on both sides of the divide (quasi versus professional, experimental versus traditional) the opportunity to appropriately encode and decode their experiences and thoughts and to validate whatever local narrative or

tradition such works may be putting forward or celebrating without being forced to abide by the dictates of cultural expectations. Thus, with the personal computer (PC), the digital culture grants quasi and experimental writers the opportunity to secure a means for the production of uninhibited and limitless self-expressions without the fear of rejection or of being labelled 'un-Traditional.' This factor has been one of the major powerful movers in the changes surrounding Literature, and Language too, in the digital culture.

Two, the architecture of the computer media space is dynamic and malleable. As a result, manifold possibilities exist for the visual manipulations of the text. These manipulations manifest in font size, font type, font colour, page layout, text background, and the animations of these and other textual elements (cf. Koskimaa, 2000, Ch. 1 par.3). This potential for the manipulation of textual materials equally gives room for quasi and experimental writers to proceed with conscious or accidental experimentations with the text and its materials and with language.

The third factor is the development of hypertext authoring software. Hypertext software like StorySpace, HyperCard, Intermedia, Microcosm, and Multicosm, for example,were deliberately fashioned for the production of 'untraditional' and screen-based virtual texts. The beauty of the software is that they potentially aid different forms of textual manipulations that were quite impossible within the Gutenberg technologies or even with Word Processors and Layout Programmes. The manipulations possible with hypertext software range from textual fluidity, multimediality, fragmentation, multilinearity of reading paths, multivocality as a result of multiple reading paths, reading-as-authoring, disorientation, interactivity, to mention just a few. The different hypertext software and tools have therefore contributed to the production of highly dynamic and experimental texts that bring alive the desires of many postmodern writers as well as the predictions of critical theorists.

The fourth factor is the networking of computer which resulted in the emergence of the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW). With computer networking, it becomes quite easy, fast, and reliable to globally disperse the artefacts of the digital culture. With the networking of computers, writers, be they quasi or experimental, as long as they are logged on a server, could distribute or disperse their works across the world in few seconds because the electronic text exists only as a piece of code. Thus, works which would have earlier been rejected by presses or publishing houses for breaking tradition are dispersed without fear in the digital

3

culture. Invariably, this factor promotes the propagation of 'local narratives' and the rejection of 'meta/grand-narrative'.

The last factor, closely linked to the fourth factor, relates to the political nature of cyberspace. It has been significantly argued that cyberspace is a 'liberatory space' being both 'equalising and non-discriminatory' in nature (Wilson, 2001, par.1). Since in cyberspace 'it does not matter whether you are a dog or a god [IRL]' (Oke, 2004: 16), the voice of the Other is not only accommodated, but it is also always aired and heard. And, as a result, the depressed, distressed, oppressed, repressed, and suppressed citizens of nations have no fear in 'walking' into the 'emancipatory' ambit of cyberspace for varied self-expressions. In essence, the technologies of the digital culture give both Self and Other limitless and untrammmelled opportunities for different forms of social experimentations. Thus, experimental and quasi writers who exploit the different potentials of the digital culture, as evident in the preceding four factors, would be able to produce texts that are untraditional in nature which, no doubt, would have tremendous and unprecedented impact on literature, and on language, that is the tool for the accomplishment of literature. Obviously, therefore, the emancipatory nature of cyberspace, when fully connected with the previous four factors, makes open the implications of digitization for literature and indicates why both language and literature cannot remain unchanged in the digital culture.

The profound implication of the foregoing is the emergence of digital textuality or hypertextuality. Digital textuality, in turn, presupposes the birth of the digital texts or hypertexts. That is, the texts that are not bound to book form as medium and that are read from the computer screen or from e-books (Koskimaa, 2000, Foreward, par.2). Not only have digital texts emerged, digital literature or hyperfiction has equally evolved. The digital literature can be viewed from two broad perspectives: (i) literature which employs the least possible potential of digital dynamics for its creation and/or production and (ii) literature written and/or read within cyberspace.

Before the present explosion of digital technologies, many postmodernist writers have had course to agitate for the possibility of changing the received traditional rules and principles guiding the production of fiction. One of such agitations is visible in Federman's (1981a) article: "Surfiction – Four Propositions in Form of an Introduction." In the article, Federman agitates for a postmodern future of fiction that would effect changes in: (1) the reading of fiction, (2) the shape of fiction, (3) the material of fiction, and (4) the meaning of fiction. In the same volume, John

Barth (1981: 19-20), notes that because of the "usedness of certain forms or exhaustion of certain possibilities [of traditional fiction]…many Western artists for a great many years have quarreled with received definitions of artistic media, genres, and forms." As a result, the writers resorted to '"intermedia" or "mixed-means" art' thereby instituting "the tradition of rebelling against Tradition." With the explosion of digital technologies, postmodernists' agitations are no longer required because the freedom and experimentations hitherto impossible in the Gutenberg technologies are not only available and fully provided for, but are core and innate features of the digital technologies: "what was unnatural in print becomes natural in electronic medium and will soon no longer need saying at all, because it can be shown" (Bolter, 1991a: 143). In this line of thought, Roland Sukenick, a foremost experimental writer, in his "Introduction" to *Neuromantic Fiction: A Black Ice Anthology* located at http://www.altx.com/ebooks/download.cfm/blackice.pdf, remarks thus about digital technology:

> … this is a new medium in which everything is new, in which even the most traditional work is new because it is framed in a different way. Writing for the screen is not the same as writing for the page – there is a malleable, plastic quality in the screen that makes evident writing's continuity with fine arts, beginning with calligraphy. All sorts of possibilities arise, from type that can be moved around on the page and drawing that can be continuous with writing, to using motion and sound in various ways…. The multi-dimensional aspect of the computer is fascinating – it spans a possible range from haiku to grand opera

Best and Kellner (1991: 3) inform us that postmodern theorists are of the belief that the "emergent processes of change and transformation" in the "contemporary high tech media society [that is, as defined by digital technology]" "are producing a new postmodern society." They go further to state that these theorists of postmodernity believe that "technologies such as computers and media … are producing a postmodern social formation." For the postmodern theorists, therefore, the digital culture is a postmodern one. Or, that the digital is a subset of the postmodern culture. In this line of argument, all digital cultural attitudes and practices are postmodern though not all postmodern attitudes manifest digitization. This, undoubtedly, indicates why hypertext theorists like Delany, Koskimaa, and Landow, believe that there are areas of convergences between digital and postmodern cultures. They reinforce their argument with the fact that digital technologies and postmodernist theory both grew

5

out of the dissatisfaction with the monotony of received tradition, and as such, they cannot but manifest areas of convergences.

It is obvious that when the agitations of postmodernists are juxtaposed with the realities of the digital culture, one is drawn to conclude that there is, indeed, a deep interrelationship between the digital and the postmodern. It may be that the digital is one and the same with the postmodern; or that the cultural practices of the two conflate, converge, or enhance the realization of the objectives of each other. It is, therefore, the stand of this study that there is a deep interrelationship between the digital and the postmodern and that the relationship is accentuated by hypertextuality and the stylistic shape of hypertexts. On this ground, the study upholds that the ontology of hyperfiction is a complex and muli-faceted hermeneutical object of discourse which demands illumination from the two sides.

Thus, as digital literature or hyperfiction engage postmodernist and cybercultural freedom to challenge our notions about text and textuality and to undermine the traditional principles guiding art creation, new areas of study are yielded for the academia. For English Studies, like every area of study in the contemporary culture, the emergence of digital textuality demands fresh areas of investigation in order to explain what is happening to texts, textuality, literary discourse, language, and linguistic representations in the digital culture. Equally, hypertexts provide the grounds for actualising many of the experimental propositions of literary and linguistic theories. It is this understanding that reveals the implications of the accidental or intended creativity, experimentations, and innovations of quasi, experimental, or professional writers or readers on the materials of language and literature in the digital culture. These new directions of research, by focusing on the new ways of creating texts in the digital culture with the dynamics of digital technologies, would enable the interpretation and prediction of the various ways by which the materials of language and literature are being/would be deconstructed to produce re[de]fined texts and textuality, and also, pave way for the identification of the implications of the re[de]fined texts and textuality on language and literature.

1.2   Aim

The term "digital" is currently has great resonance among contemporary scholars and across a wide range of disciplines. From the antediluvian/prehistoric technologies to the Gutenberg and on to digital technologies, one basic fact remains

6

constant: technologies possess a unique power for actualizing the re-conception of culture and/or cultural practices and the redesigning of the materials of language. Indeed, major cultural transitions from orality to writing, from scribal to print, and, lately, from print to electronic testify to this claim. In this regard, it is understandable that since digital technology evolved, various attempts have been made in various disciplines to investigate the effects and implications of the digital on cultural phenomenon. Rheingold (1993: par. 30) in this regard submits that:

> Because of its potential to change us as humans, as communities, as democracies, we need to try to understand the nature of CMC, cyberspace, and virtual communities in every important context − politically, economically, socially, cognitively. Each different perspective reveals something that the other perspectives do not reveal. Each discipline fails to see something that another sees very well. We need to think together, across boundaries of academic disciplines … if we hope to understand … the way human communications are being transformed by communication technologies.

The foregoing invariably reveals that the discourse of the digital technologies is an interdisciplinary one which calls for the active participation of each and every field and sub-field of intellectual inquiry. As a matter of fact, this interdisciplinary nature of digital discourse can be well perceived from the multi-disciplinary constitution of the membership of the Association of Computing Machinery(ACM)http://www.acm.org,the oldest and most prestigious organization of digital scholars, which has been providing leading works and theories about computers and digital technologies and their implications.

Digital technologies stand as the most fundamental change in textual culture since Gutenberg. It is therefore necessary to investigate the nature and extent of the textual changes brought about by the digital technologies. In the light of the above, the stylistic investigation undertaken in this study is borne out of the desire to contribute to the ongoing interdisciplinary discourse surrounding the digital technologies and its artefacts. In the preceding section (Section 1.1), we argued that the technologies of the digital culture have birthed hypertext and its textuality, which are new forms of text and textuality that call for new areas of investigation in relation to the character of texts, textuality, and language, among other things. Thus, this stylistic study investigates the nature and character of hypertext and hypertextuality. It explores how digital technologies and the eventual emergence of hypertext break down the

7

conceptual nature of traditional text, recode it, and project it into cyberspace, where the user can employ the malleability of the computer to reshape the text to whatever suits their needs. Equally, we also intend to make open those special qualities of the hypertext as opposed to print text, which enabled the emergence of hypertextuality.

The emerging revolution of the digital technologies is merging several key technologies like telephones, sound recording, movies, radio, television, print, and the computer such that the idea of composition is widened from being the assemblage of topography and the proper ordering of words in mental space to include the interweaving of visual, aural, and textual materials and meanings (cf. Delany and Landow, 1993: 5). In this regard, the study attempts to identify how this revolution has expanded the ideas of text and composition through hypermedia/multimedia systems, that is, 'computer-mediated technologies,' which "allow creators of [hyper]texts to construct their discourses in multiple dimensions, exploring alternative pathways for traversal and development' (Kaplan and Moulthrop, 1993: 265).

The architecture of hypertexts and hypertextuality reveal that there are common areas of interest between critical theories and computer (hypertext) theories. For example, hypertexts exhibit considerable conceptual interrelationship with Roland Barthes' notion of '*the Death of the Author*' and the '*writerly text*', Julia Kristeva's *intertextuality*, Mikhail Bakhtin's *multivocality*, Michael Foucault's *networks of power*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *rhizomatic and nomad thought*, to mention just a few. This relationship, though surprising, is not unexpected because 'both [hypertext and critical theories] grew out of dissatisfaction with the related phenomena of the printed book and hierarchical thought' (Landow, 1994: 1). For English Studies, examining these existing areas of common interest between hypertext and critical theories are of primal importance for a meaningful contribution to the digital discourse because hypertext has the potential to serve as a laboratory for testing and verifying the promises and claims of critical theories while critical theories illuminate the aesthetics, the character, and the natureof hypertexts and its effects (be it linguistic or literary) on cultural phenomena (cf. Landow, 1994:1-2; 2006:2).

Since 1989 whenACM held the first conference on hypertext, computer scientists and other hypertext scholars have focused their research on hypertext mainly on the possibility of developing highly sophisticated hypertext programmes and software tools and on the theorizing of hypertext. Currently, however, there is relatively little attention devoted to the study of specific hypertexts in order to discover

8

the nature and character of textuality in the digital culture. In Nigeria, the study of hypertext is still a very new area of English Studies. Because of the relatively newness of hypertext, the few existing hypertext linguists, have, in their researches, concentrated mainly on the theorizing of hypertext from different perspectives in order to provide a working theoretical frame for it (hypertext studies) within English Studies. Unfortunately, the in-depth study of select and specific hypertext fiction is rare. This, no wonder, informs why Inna Kouper, in the abstract to his year 2001 online article "Out of nothing: in-depth study of hyperfiction" concludes that "[e]arlier works by G. Landow, J.D. Bolter, S. Moulthrop, E. Aarseth established hypertext literary theory as a valuable part of literary critique. Now it is necessary to study samples of hyperfiction."

It is, therefore, our intention, in this study, to make available a referent work on hypertext for English Studies in Nigeria and to contribute to the interdisciplinary discourse surrounding digital technologies. Also, we intend to provide a work in English Studies, the world over, that would appropriate postmodern literary theory into hypertext theory in order to locate and describe selected hyperfiction texts within relevant linguistic, literary, and non-linguistic theories thereby providing an in-depth study of (selected) hyper(fiction) texts. In this vein, the primary aim of this work is to investigate, in depth, the nature and character of the new forms of text and textuality that have evolved from the technologies of the digital culture with the hope of discovering the aesthetics, character, and implications of these new texts and textuality for language studies, literary studies, critical theories, and English Studies in general. The overall aim of this study is to investigate the products of digital culture from the standpoint of a stylistic analysis. The study, while employing both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis, will engage tools of hypertext and postmodern literary theories to provide a stylistic analysis of the narrative and language materials of the hyperfiction texts. The belief is that the theories will help reveal the ontological aesthetics of the selected hyperfiction texts and their implications for literature.

On this note, it is our aim that at the end of the study, we should be able to identify how the potentials and possibilities of the digital technologies have broken down, reconfigured, and re[de]fined traditional text and textuality and how the rubrics of hypertextuality and hypermediality have expanded the ideas of composition and texts beyond being the mere representation of knowledge with topographic and visible ordering of speech in a mental space to being the representation of knowledge via

visual, aural, and textual codes. Equally, the study should assist in describing how the emergence of the textual entity identified as hypertext has coincided with and fulfilled the textual desires and dreams of postmodernists. These will not only enable us to contribute to the interdisciplinary discourse revolving round the digital culture from a linguistic standpoint, but will display how humans react to, exploit, and explore new technologies, in order to explain the hermeneutical understanding of human beings since "reading the word is … reading the world" as Montgomery (Montgomery, Durant, Fabb, Furniss, and Mills, 2000: xii) puts it in the Preface to their work. Lastly, the overall goal of the study is to provide students, especially of English Studies, who are resident in Nigeria and are interested in the study of the products of the digital culture, especially hypertext and/or hyperfiction texts, with an accessible reference material on hypertext studies.

1.3 Basic research questions

To tail the study towards a coherent realization of its goals, the study will attempt to provide answers to the following questions:

(a)   Having emerged as the primary products of the plastic and malleable virtual space of digital technologies, in what ways do the materials of the selected hyperfiction texts justify the claim that 'context' influences the stylistic shape of the texts as well as the stylistic choices made in a text?

(b)   How do these hyperfiction texts rebel against Tradition, especially in relation to the expectation about the structure and content of a work of art? To what extent does this rebellion challenge and/or re[de]fine the traditionally pre-conceived nature and notion of text and textuality?

(c)   How does the interactive nature of these texts make them (the texts) to fulfil various postmodernist agenda for text, writing, and meaning?

(d)   How central is language to the various experimentations in the selected works of Joyce and Heyward? What do these experimentations suggest about the reactions of humans to the emergence of technological innovation?

1.4 The data

Two hyperfiction texts are selected for this study: *afternoon, a story*(1987, 1996)by Michael Joyce and *of day, of night* (2004)by Megan Heyward. The two texts are CD-ROM based and created with Storyspace™, the hypertext writing environment

10

developed by Jay David Bolter, Michael Joyce (the author of *afternoon, a story*) and John B. Smithand is available from Eastgate Systems, Incorporated at the University of North Carolina. The Windows versions of the two texts are selected for the study. One major factor which informed the selection of the CD-ROM based texts are their accessibility. Unlike web-based hyperfiction texts which, though dynamic, could have their accessibility hampered by internet connectivity and host/server domains, the CD-ROM based hyperfiction texts are constantly available to and accessible for the researcher.

Storyspace™ has been identified as presently the most suitable hyperfiction text environment. Unlike other hypertext environment like HyperCard and Intermedia which are adapted for the creation of hyperfiction texts, Storyspace™ is solely developed for the creation of hyperfiction texts. This explains why most authors of hyperfiction texts have been creating their works using Storyspace™.

Michael Joyce's *afternoon, a story* is the first hyperfiction text. As noted in the packaging of the text, Robert Coover calls it "…the granddaddy of hypertext fictions … a legend" and the *Toronto Globe and Mail*says it "…is to the interactive novel what the Gutenberg Bible is to publishing." The text is created in 1987 and exhibited at the first conference of the Association of Computing Machinery (ACM) where it is welcomed with a rousing applaud. Since its creation in 1987, *afternoon, a story* has remained a masterpiece which many hyperfiction text authors look up to. The place *afternoon, a story* therefore occupies as the first hyperfiction text and as a leading experimental digital fiction influenced its choice for this study.

Megan Heyward is a new media artist and a Senior Lecturer in the Programme Area of Media Arts and Production at the University of Technology, Sydney. As a new media practitioner and educator, Heyward's projects integrate narrative and new media technologies with the experiences of memory and recollection forming their recurrent themes. Her projects have been widely exhibited internationally and are winners of several new media awards. *of day, of night*is her most recent work and has been exhibited in Europe, Asia and Australia. *of day, of night* is an unusually engaging hyperfiction text which explores the combined potentials of hypertextuality and hypermediality by engaging video, sound and text for its creation. In the work, Heyward "explores and experiments with the intersections of narrative and interactivity." The text has, among other things, expanded the idea of textual composition beyond being the mere representation of knowledge with topographic and

visible ordering of signs to being the representation of knowledge with visual, aural, and textual codes. The multimodal textuality of *of day, of night* marks a great departure from the basically alphanumeric textuality of *afternoon, a story* and shows the rate of development and advancement in the field of hypertext years after the first hyperfiction text appeared while at the same time demonstrating the extent to which humans can go in creatively responding to the potentials of technology. Although many other multimodal hyperfiction texts are available in the market, the choice of *of day, of night* is informed by the various accolades and awards the text continues to receive since its emergence and by the fact of its being the most recent of such multimodal works at the time this research commenced.

In selecting these two hyperfiction texts, it is our belief that they would reliably assist us in understanding how the affordances and potentials of digital technology have re[de]fined traditional notions of text and textuality and how the eventual emergence of hyper[fiction] text, as a new textual entity, has coincided with and fulfilled the textual desires, dreams, and prophesies of postmodernists and other critical theorists.

1.5   Methodology

This study intends to explore the verbal and the visual aspects of the selected hyperfiction texts. To fulfil this obligation, the study would be carried out using a functional content analysis method. Thisanalysis method recognises that "the rhetoric of the texts contributes to the creation and circulation of meanings in society, to the point that we understand the world and our place within it through the texts which we make and interpret" (Montgomery, Durant, Fabb, Furniss, and Mills,2000: 2).

Since our objective is to identify how the possibilities within the digital textual space have broken down and re[de]fined text and textuality and have expanded the notion of composition, we shall be preoccupied with the investigation of how the selected texts make meanings, what kinds of meanings they make, and why they make meaning in the way they have made it rather than in some other ways in order to reveal the ways in which the ideas of text, textuality, and composition have been reconfigured in digital culture. Simply put, therefore, this functional approach to the selected texts entails description (identifying recurrent items), explanation (adducing reasons for the use of the item), and interpretation (deducing implications of the use of the items) (cf. Malmkjaer and Carter, 2002: 510).

In essence, the functional approach to the stylistic study of texts is highly significant because the empirical concern of any stylistic study is the analysis of the formal features of texts so as to show their functional significance for the interpretation of such texts (cf. Wales, 1989: 437-8). In this thinking, Crystal and Davy (1969: 90) confirm that 'the business of stylistics [is]… the description of the linguistic characteristics of all situationally-restricted uses of language.' The clue then is that a functional content analysis method affords the analyst the opportunity to catalogue and classifythe stylistic features of the texts within the framework of both linguistic and non-linguistic theories. The description of the formal features of a text ordinarily implies that the analyst would want to consider those features of the text that are prominent since no writer uses a linguistic item repeatedly without an intended illocutionary force.

Another significant factor for the choice of this method of analysis is that it is highly relevant to the theoretical framework adopted for the stylistic study that is Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL), duly complemented with insights from Postmodern Literary Theory (PLT) and Applied Media Aesthetics (AMA). While SFL offers an elaborate account of the relationship of text and context and accounts for the grammatical description of the texts; PLT provides the basis for explaining the stylistic experimental nature of textuality; and AMA accounts for the audio-visual aspects of textual composition and representation. The theoretical framework for the study is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

Technological changes continue to have unforeseen impacts and to bring seismic changes. The innovative introduction of the codex into binding technology transformed the conception of literary work, while the introduction of spaces between words in manuscripts technically changed page layout and transformed reading from a vocal, public performance to a silent, personal activity (cf. Bernstein, Joyce, and Levine 1992:162). By the same token, hypertexts have brought noticeable evolutions on the writing system in general.

Usually, theorists of a new media integrate and innovate in order to make sense of the changes in media. However, a rigid stand on either extreme is intellectually dangerous as too much emphasis on innovation will present the rhetoric as utopia and, "a predominantly integrative rhetoric may interfere with the intellectual and social potential of new media; it may impede real innovation" (Moulthrop, 1991: 292). By adopting an underlining rhetoric which considers the interface between "techne" and "logos" for reconciling the media and the social practices that shape it, the task of the theorists in this instance is, to "[pursue] continuity with existing literary and cultural institutions, and … [explore] the differences that set new technologies apart from old" (Moulthrop, 1991: 292).

Following from the foregoing, our task in this chapter is to examine hypertext as a new and unique communication media with identifiable activities, shapes, and structures. We shall therefore be defining hypertext and hypertextuality; examining the implications of the eventual emergence of hypertext and hypertextuality on traditional text and textuality; and reviewing some relevant previous works. It is our belief that such expositions would provide clear paths for the stylistic investigation of hyperfiction, which is the central focus of this study.

2.2   On defining hypertext

As with every new area of study, different emerging literatures indicate that the theoretical topography of hypertext faces the definitional challenge of what exactly constitutes hypertext. The theoretical/foundational perspective from which hypertext is explored, whether Literature, Philosophy, Politics, or Science, for example, will usually influence its definition. Many have defined hypertext in terms of nonlinearity, collaborative authorship, communication networks, democracy and so on to conclude that hypertext has cultural, educational, literary, and political implications. This definitional diversity reflects the intrinsic fluidity and fuzziness of hypertext epistemology, especially as ongoing researches in hardware and software continues to incessantly reshape the nature of hypertext (cf. Ess, 1994:227).

In another development, hypertext is considered along the three major lines of its development: 'Hypertext the Thing', 'Hypertext the Technology', and 'Hypertext the System' (cf. Landow and Kahn, 1992:149; Aarseth, 1994:67-8). As a thing, hypertext is a collection of non-sequential writings. Rosenberg's (1996:22) definition of the term coincides with this perspective: "hypertext is a **document** in which interactive structure operations are intermingled with the text" (emphasis mine). "Hypertext the Technology", according to Landow and Kahn (1992:149), refers to ""machine-supported links" with or without multiple windows in which to display link contents." This implies that hypertext is defined from its software features, which takes the computer as an information manager that reveals the electronic relationship between the storage and the exploration of units of information through windowing. Klastrup (1997, Introduction, par. 1) sees hypertext from this perspective and therefore describes hypertext as "a **method** of binding a number of documents or 'screens' together by means of links … that when clicked on take the user to another text link elsewhere in the document or to another document altogether" (emphasis mine). In the same line of reasoning, Levy (1994:27) defines hypertext as "a communicative technology centrally based around the notions of links and nodes." Levy distinguishes between 'hypertext the thing' and 'hypertext the technology' by submitting that the former takes the plural form whereas the latter is in the singular form.

"Hypertext the System", refers to "the programs that [use] hypertext technology to create hypertext collections" (Landow and Kahn, 1992: 149). From this line of thought, hypertext relates to what is now generally referred to as hypertext authoring systems or hypertext environments. Storyspace™ and HyperCard fall into

15

this category of hypertext. As the field of hypertext study gradually advances, however, these three developmental lines of hypertext merges as the term comes to be mainly viewed as the new text and textuality that evolved from the computers. In this perspective,Yankelovich, Meyrowitz, and van Dam (1991: 59) see hypertext as "[b]oth an author's tool and a reader's medium" which "allows authors or group of authors to *link* information together, create *path* through a corpus of related material, *annotate* existing texts, and create notes that point readers to either bibliographic data or the body of the referenced text."

Because there is currently a consensus that hypertext originated from Vannevar Bush's conception of the Memex machine and the follow-up work of Douglas C. Engelbart, Theodor H. Nelson, and Andries van Dam, scholars working on hypertext theories usually prefer to commence discussions on hypertext from this area. More relevant here is the definition of hypertext by Ted Nelson who originally coined the term. Nelson defines his neologism as "non-sequential writing – text that branches and allows choices to the reader, best read at an interactive screen ….a series of text chunks connected by links which offer the reader different pathways" (cited in Landow, 2006: 2-3).

Nelson's definition brings out some salient points on the texture of hypertext; three are considered here. One, unlike the conventional stable physical text that enjoys the pleasure of the tactile, hypertext is a transient image/simulacrum of text blocks/chunks on the computer screen. Being intangible, hypertext exists in a virtual space which cannot exist without the presence of the computer. With this, hypertext jettisons traditional print text's pride and claim to permanence, stability and fixedness. Two, unlike the conventional text which is linear because of its top-to-bottom, and page-upon-page presentation, hypertext is presented as several non-linear text chunks which are related only through links. This structural format again projects a basic difference between traditional texts and hypertext since hypertext rejects the traditional presentation of ideas in a linear form. Three, hypertext is non-sequential. According to Landow and Delany (1991:3), this third factor indicates that hypertext "can be composed, and read, non-sequentially … [having] a variable structure." With this non-sequential structure, hypertext gracefully presents the reader with several reading options or orders and the individual readers have the absolute power to determine how to read meaning from/into the text based on the path they choose at the time of reading the text. This ability of the hypertext readers to shape the discourse of the text in

hypertext through their reading decisions conflates hypertextuality with Barthes' notion of the "death of the author" since the readers seem to now possess the prerogative of the sequential order of the "final" text.

In many works, this "non-sequential" characteristic of hypertext identified by Nelson is replaced with the terms "nonlinearity" or "multilinearity" and is considered to be concerned with several textual paths enabled by the systems of links which give the reader the option of choosing their own reading order while constructing meaning for the text. Nonetheless, the multiplicity of linearities in hypertext is a revolutionary departure from the primarily linear mode of writing/reading associated with the traditional text. For this reason, Nielsen (1995:4) says the test of the true hypertext among other artefacts of the digital technology lies in its nonlinearity which "[makes] users *feel* that they can move freely through the information, according to their own needs." He, however, does not hesitate to point out that how the feeling 'feels' is actually hard to define precisely.

The second implication of Nelson's definition identified above concerns the linking facilities of hypertext. For many scholars, this function marks the radical break between conventional text and hypertext. As Landow (1994:6) puts it, "…linking is the most important fact about hypertext, particularly as it contrasts to world of print technology." As a matter of fact, the linking facility mostly accounts for those different characteristics of hypertext which continue to have multi-varied and multi-theoretical implications. Some critics, however, argue that, as far as the linking facility of hypertext is concerned, there is no difference between the feelings of the readers of hypertext and those of the readers of traditional print texts which have end/footnotes. As the readers of the traditional print text encounters a[n] end/footnote marker, they have two basic options: (i) ignoring the note and continuing with the reading of the main text; (ii) leaving the main text to read the note which may contain additional information, author's indebtedness to other authors, or references to other authors who align with or oppose the said the idea and so on. Furthermore, the readers may decide to abandon the primary text to read the referred author after which they may decide to return to the primary text or otherwise. In this pattern, the critics believe that the readers of the traditional print text feel the same way as the readers of hypertext; hence little or no difference exists between them.

Such thinking, to say the least, trifles the aesthetics of hypertextuality in every conceivable way.This is because end/footnotes in traditional texts cannot compare with

17

the linking system of hypertext in many ways. First, "link" is an intrinsic feature of hypertext. All hypertexts are defined by the linking system regardless of their genre, whereas not all traditional texts employ end/footnotes. Second, unlike end/footnotes which are subsidiary to the primary text, linked text chunks have no hierarchical order. Each node/text chunk shifts the centre whenever one visits/traverses it. Third, there are both time and spatial distance between the primary text and the end/footnote, on the one part and between the referenced materials and references to them, on the other part. In hypertext, however, there is immediacy among linked nodes. The relationship between linked nodes brings to the fore Cairncross' (2001) concept of "the death of distance." The centrality and immediacy inherent in linked nodes radically and wholly change the experience of reading and the nature of what is read.

To this end, Koskimaa's (2000:Ch.2, para.27) itemizes the following features which mark intertextual reference from linking system:

1.   In a static print text, the reference cannot be changed at will, while the destination of a link is always changeable.
2.   The links cannot be "open" – it has to be fixed somewhere (even though that somewhere may be changed later).
3.   References cannot be timed, so that they would be available only at certain times, or, during a certain interval.
4.   References cannot directly use other media as a link can (connecting to an audio file, for example, or to a real time video feed etc.)
5.   References cannot be directed to posterior processes, or, track processes in real time.
6.   References cannot be chained as links can.
7.   Intertextuality cannot be left as an empty structure to be filled in by the reader like links can.
8.   Links can be two-way, unlike references.

Thus, establishing a relationship of similarity or synonymy between links and end/footnote or intertextual references is a superficial activity that would blind to the obvious fact that the two mechanisms differ fundamentally from each other.

2.2.1   … and hypermedia?

In the various attempts employed at defining hypertexts, theorists have occasionally distinguished between those hypertexts which are basically alphanumeric and those which employ non-verbal modes such as maps, images, diagrams, animations, video clips, and sound which are referred to as hypermedia. According to

Yankelovich, Meyrowitz, and van Dam (1991:60), hypermedia "denote the functionality of hypertext but with additional components such as two- and three-dimensional structures graphics, paint graphics, spreadsheets, video, sound, and animation." With hypermedia, therefore, the author has the ability to create links to diagrams, text, still picture, video, audio recordings, and the like.

However, hypertext theorists like Nielsen (1995), Koskimaa (2000), and Landow (2006) are of the opinion that it is unnecessary to demarcate text blocks that are basically alphanumeric from those that contain non-verbal elements in as much as nodes with alphanumeric texts can be linked with nodes containing non-verbal text elements. In their further explanation, Yankelovich, Meyrowitz, and van Dam (1991: 61) equally propose that as long as text blocks are linked together in hypertext, there is no point making a rigid distinction between text blocks that contain only and/or both alphanumeric and non-verbal elements:

> …the basic capabilities implied by the terms *hypertext* and *hypermedia* include linking together discrete *blocks* (e.g. word, paragraph, text document, graphical object, spreadsheet cell, and video frame) to form *webs* of information, following different paths through the information webs, and attaching annotations ... to any block of information.

For this study, hypertext is **an electronic textual medium with linked nodes that may contain verbal and non-verbal textual elements**; hence we do not differentiate between hypertext and hypermedia. We hold that all hypermedia texts are hypertexts though not all hypertexts display hypermediality.

Hypermediality plays a major role in effecting the reconfiguration of text, authoring/writing, and reading. Bolter (1991b:114) specifically submits that "hypermedia simply extends the principles of electronic writing into hnn the domain of sound and image ... to create a synaesthesia in which anything that can be seen or heard may contribute to the texture of the text." With hypermediality, therefore, the idea of composition now transcends representing knowledge/message with only words. Knowledge/message representation now takes place at visual, aural, and textual (alphanumeric) levels which consequently call for real "hard work" not only from the author but also from the reader of the new text. Thus, as hypertext changes conventional notions about text through various digital technology potentials, "hypermediality" actually plays a significant role in effecting this change and in projecting hypertext as a postmodern "carnivalesque" text, to use Bakhtin's

19

terminology. Hypermedia hypertext is not only a carnival that has enough room for everything; it is equally, in Barthes' term, a "writerly" text which demands non-trivial effort and attention from both the author and the reader of the text.

2.2.2 Hypertext types

Hypertext types are basically distinguished on the planes of technology/production mode and document structure. At the level of technology or system, hypertext can be divided into "read-only" and "read-and-write" types. Theorists believe that there is a great divide between read-only hypertexts and read-and-write hypertexts, especially when "interactivity" is considered as the distinguishing factor between hypertext and other digital products and as the major point of departure of hypertext from traditional text. In read-only hypertexts (such as those that are CD-ROM based), readers' interactions with the text are limited to choosing their reading paths among several other possible reading paths whereas read-and-write hypertexts possess network capabilities which allow the reader to add comments, links, or both and make them immediately available to other users of the text.

Incidentally, the visionaries of hypertext (Bush, Engelbart, Nelson, and van Dam) envision that hypertext should provide the same environment for the reader and the author such that the functions of the two are merged and the boundaries between them are totally blurred. Landow (1994:14) notes that "the particular importance of networked textuality … appears when technology transforms readers into reader-authors or "wreaders," because any contribution, any change in the web created by one reader, quickly becomes available to other readers." At this rate, the individual comments/private notes of a reader are transformed into public statements/common assets.

While hypertext has been said to have democratic implications, one should, however, be cognizant of the fact that the mode employed for the creation of such a hypertext – whether read-only or read-and-write – determines the depth of this political implication of hypertext. The freedom open to the reader of a read-only hypertext, though infinitely inconceivable by the author of the hypertext, is still cowed by the nature of its mode. For the readers of the read-and-write hypertext, however, they share the same environment with the author. This is not without serious copyright implications though. Many hypertext theorists believe that it is only this type of

20

hypertext that really bears the image of a true hypertext. In this study, while we do not object the fact that many of the changes hypertext bring upon the traditions of reading and writing are greatly embedded in the materiality of read-and-write hypertexts, we believe that interactivity, as made possible by the facilities of electronic linking system, is a major hallmark that sets hypertext apart from print texts. The linking facilityof hypertext (be it read-only or read-and-write) makes possible a breakaway from the strictures/traditions of reading and writing conventions and redefines the traditional roles of the reader and the author.

Apart from the production or technology modes, the document structures of hypertexts also demand meticulous attention. Hypertext documents have two fundamental structures: axial/pre-structured and network/self-navigating (Landow, 1994: 23 and Miall, 1997, par. 3). The axial or pre-structured hypertext relies heavily on the linear nature of the print text. That print texts seem to provide the materials and style of hypertexts at the early stage of its revolution is not unexpected because many printing presses, at the early stage of the Gutenberg revolution, were turning out manuscripts in print form rather than books! The influence of the book form as a model for hypertext is still very strong. It is expected that this influence will gradually thin away as hypertext continues to enlarge its foothold in the academia, and in theory/practice.

In the network or self-navigating hypertext, text is presented as short sections of nodes linked nonlinearly to form a web-like structure which realizes a dispersed, multivocal, centreless, and multilinear text as an inherent result of the facilities of electronic linking system. Because linking effects a network organization, hypertext has no logical order; hence, the reader of the network hypertext must consciously put in both effort and energy to find a path or an order in the labyrinth created by the web of links. The fundamental importance and implications of the networked hypertext is fulfilled in the instance where it is produced in the "read-and-write" mode thereby enabling the reader to add links, personal comments, and/or both. In this way, hypertext becomes indeterminate, infinite, and unconquerable and mirrors Barthes' notion of the "writerly" text.

Being a writerly text, hypertext "[works] in collaboration with the user who has the intelligence to understand the semantic contents of the various nodes and determine which of its outgoing links to follow" (Nielsen, 1995:16). This collaboration is highly essential because the links between nodes does not usually infer semantic links or

cohesive relationships between the nodes. According to Fish (cited in Douglas, 1994: 175), "readingis as much an act of constructing as of construing", thus, hypertext readers are obliged to construct the semanticsof the textual elements they encounter in the text blocks. Consequently, Douglas (1994: 175) concludes that "the glue that holds texts together is the reader's ability to perceive references and causal connections linking phrases, sentences, and paragraphs."

2.2.3 Elements of hypertext

The basic elements of hypertext have been identified as "node" and "link." Everything in hypertext depends upon the existence of these two elements. The two define the reconfiguration of the textuality embodied in hypertext, permit multilinear reading paths, and generate the varied cultural and theoretical implications of hypertext. When Nelson defined hypertext, he noted that "text chunks," that is nodes, are fundamental units of hypertext. In hypertext theories, terms like 'pages', 'screens','frames', and 'workspaces' are also used in referring to this basic unit. However, the term 'lexia', borrowed from Barthes' essay *S/Z* and incorporated into hypertext theory by Landow, is employed as a more theoretical reference of the unit. Being the segments of hypertext, nodes are to hypertexts what "pages" are to print texts. And, as earlier pointed out (section 2.2.1), the nodes can contain texts, images, sound, video clips, graphics.

A node is any object which is electronically linked and placed in relation to another whether text, image, sound, video, or graphic. Slatin (1991: 162) points out that "a node is a knot, is always embedded in a system – and that connectedness in turn gives the node its definition." The interdependency existing between nodes and links is such that it is impossible to mention one without mentioning the other. Thus, the answer to the definition of a node impliedly evolves as the answer to the status and nature of links. The link, as Slatin (1991: 161) defines it, is "the electronic representation of a perceived relationship between two pieces of materials, which become nodes once the relationship has been instantiated electronically." Links are therefore the mechanism through which relations are established among the various parts of a hypertext. Equally links enable the reader to move through the text. Links thus refer to the connections/relationships among the nodes of a hypertext. Usually, links are anchored at their departure points, that is, they provide the user with a clue or an object to activate in order to follow the link.

Ever since Jay David Bolter examined the concept of space in relation to hypertext writing in his *Writing Space* (1991), the subject continues to generate varieddiscussions. The link facility mainlydefines hypertext place/space in terms of non-spatiality in thatthere is no spatial/geographical distance between two linked nodes whether they belong to the same hypertext corpus or they exist within different ones. No sense of distance exists between nodes since links always enact immediacy in spite of the relative position of nodes to one another. Thus, the conceptual space in hypertext is tantamount to Cairncross' (2001) notion of "The death of the distance." Fundamentally, therefore, the two elements of nodes and links define full hypertextuality of any text and make possible the nonlinear, multilinear, fragmentation, and interactivity of hypertext as a reconfigured text.

2.2.4   Properties of hypertext

Hypertext possesses various characteristics which radically mark it off from conventional print texts. These characteristics include fluidity, plurality, and manoeuvrability, among many others. However, most prominent of the properties of hypertext are "nonlinearity" and "interactivity." The discussion in this section thus focuses on these two properties.

Nonlinearity as one distinguishing hallmark of hypertext is popularly approached from the ability of the readers to choose their own reading order while exploring the text. In reading the conventional text, the reader is expected to follow a linear path and to move from up to bottom, left to right, and page to page, in a route predetermined by the author. Because the traditional text is linear, it exists like the structure presented in Figure 2.1 below with the reader expected to move from page 1 through to 2, then to 3 and finally to page 4.

In the case of hypertext, however, the workings of hypertext elements (nodes and links), makes one to be confronted with an inherently nonlinear text. The possible nonlinearity inherent in hypertext reading is represented with Figure 2.2 below. We have deliberately ignored using numerals in order to dispel the possibility of deducing that a relationship of implied hierarchy exists among the nodes of the text. In each of the nodes in the figure, there is no hierarchical order for traversing the content of the hypertext. For the reader of the node "xh", for example, the reading path choices available include: [xh-xx-xf-xy-xk], [xh-xy-xm-xw-xq], and [xh-xy-xf-xc-xj] among other reading order possibilities in the text. The reader here is not controlled or limited
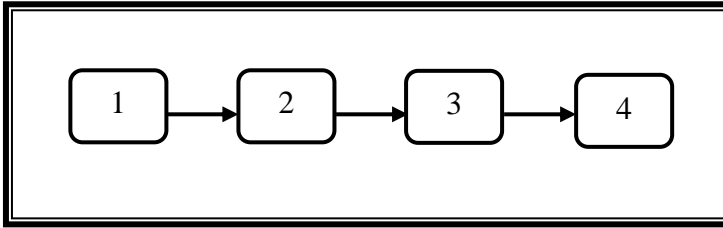
Figure 2.1. The linear nature of traditional print text
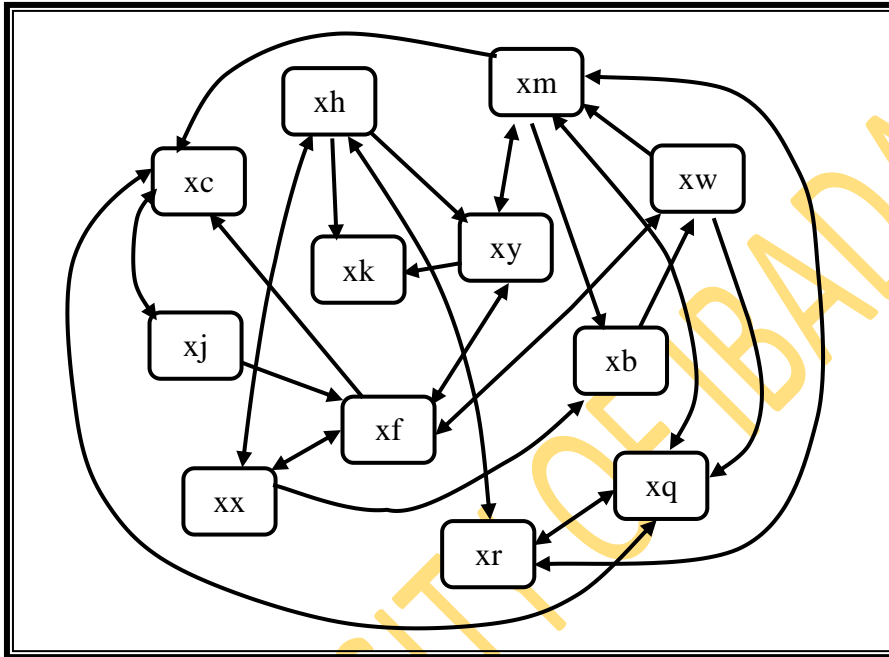
Figure 2.2. The nonlinear nature of textuality in hypertexts as enabled by its architecture of nodes and links

24

by any author-predetermined structure for progression and succession thus, "the linear chain provided by the author in traditional texts is …replaced by a nonlinear constellation of text chunks from which the reader can choose individualized routes" (Liestol, 1994: 104).

Theoretically, it is this nonlinear nature of hypertext that marks the major point of divergence from the traditional print text: that text which prides in linear presentation of ideas. From the literary point of view, hypertextual [non]linearity enables the readers to choose their orders for the semantic acquisition of the text thereby redefining the authority of the author and granting the reader more power to control. For literary theorists, this hypertext readers' ability to control and create the discourse of the text by their reading decisions partly fulfils Barthes' notion of "the death of the author" as earlier noted in the preceding Section 2.2.

Liestol (1994: 110) however argues that "the flexible collection of intersecting context-dependent linearities should ... be conceived as *multi*linear and *multi*sequential instead of as the negatives *non*linear and *non*sequential." Like Liestol, many hypertext theorists are of the opinion that the description of hypertext as being "nonlinear" only displays the euphoria of writers who desperately want to define hypertext in opposition to traditional text; forgetting that innovations, rather than enthrone itself as utopia, should, as a matter of necessity, align itself with the old and pursue continuity with it in order to objectively bring distinctions and differences to the fore. For these theorists, therefore, the complex structures of linearities inherent in hypertext should be viewed in terms of multiplicity of linearities rather than as pure negations of line and sequence.

However, Koskimaa (2000, online) argues that this conceptual reformulation of hypertext should be properly positioned in hypertext theories. According to him, when Nelson identified hypertext as being nonlinear, he basically meant the structure of hypertext which is clearly a network of nonlinear elements. The conceptual reformulation of the notion by theorists actually focuses on the readings of hypertext which are unavoidably linear since they are temporally conditioned. In this line of thought, Liestol (1994: 106) suggests that nonlinearity should be examined in relation to space and time. In space, hypertext is nonlinear. However, "nonlinearity in time is imaginary; it is a fundamental contradiction of terms and necessarily impossible. *Time is linear,* at least the time that is required to read and write hypertexts" (Liestol, 1994:106). No matter how jumpy, fragmented, and nonlinear a text may be in

space/structure, therefore, immediately the reader calls up a particular node, the node is extracted from the nonlinear context and instituted in a linear chain that is temporally defined. Since time can only be experienced linearly, what at a certain level exists in nonlinearity will always end up in a linear chain. In his further argument, Liestol (1994: 107) reiterates that "the moment one reaches into nonlinearity by clicking on one of the icons in the graph, one reduces nonlinearity to linearity. We cannot escape. We always find ourselves at the intersection of time and space, and this situation frames all our action." At best then, hypertext is nonlinear only in space and in terms of its structure. In reading, however, hypertext exists at the level of time and is as such multilinear/multisequential, or to use Aarseth's term, hypertext is "multicursal."

Interactivity is the other basic property which distinguishes hypertext from other textual implications of digitization. With the facilities of manipulation and individual navigation users/readerscaninteractively take control of the links among information units and thereby radically change the experiences of reading and writing. Although this term was formulated by Roman Ingarden in the nineteen thirties, reception aesthetics and reader-response studies further develop the idea and initiate it as the starting point of the reader's active participation in the process of signification. For Jean-Paul Sartre reading is nothing short of "directed creation." In the same vein, present-day reader-response theories have discardedthe concept of reading as a passive activity as "[r]eaders are now seen as breathing life into the texts they read, and reifying,or concretizing their possibilities – even receiving the text by composing it, in a creative effort nearly tantamount to that exerted by the author…" (Douglas, 1992:8).

Interactivity, as a property of hypertext, indicates the capacity of the reader to intervene in processes as they take place. In explaining the concept of interactivity in hypertexts, Ryan (2001: 5-6) submits that:

> In hypertext, the prototypical form of interactive textuality…the reader determines the unfolding of the text by clicking on certain areas, the so-called hyperlinks, that bring to the screen other segments of text. Since every segment contains several such hyperlinks, every reading produces a different text….Whereas the reader of a standard print text constructs personalized interpretations out of an invariant semiotic base, the reader of an interactive text participates in the construction of the text as a visible display of signs….this relative freedom has been hailed as an allegory of the vastly more creative and less constrained activity of reading as meaning formation.

A scholar like Espen Aarseth, however, particularly scorns the term "interactivity" arguing that "to declare a system is interactive is to endorse it with a magic power" (cited inLandow, 2006: 42). In consequence, Aarseth proposes to replace the term with "ergodic"; a term he appropriated from physics that derive from Greek words "*ergon*" (work) and *"hodos"* (path). In the light of this, Aarseth (cited in Landow, 2006: 42) submits that:

> in ergodic literature, nontrivial effort is required to allow the reader traverse the text. If ergodic literature is to make sense as a concept, there must also be nonergodic literature, where the effort to traverse the text is trivial, with no extranoematic responsibilities placed on the reader except (for example) eye movement and the periodic or arbitrary turning of pages

In his essay, "Nonlinearity and Literary Theory," Aarseth (1994) re-investigates and re-theorizes the subject of textuality. Under the re-theorized concept of textuality, he uses "texton" to refer to the basic unit of textuality, while "scripton" describes an unbroken sequence of one or more textons as they are projected by the text. He thereafter identifies five "traversal variates" which determine the extent to which a reader can participate in the meaning production of any text. The variates are: dynamics, determinability, transiency, maneuverability, and user-functionality. In his further work, *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (1997), Aarseth expands these variates into seven:

1. *dynamics*: static (*scriptons* are constant), intratextonic dynamics (the number of *textons* is fixed, the *scriptons* may change), textonic dynamics (the number and content of *textons* may vary)
2. *determinability*: determinable (the same response to a given situation will always produce the same result), indeterminable (the results of responses are unpredictable)
3. *transiency*: transient (mere passing of the user's time causes *scriptons* to appear), intransient (*scriptons* appear only through the user's activity)
4. *perspective*: personal (requires the user to play a strategic role as a character in the world described by the text), impersonal (reader not involved as a participant)
5. *access:* random (all *scriptons* are readily available to the user at all times), controlled (some *scriptons* are available only when certain conditions are met)
6. *linking:* explicit, conditional, none

7.   *user-functionality*: explorative, configurative, interpretative,
      textonic   (cited in Koskimaa, 2000: Ch.2, para.37)

These seven variates theoretically determine the extent to which the reader will actively take part in the process of meaning production. As demonstrated in Figure 2.3 below, the reader's participation is highly essential for the semantic construction of the text. Ordinarily, interpretation is an inseparable part of all reading activities. However, when reading hypertext, readers, in addition to interpretation, also performexplorative roles which require the reader to choose a path through the materials of the text. This function conflates with the navigation prowess of the reader. The configurative user-function allows the reader to reform the text within certain limits while the textonic function relates to the possibility of actively participating in the writing of the text.Thus enabled to write additional text, change pre-existing text, or delete part/all of the text in a certain way, the reader interactively participates in the evolution of the text.

When the user functions are combined with other six variables Aarseth identifies, the interactivity of hypertext is exhibited such that the reader, in addition to reading the text, is required to actively contribute her/his quota to the evolution of the text. Whether interactive or ergodic, hypertext reconfigures the role of the reader and places on her/him higher responsibilities that print texts do. Although reader-response theories argue that the literary work of art is incomplete without reader participation, the variates Aarseth identifies point to the fact that where interactivity occurs as an anomaly, an experiment and/or a postmodern departure from traditions in print texts, it is taken as a natural property of hypertext: the indelible signature of its existential space and location.

2.3   Redefining the text

When we hold a written text in our hands, we are rather unconscious of our subconscious assumptions and expectations about what that text must be like: linear, bounded, and fixed (cf. Landow and Delany, 1991:3). Since the invention of writing, the written text, whether on clay, papyrus or paper, tablet, scroll or book, has been viewed as and praised for being a stable record of thought that allows information to be shared across boundaries and over ages (cf. Delany and Landow, 1993:5). In this

regard, Richard Lanham (cited in Slatin, 1991:155) says that "it was establishing the original text that the Renaissance scholars thought their main task, and generations of
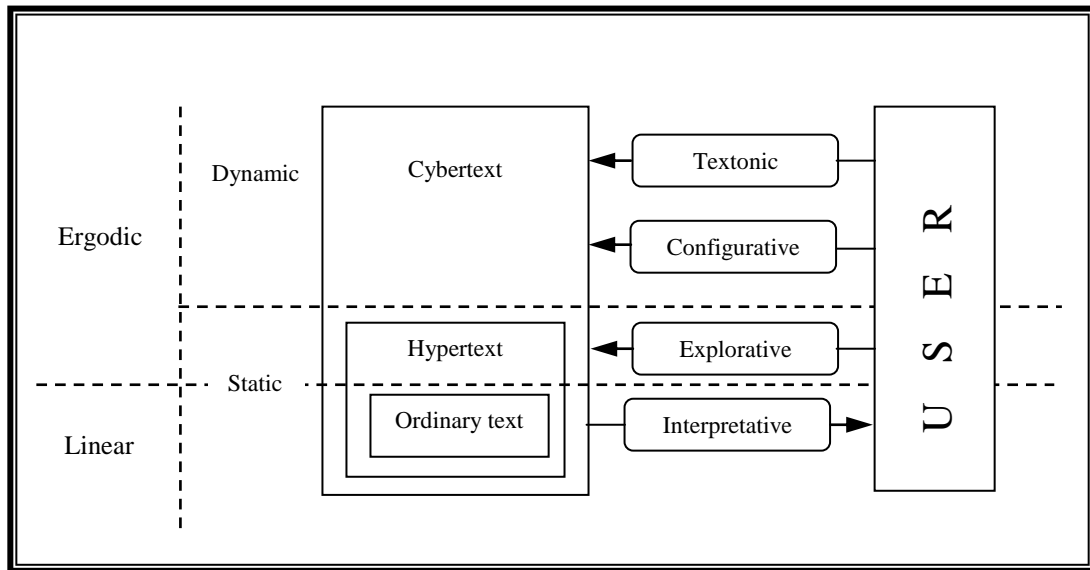
Figure 2.3. Aarseth's cybertextual categories and perspective on textuality (Source: Koskimaa, 2000: Ch 2, para.39)

textual editors since have renewed their labors. The aim of all this was to fix the text forever."

Highly important in the transmission of stable information in the written text is the ominous landmark of the inventions of the Gutenberg technologies which added the quality of multiplicity to the fixity of the written text (Delany and Landow, 1993:6). In this way, printing does not only ensure the fixity of the text, but also allows the multiple production of the text for dispersal across geographic and time borders such that the task of preserving information in some fragile manuscript that degrade with use and age was no longer necessary. The impress is thus that fixity is the 'biggest asset' of the written text (Yankelovich, Meyrowitz, and van Dam, 1991:54) because it pictures the text as a stable and fixed object in both physical and mental spaces (cf. Slatin, 1991:155) and permits individuals separated in time and space to refer to the same information (Delany and Landow, 1993:6). Coincidentally, this biggest asset of the written text, according to Yankelovich, Meyrowitz, and van Dam (1991:54), is considered its most serious shortcoming. Yankelovich, Meyrowitz, and van Dam, reiterate this position as shown in Table 2.1 below. Because of the disadvantage of the fixity and stability of the print text, experimenting with other media of information like sound, video, and motion within the written textwas absolutely impossible.

Interestingly, however, the emergence of hypertext radically changes many of the preconceived notions we hold about the text. With the facility of linking and the virtual nature of the digital environment, we are confronted with a nonlinear (multilinear), fluid, and unbounded text that exists as virtual codeswhich have no physical equivalences and come alive only in the presence of a computer system.

The basic elements of hypertext transform it into a conglomeration of text chunks; a text of fragments; a structure of fragments; a structure for fragments. It relieves the text of the burden of one ordering principle and jettisons the tradition of linearity. Thus, unlike the traditional print text that is a fixed unitary text, hypertext is a fragmented text both in space and in time. In space, hypertext is made up of various nonsequential chunks of text. In time, variant readings of the text must be pursued in order to fully grasp the whole in the fragments that hypertext is made of.Thus, the possible variable readings of hypertext authenticate hypertext as a fragmented text rather than as a unitary text.

From a somewhat subjective point of view, one may hastily conclude that this
fragmentation of the text will directly lead into anarchy and chaos. However, it should

Table 2.1. Advantages and disadvantages of the written text (Source: Yankelovich, Meyrowitz, and van Dam, 1991:54)

CHARACTERISTICS	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Integrity of information	• Historical value • Never inaccessible because of unreliable hardware	• Readers can never alter content • Readers cannot customize information • Cannot conform to user preferences (e.g. type size, margin width)
Physical entities	• Portable • Allows browsing and exploring • Allows annotation and underlining • Aesthetically appealing	• Limited to 2-D information • Limited to static text and graphics • Costly to reproduce for quickly outdated information • Often hard to locate specific information
Static		• Cannot handle sound or motion • Difficult to create multiple indices
Advanced technology	• Well-defined and accepted standards • Typography, graphic design, and photo reproduction refined fields • High-resolution print and graphics • Easy to read	• Joint authorship difficult • Re-keying text is error-prone

be noted that the reader of the text of fragment has the proclivity and natural capacity in her/his role as a 'wreader' to create a coherent route through the fragments of the text at every moment of 'wreading' the text. As long as the reader possesses this natural capacity to coherently waddle through the text, wreading the fragments of hypertext does not subject either the text or the wreader to the ill effects the abandonment of linearity would have had were it in book technology. This explains why in the digital world, there is neither anarchy nor entropy in spite of its characteristic nonlinearity. The digital empowers the centre such that the on-screen node takes the centre of the textual universe until the action of the wreader causes a shift in the centre and another node takes position at this ethereal, re-centrable, intangible, and evanescent centre.

Bush and Nelson, the visionaries of hypertext have anticipated a future in which the facility of links would produce a grand order text: the dispersed text in which all texts would be linked together. Although the digital world is yet to witness the birth of this metatext, ongoing hypertext experiments indicate a promising future. Already there are mini-metatexts. There are hypertexts that link texts to other texts and there are those which link sections of individual texts to the sections of other individual texts.

In another dimension, some other hypertexts exist as the digital translations of materials initially conceived for book technology. The simplest form of these translations puts a classical linear text at the centre of the structure and then appends to it various other materials ranging from critical commentaries to textual variants. In this circumstance, the classical text, according to Landow and Delany (1991: 9) "becomes an unchanging axis from which radiate linked texts that surround it, modifying the reader's experience of this original text-in-a-new-context." This type of hypertext is, in fact, ta common phenomenon among those educational institutions where hypertext studies are seriously handled for the presentation of canonical literary texts (cf. Landow, 2006: 69). There is, for example, a World Wide Web presentation of Carlyle's "Hudson's Statue" created by Landow to practically teach undergraduates at BrownsUniversity. The environment of the work being a read-and-write one, the students have been able to create various links to the work, ranging from the Bible, Jonathan Swift's *Tale of a Tub*, contemporary guides, parliamentary documents,

newspapers, and other materials Carlyle's text obviously relates for the interpretation of the text (cf. Landow, 2006: 106).

All these forms of hypertext, though not exhaustive, evince that hypertextual possibilities created through the system of electronic linking atomize texts and disperse them into one another. Since the text associates with whatever is linked to it, the notion of intellectual separation of a text from other texts is redefined just as the beingness of the entity labelled text and the attitudes associated with it are reconfigured. The belief in an individual, discrete, and unique text is just as much undermined since hypertext weaves texts, authors, and various media. In a true read-and-write hypertext environment, texts not only disperse into other texts but automatically shoot out vacuums and fill-able appendage points that are to be filled through electronic linking of relevant materials to the points.

By this, hypertext blurs the boundary of the text and translates it into an open-ended, expandable, and incomplete text which cannot be appropriately clothed with the traditional notion of a complete and finished work. Hypertext, thus, provides an escape route from what Gerard Genette terms a 'sort of idolatry … the fetishism of the work – conceived of as a closed, complete, absolute object' (cited in Landow, 2006:113) and creates an open-bordered text which exists in the presence of other texts; disabled from shutting out other texts. This text, as Landow (2006:114) explains, embodies the Derridean text that blurs 'all those boundaries that form the running border of what used to be called a text, of what we once thought this word could identify, i.e., the supposed end and beginning of a work, the unity of the corpus, the title, the margins, the signatures, the referential realm outside the frame, and so forth.' Landow consequently concludes that hypertext undergoes what Derrida describes as a 'a sort of overrun [*debordement*] that spoils all these boundaries and divisions.' As hypertext links within and without a text, all textual materials are brought closer together and the boundaries between them are blurred.

As hypertext evinces integration rather than self-containment, it situates texts in a field of other texts, changes spatial and temporal boundary relations among the texts, and corrects the artificial isolation of texts from its contexts thereby trampling under a major quality of the book. In essence, hypertext, with its permeable and blurred border demystifies the text of those idolized notions of a unitary, independent, and all-encompassing isolated work which, according to Ong (1982:132), writing and printing have bestowed on the text:

By isolating thought on a written surface, detached from any interlocutor, making utterance in this sense autonomous and indifferent to attack, writing presents utterance and thought as uninvolved with all else, somehow self-contained, complete. Print, in the same way situates utterance and thought on a surface disengaged from everything else, but it also goes farther in suggesting self-containment.

If hypertext reconfigures textual border by making it continually expandable and open-ended, one can, for sure, expect that the notions of beginning and ending are equally redefined. Ordinarily, the concepts apply more appropriately in the tradition of linearity and not within the context of a nonlinear (multilinear) borderless and open-ended textual heritage. When one aligns oneself with the assumption of multiple sequences in hypertext, then one can easily conclude that hypertext equally possesses multiple entry and exit points.

From her perspective, Ryan (2001:226) submits that 'every hypertext has a fixed entry point – there must be an address to reach before the system of links can be activated.' Ryan's perspective is understandable in as much as one quickly detects that she is a theorist of WWW hypertext. Her use of 'address' in the definition of the beginning of hypertext encounters a problem when it is applied to stand-alone hypertexts since the term implies that she is thinking only in terms of WWW hypertexts. Equally, the possibility of a reader using a search engine to guide to any particular lexia within the hypertext indicates that the assertion of a fixed and true entry point cannot always be true even with the WWW hypertext. In fact, as Landow (2006: 111) remarks, many readers of hypertexts, in many instances, 'fall in through the living-room ceiling rather than entering through the front door.'

In contrast to Ryan, Said (1985:3) whose work centres on origins and openings explains that the beginning of a text is 'the main entrance to what it offers.' In this line of argument, therefore, a text like *of day, of night* which has more than one entry points has many beginnings. In a somewhat related submission, Said (1985: 5) says that 'the beginning is the first point (in time, space, or action) of an accomplishment or process that has duration and meaning. *The beginning, then, is the first in the intentional production of meaning*.' In Said's view, therefore, it is at that very point at which the reader initiates a path in the process of intentionally reading meaning into a given hypertext as a text of fragmentsthat indicates the beginning of the text [for that particular reader]. These various assertions about hypertext indicate that the issue of

'beginning' is just as characteristically fluid as the notion of hypertext as a text. For, what at this moment serves as the beginning may forever never be again, especially in a read-and-write hypertext environment where the text is continually in the process of becoming.

If hypertext makes determining the beginning of a text difficult and problematic, one expects no less about the concept of an ending. In a read-and-write system, readers do not only choose different ending points, they shake and widen the text by annotating the text and providing various links to the text. This invariably problematizes the concept of an ending in hypertext as underscored in Nelson's point that:

> There is no Final Word. There can be no final version, no last thought. There is always a new view, a new idea, a reinterpretation. And, literature, which we propose to electronify is a system for preserving continuity in the face of this fact…. Remember the analogy between text and water. Water flows freely, ice does not. The free-flowing, live documents on the network are subject to constant new use and linkage, and those new links continually become interactively available. Any detached copy someone keeps is frozen and dead, lacking access to the new linkage (cited in Landow, 2006:112).

Landow (2006:112) avers that Nelson's remarks relate directly to Bakhtin's conception of textuality which anticipates hypertextuality: 'the whole is not a finished entity; it is always a relationship…. Thus, the whole can never be finalized and set aside; when a whole is realized, it is by definition already open to change.' In effect, with the facility of the linking system, the end of hypertext is always open to change and is constantly in the process of formation.

One visible effect of this open-enedness of hypertext as embedded in the linking system is that the reader now gains certain power to behave like the author. The reader is able to control and to continually re-structure (re-text/re-word/re-world) the text and s/he therefore re-writes the authority of the writer (the author) who, unlike her/his traditional counterparts, does not have the final say on her/his text. In fact, the text no longer bears her/his sole signature as the text is dispersed into other texts and becomes a common property of the co-authors whether writers or wreaders. As the writer loses control over her/his text, the traditional status and power relation scale between the author and the reader is adjusted; the reader gains more control and s/he no longer stands at a disadvantaged end.

35

Apart from readjusting the status and power balance between the writer and the reader, hypertext also readjusts the relation scale between what is traditionally referred to as primary and /or supplementary text. In book technology, a smaller character type indicates of end/footnote. The placement of the end/footnote away from the centre of the text indicates that it is subsidiary, dependent, and less important. However, electronic linking destroys this binary relationship. A link takes the reader through any nature of text be it other works by the same author, a range of critical commentaries, textual variants, and allusions. Depending on the navigational path and method of the reader, what may in one instance stand as a commentary on a text may, in another navigational route, exist as the text to which the other text is linked for better illumination. As hypertext dismantles textual hierarchies, it makes the assignment of texts into "statusphere" of "primary" and/or "secondary" texts difficult (Tom Wolfe's term). At best, hypertext creates a new kind of hierarchy which empowers the centre such that the current on-screen textual unit holds the power of the textual universe and dominates, howbeit temporarily and in a nontyrannical manner since "that center is always a transient, decentrable virtual center – one created … by one's act of calling up that particular text" (Landow and Delany, 1991:10).

Another fundamental way in which hypertext reconfigures the text manifests in the relationship betweenverbal and visual elements of the text. As Hayles (cited in Landow, 2006:84) argues, the digital emphasizes the visual because "the computer restores and heightens the sense of word as image – an image drawn in a medium as fluid and changeable as water." With the possibilities of hypermediality, hypertext systems easily make links between verbal and nonverbal elements like graphics, sounds, still and moving images. This is why the virtual culture, that is the digital culture, is equally labelled a visual culture. Mirzoeff (1998:6) argues that "one of the most striking features of the new visual culture is the visualization of things that are not in themselves visual." In this wise, hypertext brings about a challenge between the ""world-as-a-text" and the "world-as-a-picture" because the visual disrupts and challenges any attempt to define culture in purely linguistic terms" (Mirzoeff, 1998:5).

Hypertext as a form therefore "implements Derrida's call for a new form of hieroglyphic writing that can avoid some of the problems implicit and therefore inevitable in Western writing system and their printed version" (Landow, 2006:84). It is Derrida's belief that the inclusion of the visual in writing will enable an escape from the constraints linearity imposes. Derrida's call, as Ulmer explains, confronts that

which in language suppresses anything that resists linearization because "this suppression amounts to the denial of the pluridimensional character of symbolic thought originally present in the 'mythogram' (Leroi-Gourhan's term), or nonlinear writing (pictographic and rebus writing)" (cited in Landow, 2006:84).

Perhaps the height of the visual in hypertext is achieved through the possibility of programming the text to behave in a dynamic way such that the text can move, dance, undulate, sweep from one side to the other, appear to move closer to the reader or retreat into a simulated distance or a diminishing background, evolve from a chaotic assemblage/collage and change font colour, size, and type:the possibilities are unprecedented and unpredictable. Text animation, taking on the virtual nature of the digital space, reimburses the fact that the interpretation of the text as a fixed, stable, unitary element is not appropriate for hypertext. With these textual animation facilities, the text, in reality, is an assemblage and/or a collage of various codes which can be changed, manipulated, and moved in ways which print technology never did and may never do. In many instances, animation is accompanied by sounds which make the text more of a performing text – a text performing its text. The animated text, in actual sense, controls the reader's access to information at the speed and time imposed by the author. Invariably, it is not in all circumstances that the author completely loses her/his authority. The same medium that snatched some of the author's status power/authority can be manipulated to help her/him regain it, however partial or temporal. Everything, however, depends on how far the author has gained versatility in programming, computer skills, and electracy in general for the dynamic manipulation of the text.

2.4 Redefining writing

Until the development of digital textuality, the act of writing was taken as the inscription of physical equivalence of verbal codes on physical surfaces. At the wake of digital technologies, however, writing took the form of simulated electronic codes and there was a shift from what Jean Baudrillard identifies as the 'tactile' to the 'digital.' This fundamental shift from tactile to digital is an indication of a shift from physical marks to virtual codes and from hard to soft media. Invariably, digital technologies invent highly distinctive texts and pose several questions relating to textuality: What kind of texts are these texts? Who writes them? How are they written or read? What roles do the constraints and potentials of their technological context play in framing them? In pursuing these questions, we seek to uncover the nature of

37

the texts identified as hypertexts and to understand the activities which enable their frames and structures.

As already discussed in the previous sections, hypertext/hypermedia systems enable the representation of knowledge with the combination of words, images, sounds, animations and simulations. This situation is understandable in Kaplan and Moulthrop's (1993:263) argument's that "communications technologies are evolving more complex and powerful forms of systematic representation … [which indicate that we now live] in increasing intimacy with electronic simulations." Therefore, 'writing' as we used to know and understand the term no longer remains purely typographic or alphabetic/alphanumeric. As digital technologies integrate alphabetic representation of knowledge with other media, it is becomes pertinent to re-examine writing and/or composition within a broader technological perspective. It thus becomes necessary to look through all the interfaces of representing idea/knowledge in this new digital culture in order to understand what writing now really connotes.

The potentials and facilities of hypermedia/multimedia systems now define text as a sort of "collabo", a collage of the typographic, topographic, iconographic, holographic, and audiographic communication materials. In essence, writers of digital texts work in this reality so as to fully grasp the spatial and audio-visual dimensions of the digital environment. Ordinarily, the media space in digital technologies is fluid, malleable, and permeable. This gives room for various forms of experimentations with the virtual codes since codes can easily be manipulated and moved about. By this, codes could change colour, size, and font type. They could disappear, dissolve, and dance; depending on how wide the writer possesses the needed skills and expertise and what the writer intends to achieve with the text. Textual animation therefore provides some answers on the dynamic nature of text composition in digital culture. Writing thus presupposes the possession and the understanding of programming dynamics and skills to extent that the writer can invent an interactive and manipulatable digital text that can elastically stretch the spatial and visual boundaries of cyberspace.

Writing, in the digital environment is a programming activity that involves the manipulation of both 'interface' and 'cognitive' time (cf. Koskimaa, 2000, Ch.1 par.37). Experimentation with the temporal dimension of the digital text can facilitate a transient text. Equally, exploration of the temporal dimension can enable the control of reading time either for the whole text or for some of its part. Where reading is controlled, the possibility of re-reading may be restrained or limited. In another

dimension, revisiting a lexia may indicate reading something entirely different from what was previously read.

In Stuart Moulthrop's web text, *Hegirascope* (1997), the text changes on the screen every 30 second. Also, William Gibson's cyberpunk sci-fi, *Agrippa*, scrolls on the screen by itself. When it scrolls out of the screen, it vanishes and the reader can never return to the text again. Gonzalo Frasca, according to Koskimaa (2000, Ch.1 par.41), also wrote a 'one-session narrative' which changes each time the reader starts reading it and once the reading session ends, the reader may never return to an exactly identical text. In *of day, of night*, more lexias appear only when certain numbers of lexias have been traversed.

In all, temporal and spatial manipulations of the text point out that the notion of writing/composition of texts has expanded in the digital culture. Koskimaa (2007:6) is therefore apt in concluding that "writing should be understood today in a broader sense than previously; especially programming, the writing of code, should be included in this expanded notion of writing." What we are dealing with involves hypertextuality, programming, and interactivity. And, an objective theorization of (digital) writing must be cognizant of this very fact. In other words, acquisition of electracy, in terms of computer and programming skills/versatility, is essential in this medium where good/bad writing is not defined basically along the climes of grammaticality but also in terms of the degree of interactivity, dynamicity, and programmability.

One major theoretical implication of the acquisition of the various dimension of electracy is that the writer could exploit the same environment which 'unwrote' her/him out of existence and severed a degree of her/his authority to the reader to regain the authority and possibly command a dictatorial and subservient rather than democratic loyalty and reverence from the reader! Everything, however, depends on how well the writer gains the mastery and exploration skills of electracy to manipulate the spatial and temporal dimensions of the digital technologies.

Aside representing meaning via various media, writing the digital text involves fragmentation, flexible organization of materials, and logical stringing of the fragmented materials into a web-like structure. Writing digital codes thus involves the ability to create and manage nodes and links such that the reader, at any given time, will have the freedom of movement within the text and the possibility of interacting with the text. The composition of the digital code must offer multiple dimensions and alternative pathways for exploration and traversal.

Because 'hyperlink' simulates connections among the nodes within a system, "an obligation [is imposed] on the author(s) of a hyperdocument …: the nodes must seem complete in themselves, yet at the same time their relations to other nodes must be intelligible" (Slatin, 1994:162). Writing hypertext thus implies chunking texts and linking them appropriately. In addition to this, as Slatin (1994:161) suggests, writing should "treat each node as if it were... the reader's next destination." The individual node should, in certain regard, behave like the conventional text in being somewhat self-contained.

Michalak and Coney (1993: 174) will also reason that since hypertext can promote six different roles for the reader – *receiver of information browser, user, maker of meaning, co-author,*and *professional colleague* – the writer of hypertext must clearly acknowledge and define the epistemology within which s/he wishes to produce her/his text. They suggest that when the writer wishes to involve the reader role of 'receiver of information,' for example, s/he must write with a tone of objectivity to establish her/his authority on the subject matter. On the other hand, if s/he is invoking the reader as 'maker of meaning' or a 'co-author', her/his "original set of nodes and links must be interesting and challenging enough to invite comment [from that reader]" (Michalak and Coney, 1993:180).

One major grey area theorist identify in digital textuality is the propensity of complex web-structured hyperdocuments to disorient readers. This is why Yankelovich, Meyrowitz, and van Dam (1991:62) reason that hyperdocuments must posses visual cues that will help authors and readers alike to determine where they are in the web of information: "[t]ools that promote spatial orientation can include schematics of the information on web, maps indicating all possible path options at a given time, and diagrams of specific paths a reader has already taken."

To guide against disorientation and to properly orient readers in the web documents, Landow (1994) perceives that there are specific rhetorical devices writers should employ in composing documents and in linking them to one another. He identifies the need for the 'rhetoric of navigation,' the 'rhetoric of departure,' and the 'rhetoric of arrival/entrance' to help the writer manage the elements of the text well and to help in orienting the reader. Based on these three rhetorical indices, Landow proposes a total of nineteen rules to guide authors while writing hypertext/hypermedia documents. Generally, the rules encompass the manner, attitude, activity, and modalities that all come to play when writing/composing digital texts.

So far we have discussed how digital technologies employ electronically linked verbal and non-verbal elements when writing in the digital environment. With the linking of chunked/fragmented elements of the text, there arises a new range of potentials and possibilities for the text and for writing/composition. As our ideas about the nature of the text change, so also do our notions of its composer/writer and the means/methods of composing it.

2.5   Redefining the author

Digital technologies have radically reconfigured the text; hence the author figure/function derived from this new textuality cannot be defined within the frame of older conceptions of the author. Granted, hypertext is interactive in nature. This singularly calls for an active reader who not only infringes on the power of the writer but also inherits some of it. This is demonstrated in the reader's ability to move freely within the text as s/he desires or needs and to inscribe her/his choice path through the text. More than that, the transference of authorial power enables the active-intrusive reader in a read-and-write hypertext environment to annotate texts written by the Other and to create links between the documents. In this way, hypertext narrows the phenomenological distance between individual documents, diminishes the private and distinct self of the author, and re-theorizes the notion of authorship. The author in Foucault's terms, is thus transformed into 'a victim of his own writing' since the reader is no longer merely receptive but active, independent, and authorial such that the author has no final say on her/his text. In other words, the self of the author is eroded and, like the text, s/he is transformed into a decentred network of codes which can be explained off with Lyotard's conception of the self as a node in an information network: "no self is an island; each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before. …a person is always located at 'nodal points' of specific communication circuits, however tiny these may be. Or better: one is always located at a post through which various kinds of messages pass" (cited in Landow, 2006:127).

For a theorist like Said, the erosion of the Self of the author is directly derived from the nature of electronic information technology: "the proliferation of information (and... a proliferation of hardware for disseminating and preserving this information) has hopelessly diminished the role apparently played by the individual" (cited in Landow, 2006:129). In the same manner, Heim, according to Landow (2006:129),

41

submits that: "Fragments, reused material, the trails and intricate pathways of 'hypertext,' …advance the disintegration of the centering voice of contemplative thought. The arbitrariness and availability of database searching decreases the felt sense of an authorial control over what is written." In essence, the availability of search engines allows the reader to enter the author's text at any point other than the one the author may designate as 'the beginning.' The loss of the authorial prerogative, in effect, turns out a fragile and flabby author whose self and author figure/function have been eroded by the possibilities of the digital environment.

The loss of authorial self and its implied authorial privacy, are very well demonstrated in Weblogs, Facebook, Fansbook, Yahoo-Messenger, and newsgroups where "digital writing turns the private solitude of reflexive reading and writing into a public network where the personal symbolic framework needed for original authorship is threatened by linkage with the total textuality of human expressions" (Heim, cited in Landow, 2006:129). Thus, digital writings such as blogs and Facebook put the author at a decentred centre of a network where everything is constantly published and where self and privacy increasingly become fragile notions. At another level, the image of the author as an authority, that professional who knows and understands her/his subject well is undermined because anyone who is available in the digital environment has the capacity to contribute andauthor and, without questioning too. Whether a duffer or an egghead, whether a god or a dog, anyone who is connected to the network is either an author or potential one. In this wise, hypertext, according to Michalak and Coney (1993:179), is a "Rortyian conversation," where no individual serves as "privileged expert," but all are reduced to the role of the "ordinary participant".

Hypertext having lost its uniqueness and its fixity having been dispersed, its author can no longer lay claim to her/his individuality in the digital environment. While remarking on the author's subverted individuality in the digital environment, Poster (cited in Oha, 2002: 257) submits that

> To the extent that the author is an individual, a unique being who confirms that uniqueness in writing, who establishes individuality through authorship, the computer may disturb his or her sense of unified authorship. Unlike the handwritten trace, the computer monitor depersonalizes the text, removes all traces of individuality from writing, de- individualizes the graphic mark.

42

Since the text has been translated from being stable marks on a stable physical surface to being virtual electronic codes, the author loses her/his attachment to the text as her/his personal signature becomes quite difficult to decipher in the text. Leaning on Wayne C. Booth, Michalak and Coney (1993:180) submit that the author in the digital context takes on the image of an "implied author." They argue further that the image of the implied author coincides with what Landow and Delany (1994) identify as the author's virtual presence.

> Virtual presence is of course a characteristic of all technology of cultural memory based on writing and symbol systems: since we all manipulate cultural codes in slightly different ways, each record of an utterance conveys a sense of the individual who makes that utterance. Hypertext …in several crucial ways…[amplifies] this notion of virtual presence. Because the essential connectivity of hypermedia removes the physical isolation of individual texts in print technology, the presence of individual authors becomes more available and more mutually influential (Michalak and Coney, 1993:180).

The authorial abilities imparted on the reader, notwithstanding, the author can exploit her/his virtual presence to manipulate the text in order to achieve a certain response from the reader. In this way, the author could exploit the same medium granting power to the reader in order to limit power transference from her/himself to her/his reader.

The virtuality of texts, authors, and readers give room for a collaborative and social construction of knowledge and meaning in cyberspace. Landow (2006:136) indicates that collaboration appears when the roles of the author and the reader are compared and when authors are compared with other authors. The collaboration of the author and the reader exists in the ability of the reader to produce a particular version of the text through the reading choices s/he makes among the various materials of the text. The reader is therefore not just a mere reader but a 'wreader', a rider, a co-author and a co-[e]llaborator, who continues the process of writing the text especially when there are facilities to annotate, comment and add links to other materials. As readers therefore breathe life into the text with an active and creative effort almost equal to that exerted by the author, 'the death of the author' is announced. For, as Barthes (1977a: 148) argues, the death of the author occurs when:

> …a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there

is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not… the author… . [A] text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination…. [To] give writing its future… the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author.

In a second sense, the author writes in the digital environment in front of all other writers who wrote, are writing, or will still write on the system. The authors all collaborate for the eventual production of the grand metatext in which all texts will be linked together. This is why in the perception of Bikson and Eveland (cited in Landow, 2006:142), "doing work and sharing work [become] virtually indistinguishable" in the electronic technologies. Thus, hypertext transforms independently produced texts into collaborative ones; authors working alone into collaborative authors; and readers into co-authors.

The conventional understanding about the notions of authorship, authorial property, individuality, originality, and creativity entrenched in page-bound technology are foregrounded in hypertext where text is composed of virtual and electronic codes. Ordinarily, in printing a book, the author puts in considerable capital and labour and the need to protect the investment nurtures the perception of the text as the author's intellectual property. However, as Landow and Delany (1994:17) will argue,

… print technology… strongly contributed to the sense of a separate, unique text that is the product – and hence the property – of one person, the author. Hypertext changes all this, in large part because it does away with the isolation of the individual text that characterizes the book…. [T]he fixed nature of the individual text made possible the idea that each author produces something unique and identifiable as property.

Hypertext promotes and evinces collaboration thus, the expansive view of authorship and text ownership are redefined. Hypertext production is cost effective because the digital environment is manipulatable and permeable. Hence, the need to protect personal investment when producing and re-editing texts is outfaced by the technologies surrounding the production of hypertext. A new edition of hypertext, for example, can be circulated in a matter of minutes while the editing is also immediate since the text is composed of electronic codes. Being electronic codes, hypertext is abstracted from its author. No personal trait or mark of the author is distinguishable on

the text. The senses of intimacy, triumph, personal achievement, and aggrandizement are deprived the author.

The foregoing all point to the fact that defining the author figure/function by conventional standards is no longer safe. In several ways, hypertext has broken, melted, and remoulded what we used to assign the image of an author to. Equally, the author notion is expanded to accommodate the images of her/him as a programmer, an artist, an interface designer and a musician among other things. As the author writes, she/he equally strings nodes, link and other non-verbal items together in the hypermedia/multimedia environment. When all of these facts are considered, it becomes quite obvious that hypertext not only reconfigures the text and the act of writing, but also redefines the traditional role of the author while equally questioning our received notions about the status and affairs of the reader.

2.6   Redefining the reader and reading experience

Just like every item which maintains a significant position in the textual world, both the reading experience and the reader of the text are redefined in entirely new ways in the digital culture. Because hypertext inherently possesses multiple entry points, multiple exit points, and multiple pathways between the various points of entry and exit, hypertext calls up new medium for thought and expression and translates the reader from being the usual passive receptor and decoder of stable message medium to being a wreader, an interactive reader, and a co-author with the author of the text. This is because her/his processes of reading the text creates preferred and logical pathways through the labyrinth of the text. The reader thus becomes an active participant in the process of "texting" the text. Reading therefore translates into an obligation for the reader to inscribe a choice beginning for the text, proceed through series of materials in her/his order, and decide the exit point as she/he wishes to define the end. Furthermore, hypertext reconceives the role of the reader and places her/him at some vantage position where s/he exhibits a degree of authorial power and exists as a co-[e]llaborator and co-author with the author of the text. As a matter of fact, the reader as a co-author is largely visible in a read-and-write environment which bestows some authoring potentials on the reader. There, the reader is technologically endowed with the ability to add comments, notes and annotation and thereby participate in the continued authoring of the text.

Traditionally, the assumption about reading is that it is sequential. The reader is expected to begin at a certain clearly marked out point determined and defined by the author as the beginning of that text. Equally, the reader is expected to proceed from that beginning and follow through to the point designated as the ending by the author. Slatin (1994:154) will remark that "the reader's progress from the beginning to the end of the text follows a route which has been carefully laid out for the sole purpose of ensuring that the reader does indeed get from the beginning to the end in the way the writer wants him or her to get there." With hypertext, however, the circumstance is converse as the reader faces the reality of a nonlinear text whose reading path is to be mainly determined by her/him.

In Section 2.2.4, we established that all reading experiences are temporally defined and consequently linear. However, to assume that the linear readings in print texts and hypertexts are the same will be tantamount to a fundamental error. Unlike the pre-determined sequence and linearity in print texts, the reading experience in hypertext demands active participation of the reader for the determination of cursal routes within the text's labyrinth. Thus, linear reading in hypertext must be specifically examined against the backdrop of hypertext as a structurally and spatially nonlinear or ergodic text.

As an ergodic text, reading hypertext, in line with Aarseth's argument, extends beyond the boundary of interpretation to involve other user-functions − explorative, configurative and textonic. Liestol (1994: 96), leaning on the categories Gerard Genette employed in analysing the narrative structures in the writings of Marcel Proust, establishes the theoretic implications of reading the hypertext. He discovers that in addition to Genette's story-discourse dichotomy, hypertext effects a third level which he labels 'discourse-as-discoursed'. The 'discourse-as-discoursed' level refers to the actual use and reading of the nonlinear digitally stored text. He explains that the level of discourse-as-discoursed relates to "the creation of a path based on the selection and combination of elements existing in a spatial and nonlinear arrangement of nodes and link."

Furthermore, when the linearity of the text is independent of reader actions as it is in traditional print texts, the text exists as either 'discourse-as-stored' or 'stories-as-stored,' that is, the equivalents of Genette's story-discourse dichotomy. However, where the interactive processes of selection and combination are undertaken by the hypertext reader, linearities are installed in the text and additional levels: 'discourse-

as-discoursed' and 'story-as-discoursed' evolve. Characteristically then, hypertext is defined by the reader's active engagement with the composition and construction of the text. Reading is therefore no more a casual, passive activity but a deeply informed activity and "a dialogue with the text",to use Bolter's (1991b:117) term. This radical departure from the conventional text fosters a new relationship between the author and the reader, and between the reader and the text. In this reality, the reader has the onus to determine the signification of the text through the choices s/he makes; hence coherence is relocated to the metatextual level where the reader perceives 'the pattern which connects,' to use Gregory Bateson's term.

In reading hypertext, one is not dealing with physical materials such as paper, books, pencils, markers, and pens but with monitor, keyboard, mouse and joystick because one is engaged with virtual codes. In this wise, traversing the digital environment involves facing the computer screen and manipulating virtual codes. A reader of the digital text must therefore acquire basic computer skills for effective functioning and traversal in the digital environment. In essence, digital technologies require the acquisition of electracy in addition to literacy.

As Slatin (1994:153) will advise, the first step in theorizing a rhetoric of hypertext is to understand the fact that the computer is not just its mere presentational device, but a new medium for both composition and thought. This will foster varied meanings depending on one's level of abstraction. On the plane of the reading process, the reader does more than reading knowledge as codes in hardware and software media. It is innate to the nature of hypertext to stretch the text beyond being mere composition of alphanumeric elements. With the realities of hyper/multimediality, hypertext entrenches a widened purview of the text by permitting the inclusion of video, still images, graphics, and sounds in the text. Reading is thus projected as an all-inclusive activity which involves the ability to decipher the meaning of all lexia contents, be it video text, graphic, or sound. Landow and Delany (1994:7) put it that:

> …hypermedia takes us even closer to the complex interrelatedness of everyday consciousness; it extends…[reading] by re-integrating our visual and auditory faculties into textual experience, linking graphic images, sound and video to verbal signs. Hypermedia seeks to approximate the way our waking minds always make a synthesis of information received from all five sense. Integrating or (re-integrating) touch, taste and smell seems the inevitable consummation of the hypermedia concept.

This newly defined reading experience connotes that one 'reads' the virtual codes not only with the eyes but equally with the ears and other senses.

Apart from expanding the boundary of the text beyond being mainly verbal codes, hypertext manifests some visual elements that are not found in traditional print texts. Landow (2006:84-5) submits that "the most basic of these is the cursor, the blinking arrow, line, or other graphic element that represents the reader-author's presence in the text." Although a reader in a book technology can move her/his pencil or finger across the page, her/his presence is physically separate from the text. In the digital culture, however, the cursor for example, provides the moving intrusive image of the reader's presence within the fluid codes of the text. When the reader moves within the text, the cursor which indicates her/his presence follows. The shadow/image of the reader as a virtual self is thus erected within the virtual codes of the text as long as the reader remains within that system. Whatever function the reader performs: deletion, addition/annotation, poping-up a window, or calling up a linked material, her/his presence, activity, and movement are unseparated from the electronic codes.

Hypertext's capacity for interactive reading implies co-authorship and represents a radical departure from the traditional relationships among the author, the reader, and the text. The theoretical implications of these departures are enormous. From the literary or stylistic perspectives, interactive reading establishes the death of the author earlier projected by Roland Barthes. In this wise, as readers process and manipulate this new kind of text, it is indubitable that new reading activities have emerged and that their activities in turn, demand a redefinition of reading experiences and the notion of the reader.

2.7 Hyperfiction: narrative at the edge of print limits

Hyperfiction is the subset of digital narrative that explores different facilities of the digital technologies for its creation. Across various theoretical writings, hyperfiction is referred to as hyperfictional text, digital literature, hypertext literature, hypernovel, interactive literature, hypertext narrative, and hypertextual narrative among many other terms and is taken to be the most radical and experimental use of hypertext (cf. Abott, 2008: 33; Kolb, 1994: 324). As Douglas (1992: 2) argues, hyperfiction…is "the most revolutionary" form of hypertexts…which most directly challenge our definitions of what the act of reading entails [which] provide the best fodder for defining what hypertexts *do* and, further, of what they *do* that print narratives cannot."

Hyperfiction thus puts the narrative line under serious attack while linearity is at the end of its wits.

In the characteristic nature of narrative, hyperfiction manifests in varied forms. As Landow (2006: 217) submits, the different forms of hyperfiction takes can be considered along a number of axes especially in terms of the degrees of: "(1) reader choice, intervention, and empowerment, (2) inclusion of extralinguistic texts (images, motion, sound), (3) complexity of network structure, and (4) degrees of multiplicity and variation in literary elements, such as plot, characterization, setting…".Nonetheless, Landow is swiftin pointing out that none of these forms/degrees supersedes the other because creativity is what really matters. This argument is corroborated by the factor that motivated Michael Joyce, the author of the first hyperfiction, in writing *afternoon, a story*:

> I wanted, quite simply, to write a novel that would change in successive readings and to make those changing versions according to the connections that I had for some time naturally discovered in the process of writing and that I wanted my readers to share. In my eyes, paragraphs on many different pages could just as well go with paragraphs on many other pages, although with different effects and for different purposes. All that kept me from doing so was the fact that if I, as author, could use a computer to move paragraphs about, it wouldn't take much to let readers do so according to some scheme I had predetermined (cited in Landow, 2006: 216).

Joyce's remark brings out salient facts about the creativity, nonlinearity, plurality, and manoeuvrability hyperfiction generates. One, hyperfiction has the capacity to change in successive readings according to a predetermined (programmed) scheme of the author. Two, hyperfiction's capacity to change in successive readings indicate that the notion of the 'plot' as a basic narratological concept is under question. Three, the author's predetermining the structures of the successive readings calls for the re-examination of hypertext's interactivity and its much acclaimed projection of reader-as-author.

For a theorist like Koskimaa (2000) hypertext and hyperfiction should be taken as different digital textual realities. He believes that mixing and/or confusing hypertext and hyperfiction have the implication of exaggerating readers' interactivity. Since the author is able to scheme hyperfiction in some predetermined manner, it implies that "hyperfictions largely maintain the distinct role of the author as the ultimate creator of

the Text" because the author is the one who provides the multiple possibilities. In essence, the reader's interactivity being conditioned by the author, the reader is more like a potential "versionier" of possible versions from that narrative which is, in Bolter's term, "a structure of possible structures."

Actually, hyperfiction's interactivity is basically challenged on the ground that it is still at its early stage of its technology since many hyperfiction texts are stored on various storage discs before they could be distributed. Hyperfiction texts which exist on the Internet and permit the role of reader-as-author like the normal educational and informational hypertexts are still very few. This equally implies that the belief of an open-ended space for digital texts must be applied to hyperfiction with certain degree of caution since many of them exist on storage discs. To apply this notion to hyperfiction, it must be understood in terms of the multiple discourses the reader can make out of the nonlinear structure of hyperfiction. Another possibility lies in the fact that hyperfiction problematizes the notions of "beginning," "ending", and "closure." The reader may start at any point and end at any point. Exhaustion with narrative threads, the need to excuse oneself from before the screen while reading hyperfiction, and the reader's perceiving some sort of "closure" from the reading even when the session has not ended all expand the notion of "closure" and suggest open-endedness in some unprecedented manner.

2.7.1 The structure of hyperfiction

Ordinarily, when dealing with CD-ROM based hyperfiction texts such *afternoon, a story* and *of day, of night*, the data for this study, there are no external links in addition to the internal links. This situation thus undermines the claim that hypertexts have unfixed borders. To say hyperfiction texts are limitless or infinite can only be acceptable in the sense that the reader's construction of the narrative is wholly determined by the choices s/he makes. In other words, it is not the content of the hyperfiction that installs the narrative; rather it is the process of reading. From this point of view, the active reader predominates as s/he determines the unfolding of the story in her/his own way.

In narratology, as Gerard Genette embraces it, narratives exist at the levels of 'story' and 'discourse,' that is, in the dichotomy between the story as it happened in time and the telling of the story in narratives. Usually, narratives exist at the second levels, the level of discourse. However, Liestol (1994:96) will argue that hyperfiction

redefines this story-discourse dichotomy and installs the two additional levels of "discourse-as-discoursed" and "story-as-discoursed" as Figure 2.4illustrates below. The discourse-as-discoursed level is the reader's actual reading of the digitally stored text. This basically refers to the reader's creation of paths within the text based on her/his personal choices that are made through the selection and the combination of the nonlinear lexias of the text. With the workings of the hypertext system, the story level readjusts to 'stories-as-stored', that is level 4, while the discourse level translates into 'discourse-as-stored,' that is, level 2.

At levels 2 and 4, there are alternatives available to the reader. It is the choices,selections, and combinations the reader makes among the nonlinear elements of the hyperfiction text at these two levels (2 and 4) that translate into levels 1 and 3; the 'discourse-as-discoursed' and 'story-as-discoursed.' The icons at the discourse-as-stored show the varied opportunities available to the reader to implant linearity: ⟶ – is one directional possibility; ⟵ bi⟶directional opportunity; - nondirectional opportunity. Liestol (1994:96) thereafter notes that "within the frame and constraints conditioned by the hypertext author's choices of information, composition, software, and linking structures, the discourse-as-discoursed can take unlimited variety of configurations and orders, which produce different and even contradictory story lines." With this reasoning, Bolter (1991a:124) says of *afternoon, a story,* and by extension, all hyperfiction texts, that "there is no single story of which each reading is a version, because each reading determines the story as it goes. We could say that there is no story at all; there are only readings."

In practice and in principle, therefore, hyperfiction texts defy the notion of 'plot', that narrative element that accounts for order and hierarchy among other narrative elements. In essence, the reader, rather than follow the predetermined plot of the author, plots her/his reading. The more the reader processes the text, the more orders and plots s/he generates from the text. This lack of finitude or a definite plot has considerable implications on concepts such as 'beginning,' 'ending,' and 'closure.' Already, in Section 2.4, the concepts of 'beginning' and 'ending' have been discussed. As for 'closure,' Montgomery, Durant, Fabb, Furniss, and Mills(2000:216) define the concept as "the 'tying-up' of the narrative, whereby loose ends are dealt with, problems solved and questions answered." Equally, Abott (2008:64) says "closure brings satisfaction to desire, relief to suspense, and clarity to confusion. It normalizes. It confirms the masterplot."
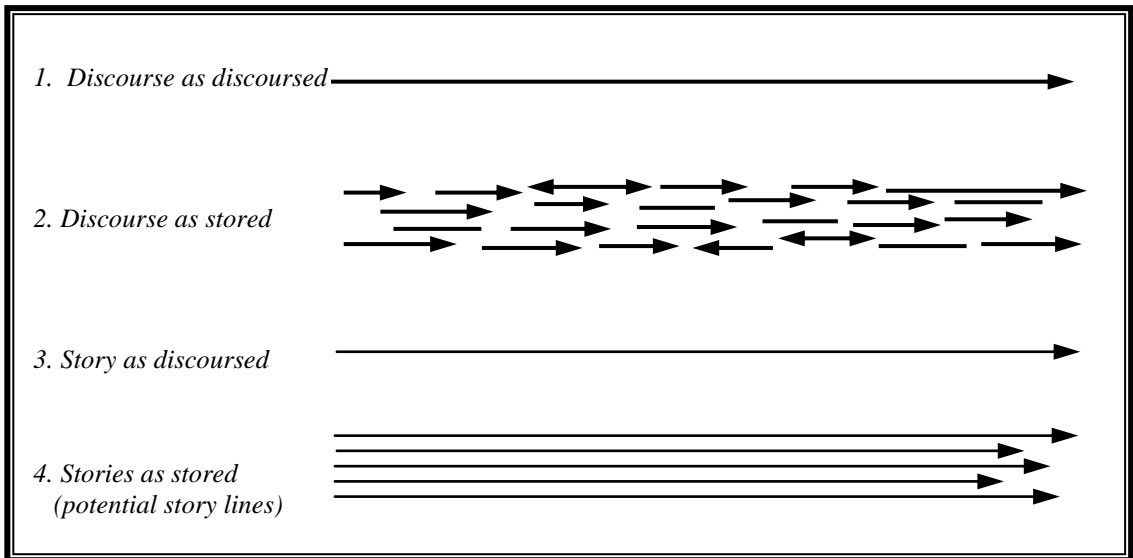
Figure 2.4. Redefined story-discourse dichotomy in digital space (Liestol, 1994: 96)

While reading hyperfiction texts, lexias are linked to other lexias and the linking chain remains unbroken. This situation facilitates the thinking that more narrative elements that will aid the better understanding of the text exist beyond the next link. In this way, it becomes very challenging to attain a sense of closure in hyperfiction texts especially in view of the fact that finding the beginning or reaching the end is sometimes very difficult.Although in many instances of experiencing hyperfiction, narratives may reach an end which satisfies the reader as a point of closure, there are times when the reader may not. Projecting into such circumstances, Joyce, in the lexia "work in progress" (*afternoon*) says "Closure is… a suspect quality, although here it is made manifest. When the story no longer progresses, or when it circles, or when you tire of the paths, the experience of reading it ends." In other words, Joyce makes realizing closure, the responsibility of the reader. No wonder then that one student reader of *afternoon*, after completing series of readings remarks that:

> We have spent our whole lives reading stories for some kind of end, some sort of completion or goal that is reached by the characters in the story…I realized this goal is not actually reached by the character, rather it is reached by our own selves. …it occurs when we have decided for ourselves that we can put down the story and be content with our interpretation of it. When we feel satisfied that we have gotten enough from the story, we are complete (cited in Douglas, 1992:7)

The experience of this student tallies with Joyce's expectation about the text since he submits further in "[work in progress]" in *afternoon, a story* that "there are likely to be more opportunities than you think there are at first. A word which doesn't yield the first time you read a section may take you elsewhere if you choose it when you encounter it again; and sometimes a loop, like a memory, heads off again in another direction." Thus, attaining closure in *afternoon, a story*is the sole responsibility of the reader since the text projects multiple points of departure within each of its lexia and continually changes points of linkage. The reader must therefore perceive her/himself as the "glue" that sticks the fragments of the text together to form a whole within the reader's world of perception. This ability to perceive references and causal connections among lexias of the text will generate some sort of closure desired by the reader. Landow (2006:231) argues therefore that:

> The successive lexias one encounters seem to take form as chains of narrative, and despite the fact that one shifts setting and narrator, one's choices produce satisfying narrative sets. Moving from section to section, every so often one encounters puzzling changes of setting, narrator, subject, or chronology, but two things occur. After reading awhile one begins to construct narrative placements, so that one assigns particular sections to a provisionally suitable place – some lexias obviously have several alternate or rival forms of relation. Then, having assigned particular sections to particular sequences or reading paths, many, though not all, of which one can retrace at will, one reaches points at which one's initial cognitive dissonance or puzzlement disappears, and one seems satisfied. One has reached – or created – closure!

On this note, closure, like coherence, resides in the metatextual level where the reader is able to perceive "the pattern which connects."

2.7.2 Hyperfiction and the experimental tradition

Hyperfiction text's multiple narrative paths, plethora of points of closure, and the subjection of fiction elements to fragmentation and recombination offer the reader the possibility of choosing her/his path through the narrative. These possibilities give away the stability and certainty of the plot and embed hyperfiction in the tradition experimentation. Equally, because the media space of hyperfiction does not close off possibilities of alternative narrative orders, the space always provides links to other places in the narrative and, in effect, intensifies the level of indeterminacy which identifies it with experimental traditions like Dadaism, Surrealism, Cubism, Modernism, Avant Garde, and Postmodernism. Avant Garde, for example, experiments with breaking, challenging, and transgressing the limits and structures of established art and literary expression.

Usually in hypertext theoretical discussions, earlier experimental print works are referred to as "proto-hypertexts" in the belief that they anticipate digital textuality. There is, for example, Mark Saporta's *Composition No. 1* which is a deck of one hundred loose leaves meant to be shuffled before each reading. Robert Coover's "Quenby and Ola, Swede and Carl" and "The Babysitter" are also examples of proto-hypertexts. "The Babysitter" explores multiplicity and simultaneity by featuring 105 narrative segments which begin as nine separate and distinct strands framed from nine different perspectives. As the narrative proceeds, the narrative strands become increasingly indistinguishable from one another. For "Quenby and Ola, Swede and Carl," McHale (1987:107-108) summarized it thus:

Carl, a businessman on a fishing holiday, either sleeps with one of his fishing guide's women or he does not; if he sleeps with one of them, it is either Swede's wife Quenby or his daughter Ola; whichever one he sleeps with (if he actually does sleep with one of them), Swede either finds out about it or he does not; if he does find out, he either plans to kill Carl in revenge or does not. All of these possibilities are realized in Coover's text.

Federman (1981a:1) in particular, proposes an experimental tradition: "Surfiction" which is based on the "dissatisfaction with fiction, this insufficiency, this crisis of fiction … [which brings about the need] to re-examine, rethink, rewrite fiction in terms and in forms that have not yet been defined." In this wise, Federman (1981a: 7) will describe a work based on the philosophy of Surfiction in the following terms: "that kind of fiction that tries to explore the possibilities of fiction; the kind of fiction that challenges the tradition that governs it; the kind of fiction that constantly renews our faith in man's imagination and not in man's distorted vision of reality – that reveals man's irrationality rather than man's rationality." To establish his argument, Federman (1981a:9-14) goes a step further in proposing working propositions for the Surfiction fiction within this experimental tradition.

> PROPOSITION ONE – *The Reading of Fiction:*
> The very act of reading a book … in a consecutive pre-arranged manner has become *boring* and *restrictive*. Therefore, the whole traditional, conventional, fixed, and boring method of reading a book must be questioned, challenged, demolished. And it is the writer (and not modern printing technology) who must, through innovations in the writing itself – in the typography and topology of his writing – renew our system of reading.
> All rules and principles of printing and bookmaking must be forced to change as a result of the changes in the writing (or the telling) of a story in order to give the reader a sense of free participation in the writing/reading process, in order to give the reader an element of choice (active choice) in the ordering of the discourse and the discovery of its meaning.
> …. And the space itself in which writing takes place must be changed. That space, the page (and the book made of pages), must acquire new dimensions, new shapes, new relations in order to accommodate the new writing….

In line with this proposition, Federman authors works like *Double or Nothing* (1972) and *Take It Or Leave It* (1976) which extensively employ typography and new writing space for signification. In the opening page of *Double or Nothing*, for example, the text circles round the edge of the page to depict the small room into which the

narrator locks himself in order to write his novel. The maximal possibilities of the statements in "Proposition One" are however inherent in the digital space because of its vastness and permeability. Simulations, programming, and animations will help to wittingly, but effortlessly manipulate the writing space. As has been copiously addressed in the preceding sections, the choices of possible multiple and plural linearities in hypertext's nonlinear structure turns the reader into an active participant in the process of the narrative. This not only changes the traditional binary relationships among notions like author/reader, author/text, and reader/text but equally tramples under the rules of printing and bookmaking. The issue ties closely with the second proposition which focuses on the shape of fiction; the rejection of linearity and the embrace of nonlinear narrative.

> PROPOSITION TWO – *The Shape of Fiction:*
> If life and fiction are no longer distinguishable one from the other, nor complementary to one another, and if we agree that life is never linear, that, in fact, life is chaos because it is never experienced in a straight, chronological line, then, similarly, linear and orderly narration is no longer possible …. The plot having disappeared, it is no longer necessary to have the events of fiction follow a logical, sequential pattern (in time and in space).
> … [T]hese elements will now occur simultaneously and offer multiple possibilities of rearrangement in the process of reading. The fictitious discourse, no longer progressing from left to right, top to bottom, in a straight line, and along the design of an imposed plot, will follow the contours of the writing itself as it takes shape (unpredictable shape) within the space of the page. It will circle around itself, create new and unexpected movements and figures in the unfolding of the narration, repeating itself, projecting itself backward and forward along the curves of the writing….

Already, in Section 2.7.1 above, we have discussed the implication of hyperfiction on plot. Although the author might have predetermined some structures for hyperfiction, the ability of the reader to move through the nonlinear space of the text enables the reader to "plot" the discourse of the narrative at any point in time.

> PROPOSITION THREE – *The Material of Fiction:*
> ... . Everything can be said, and must be said, in any possible way…. And since writing means now filling a space (the pages), in those spaces where there is nothing to write, the fiction writer can, at any time, introduce material (quotations, pictures, diagrams, charts, designs, pieces of other discourses, doodle, etc)….

PROPOSITION FOUR – *The Meaning of Fiction:*
… the new fiction…will be seemingly devoid of meaning, it will be deliberately illogical, irrational, unrealistic, non sequitur, and incoherent. And only through the joint efforts of the reader and creator… will a meaning possibly be extracted from the fictitious discourse.

     The new fiction will not create a semblance of order, it will offer itself for order and ordering. …no longer manipulated by an authorial point of view, the reader will be the one who extracts, invents, creates a meaning and an order for … the fiction. And it is this total participation in the creation which will give the reader a sense of having created a meaning and not having simply received, passively, a neatly prearranged meaning.

The tendency of hyperfiction to blend media and modes to evolve qualities of multivocality, multimediality, and collage are grounded in the third proposition while proposition four projects the image of the active reader who participates in the creation of the text through the choices s/he makes while reading.

Usually, experimental writers put in all efforts to subvert and to undercut the conventions of print texts from within. Bolter and Joyce (1987:45) note that this "subversion is an effective mode of attack … because … the printed novel is made to contain the seeds of its own destruction, or perhaps deconstruction." It can therefore be concluded that the numerous experiments of writers formulate ideas while digital technology provides the space.

2.8   Summary of the review

Our attention in this chapter has been devoted to issues that bother on the origin, birth, and development of hypertext with the aim of demonstrating how and why hypertext (together with its offspring, hyperfiction) radically differs in nature and experience from what we usually know and define as texts. The media space of digital technologies, that is, cyberspace, has no fixed centre, no edges, or boundaries and, as such, reading within this space is not identified with pages, single sequences, identifiable linear structures, and singular sense of closure or ending. The discourse line develops through the linking of lexias which proceeds from the reader's associative rather than causal ordering of lexias. In all of these, hypertext introduces new modes of thinking and of experiencing the textual.

Hyperfiction, the literary dimension of hypertext, bears the stamp of its context and features new textual experiences. The implication of this reality is twofold. First, literature now exists in a different cultural context; hence the traditional sense of

interpreting the notion of fiction has given way to the electronic. Second, literature has significantly changed in the electronic media and unprecedented new forms of literary expressions have emerged. These implications demand "media-specific" and "context/culture-sensitive" analysis of digital texts. According to Koskimaa (2007:4), such a task is bi-faceted: "first there is the need to understand the character of literary discourse based on the material conditions of its existence and on the new environment developed around it" while the other side of the task is the "need to acquire an understanding of the overall media landscape, as well as related user-spectator-audience behaviour, and to see literature as a media operating amongst others."

In the reality of this new textuality, literary and stylistic studies have the obligation of contributing to discussions revolving round digital textuality because these studies have always been significant and relevant in providing core understanding of cultures, the digital media culture not being exempted. It is therefore a very important task for researches in literary and/or stylistic studies to recognize how the notions of everyday life and textuality are changing in the presence of digital technologies and how these changes are reflected in present textual expressions and the implications these in turn have on several textual conventions.

CHAPTER THREE
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter Two weargued that the textual world is no longer what it used to be, hypertexts having modified the nature of texts and textuality.In recognition of the dynamic nature of the selected digital texts, we adopt linguistic and non-linguistic theories for this study. We believe that the combination of the two will adequately provide for the functional analysis of the verbal and visual aspects of the selected texts.

In Section 3.2, we discuss the Hallidayan model of Systemic Functional Linguistics which will help in categorising grammatical structures and in describing the relationship of text and context. Postmodern Literary Theory, discussed in Section 3.3and Applied Media Aesthetics, discussed in Section 3.4, are the two non-linguistic orientations adopted for the study. We believe that these non-linguistic theories will assist in describing the experimental nature of textuality and in providing explanation about the audio-visual aspects of the texts. In Section 3.5, Systemic Functional Linguistic is modified to incorporate stances from Postmodern Literary Theory and Applied Media Aesthetics. Thus, the section is an integration of the linguistic and non-linguistic theoretical orientations adopted for the analysis of the selected texts in the belief that the modification will provide a neat frame that will enable the functional analysis of the selected texts.

3.2 Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) was developed at the University of London by M. A. K. Halliday as a continuation of the work of his teacher, J. R. Firth. Firth was equally influenced by Bronislaw Malinowski, an anthropologist, who, while conducting field work on the Trobriand Islands, came to recognize and conclude that "context" was highly important and primal in the interpretation of any text. Malinowski categorized context into three: verbal, situational, and cultural. Not only did Halliday utilize these categorizations, he also expanded them within SFL and provided the framework for their semantic implication within the grammatical system

59

of language. Simply put, therefore, Halliday adopted and developed further within linguistic domain, Malinowski's view of "meaning as a function in context." Against this backdrop, SFL holds that language is a natural part of the process of living and therefore gives very high priority to the sociological aspects of language. That is, SFL pays particular attention to the actual use of language – what people actually "*do* and *mean* and *say,* in real situation" (Halliday, 1978:40). Because language exists in context, it must be studied within context as "the environment in which text comes to life" (Halliday, 1978:109). The position is that context defines the meanings likely to be expressed in language and the language likely to be used in expressing those meanings. Language is thus taken as a social semiotic resource which, contextualized among other semiotic cultural systems, is employed in construing the experience of the world and in enacting personal and social relationships with the other people around us.

SFL derives its name from this notion of 'language as a resource' which defines language as a system of networks, a range of choices or alternatives available to the language user. In this belief that language is "a system of meaning potentials… what the speaker *can do*" (Halliday, 1978:29), SFL maintains a shift from the traditional perspective of language as structure to language as system. The reasoning is that "languages evolve – they are not designed, and evolved systems cannot be explained simply as the sum of their part" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004:20). This is why Halliday and Matthiessen (2004:19) submit that SFL is a comprehensive theory which "is concerned with language in its entirety." This standpoint contrasts SFL with other linguistic theories which emphasize grammar as a set of rules rather than as a resource. By this, SFL is able to show grammar as a meaning-making resource and to describe grammatical categories in reference to what they mean.

In this wise, language is a resource for making meanings and those meanings reside in the systemic patterns of alternatives available to the language user. SFL is therefore not syntactic and formal in orientation but 'semantic' (concerned with meaning) and 'functional' (concerned with how language creates and expresses meaning). Building on this concept of language function, SFL identifies three fundamental metafunctions, that is, the intrinsic functions language performs – ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The three functions are integral to the semantic stratum of the lexicogrammar which are grammatically realized in the system of the clause as the central processing unit in the lexicogrammar. Here again, SFL maintains

a contrast to the formalist approach which views the sentence as the basic unit of linguistic analysis. The text, defined as "any instance of language," is taken as the object of examination while the clause is taken as the sub-unit of the text. This idea is integral to SFL's sociological orientation that a grammar should always seek to account for actual instances of language whereas language users produce texts as they speak or write. SFL thus holds that it is in clauses and clause complexes that the meanings and functions of language are adequately captured and reflected.

As language interfaces with what goes on outside of language, the activities and conditions of our personal and collective world, the ideational metafunction comes in to help in accounting for the organization, understanding, and expression of our perceptions about the inner world of our consciousness and the world at large. The ideational metafunction thus provides a theory of human experience (whether as remembered, imagined, abstracted, metaphorized, or mythologized) and of certain resources of the lexicogrammar dedicated to this metafunction (cf. Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004:29). This metafunction is thus used in construing experience and in representing "language as reflection." This metafunction equally defines the "**clause as representation**" and has two components: the "experiential" and the "logical."

The logical component of the ideational metafunction provides explanation for the recursion in language. Enabling the construction of logical relations among clauses, the logical component manifests in the linguistic systems of parataxis and hypotaxis which lead to the relations of coordination, subordination, apposition, condition, and reported speech in clause complexes (cf. Halliday, 1971:333, 1978:49, Morley, 1985:57). The experiential component describes the relationship between process and participants mainly through the grammatical system of **transitivity**. According to Halliday (1978:38), the system of transitivity is concerned with "the type of process, animate and inanimate, and with various attributes and circumstances of the process and the participants." It is the function of the transitivity system to construe experience into a manageable set of process types. Figure 3.1 below represents process type as a semiotic space with each process type providing its own schema for construing and modelling a particular domain of experience as a **figure** of happening, doing, sensing, saying, being, or having which all together indicate the flow of events, of 'going-ons' in the world. These 'figures' translate into material, behavioural, mental, verbal, relational, and existential processes and unfold through time and the participants involved in the processes.

61
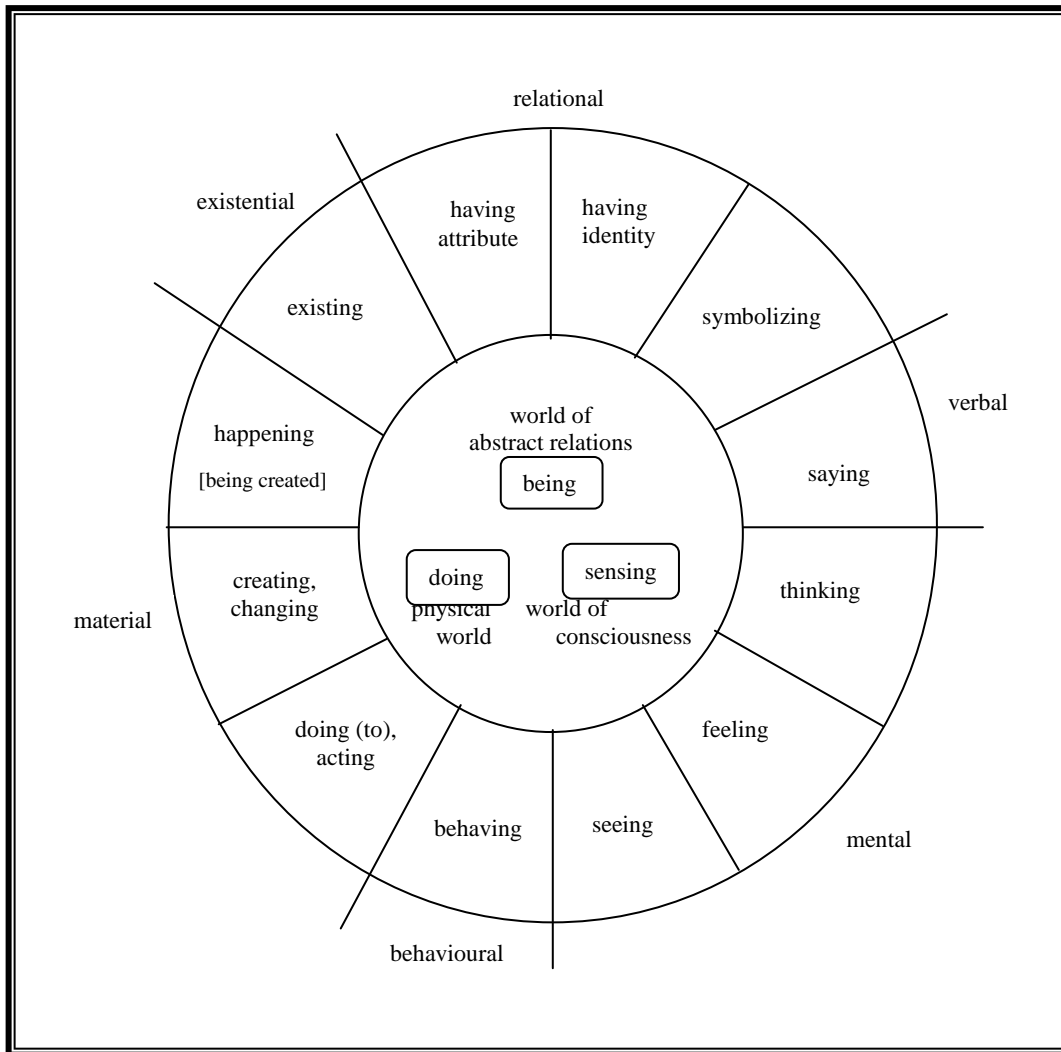
Figure 3.1. Process types within the ideational metafunction as the grammar of experience (Source: Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 172)

The interpersonal metafunction is concerned with the social world. It is responsible for the role language plays in enacting and maintaining interpersonal relations. It is this metafunction that accounts for how language is used "in communicative acts with other people, to take on roles and to express and understand feelings, attitude and judgements" (Bloor and Bloor, 1995:9). Because the interpersonal metafunction is the resource of language which enables communication and socialization, it answers for the description of the "**clause as exchange**." The interpersonal metafunction is actualized in the **mood** system of the clause as illustrated in Figure 3.2 below.

The textual metafunction is concerned with the creation of text and is actualized by the **theme** system of the clause as shown in Figure 3.2. This metafunction embodies "text-forming resources of the linguistic system" (Halliday, 1978:133). Since this function provides for cohesive relations in texts, a language user is able make connected passages of discourse meant for particular purposes while the decoder of such a text is equally enabled by this metafunction to perceive meaning out of the text. Basically, therefore, the textual metafunction is an enabling one since it serves for the presentation of ideations and interactions as information that can be shared by the speaker/writer and the listener/reader. The metafunction defines "**clause as a message.**"

An important theoretical point Figure 3.2 demonstrates is that the metafunctions are intrinsic to language and are realized within the system of the clause. Not that only, Figure 3.2 also shows that the clause is constituted of not one dimension of structure, but three and the three manifest three distinctive levels of meanings. Although the metafunctions project threefold system of meaning, they are still closely interconnected and realized simultaneously within the clause system. With this, the metafunctions indicate that most elements of a clausal structure have more than one function and meaning potential in the contextualised clause.

As indicated earlier, SFL prioritizes the actual instance of text because it holds that the concept of 'context' is crucial to meaning. Context is taken as a higher-level semiotic system in which language is located. Since language usually interfaces with the non-linguistic world before it provides the theory of human experience and interactions, the metafunctions language performs are realized in the clause as a result of these contextual considerations. In this wise, every text is an instance in the meaningsystem determined by a particular context. The text does not just evolve.
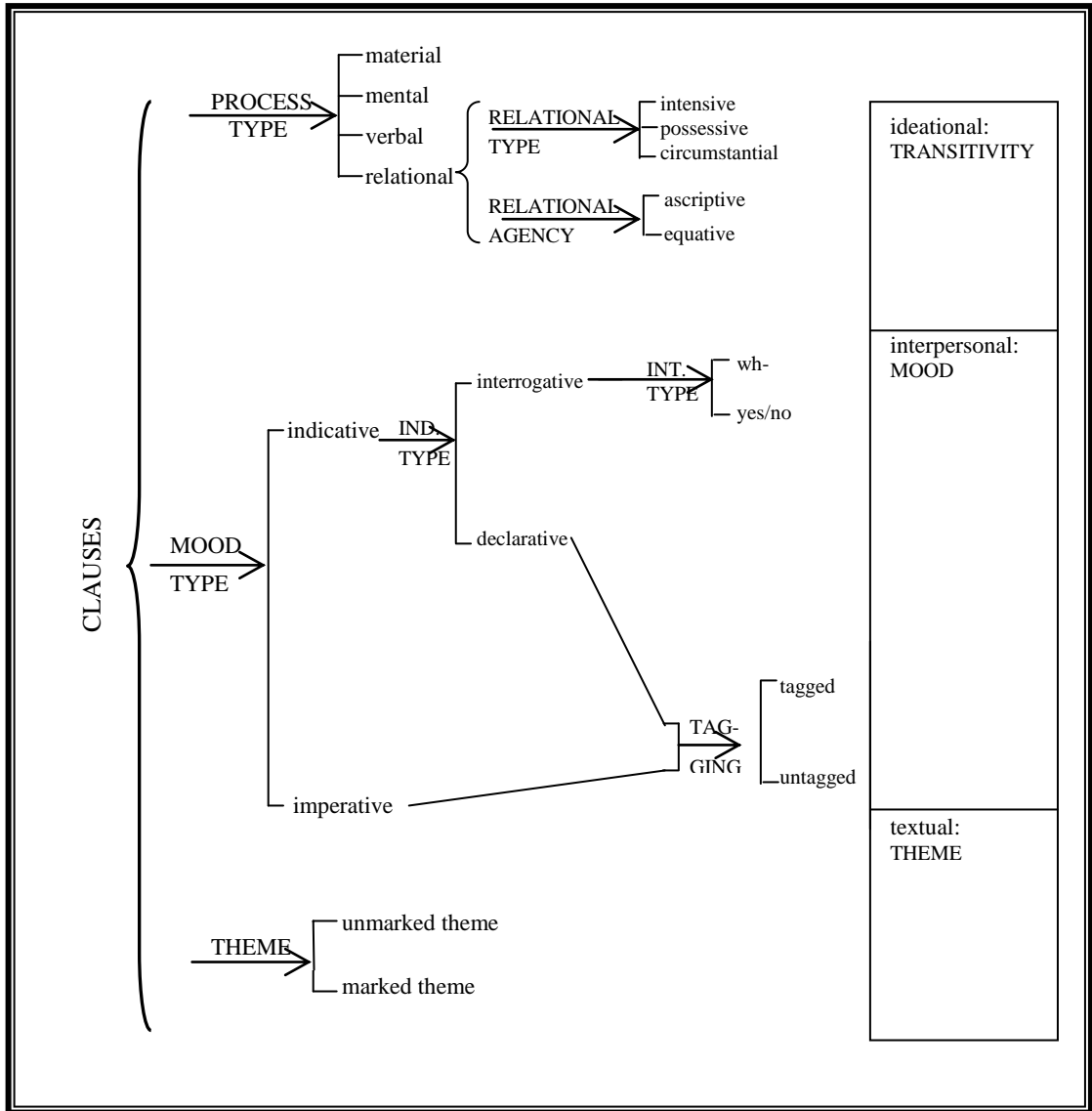
Figure 3.2. Metafunction as manifested in the system network of clause (Source: Wilcock, 1993: 20)

There is **a cline of instantiation**, a set of contextual considerations that work for the production of a meaningful text.

As illustrated in Figure 3.3 below, context stands as the ecological matrix for the general system of language and for particular texts. Language is embedded in a context of culture or social system while every text is the instantiation of language embedded in its own particular context of situation. **System** (overall potential provided for by culture) and **text** (particular instance resulting from situation as context) are the two poles along the cline of instantiation while **register** represents the intermediate level between the two poles. From the instance pole, as the Figure shows, every single text is language in the context of situation. When the samples of such a text are examined, they manifest certain identical patterns which describe the **text type**. Thus, a particular **situation type** is the 'window system' through which the text type associated with it can be viewed. By identifying a text type, we move along the cline of instantiation from the text pole to the system pole which refers to the overall potentials a language has within a specific cultural context.

The theoretical implication of the foregoing is that texts vary systematically according to the nature of their contexts. In this instance, recipe, stock market, weather forecasts, media interviews, advertisements, guide books, text books, bedtime stories, amongst other cultural semiotics are text types indicating how language is used in different contexts. This interprets text types as **registers**, that is, "the patterns of instantiation of the overall system associated with a given type of context (a **situation type**)" which "show up quantitatively as adjustments in the systemic probabilities of language"(Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004:27). Registers are thus functional varieties of language that evolve according to how language is used in particular contexts.

Registers evolve as particular settings of systemic language probabilities which are functionally determined by the **field**, **tenor**,and **mode** of discourse. The field of discourse is "the linguistic reflection of the purposive role of the language user in the situation in which the text occurred" (Gregory and Carroll, 1978:28). Gregory and Carroll (1978:28) elaborate further that "the field determines the selection of experiential meanings, what socially recognized action the participants are engaged in, in which the exchange of verbal meanings has a part." Thus, field of discourse refers to the purpose of the social activity informing the text. Within the general view of language functions, the field of discourse correlates to meanings realized from the ideational metafunction.
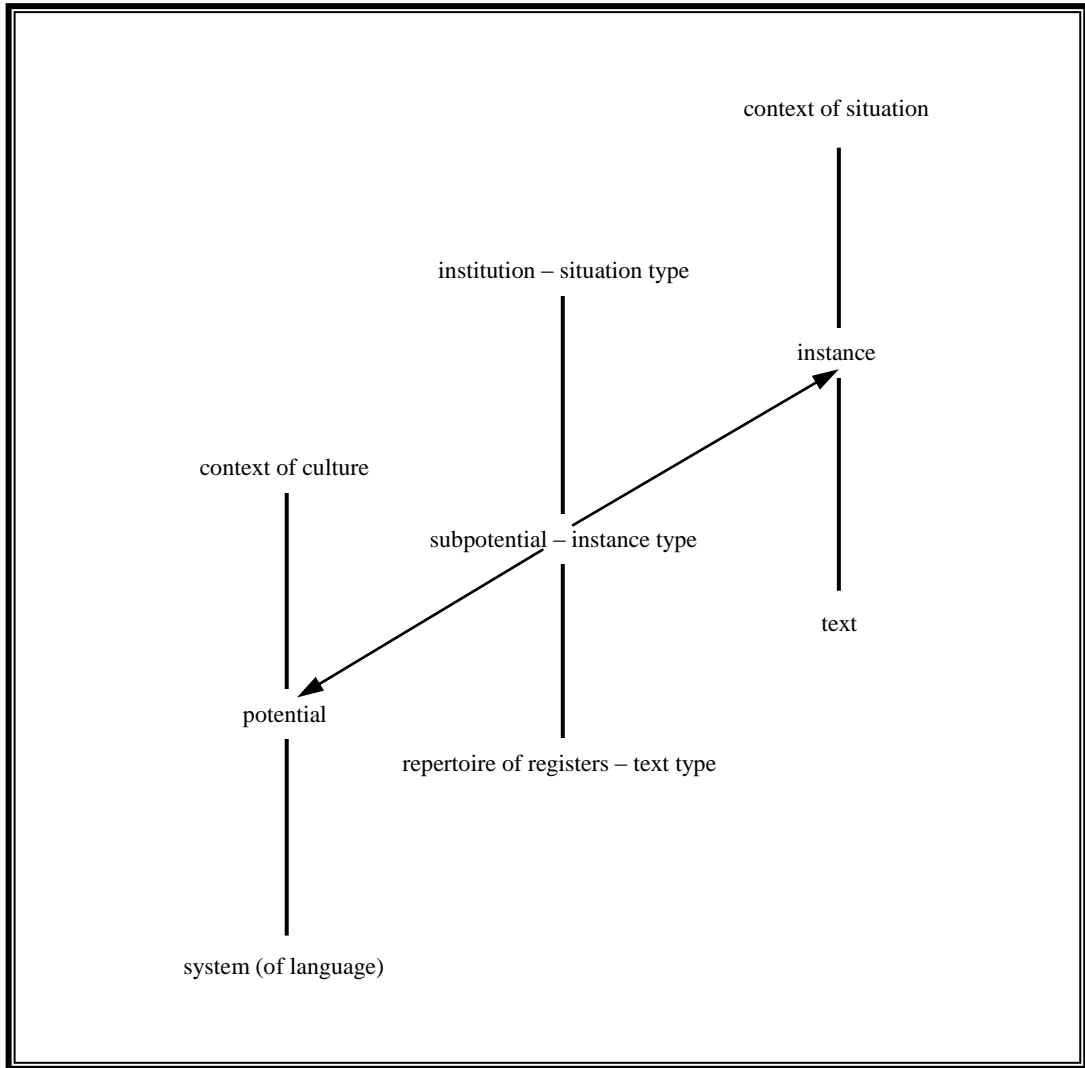
Figure 3.3: The cline of instantiation (Source: Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 28)

The mode of discourse concerns the medium used while employing language, the role language is playing in context, and the distance between those involved consequent of the medium (spoken, written or various other complex categories like "written to be spoken," "spoken to be written," "written to be read," "written to be read as if heard," and so on), the channel (face-to-face, telephonic, SMS, e-mail, and so on); rhetorical contributions (didactic, instructive, persuasive, literary and so on). The mode discourse relates to meanings from the textual metafunction.

The tenor of discourse shows the role language plays in "linking people together in various kinds of social interaction; defining relative statuses and personalities; establishing, maintaining or ending relationships" (Gregory and Carroll, 1978:48). This implies that the tenor shapes, defines, and establishes the relationship existing between the speaker/writer and the hearer/reader. The tenor will always reflect social and speech roles in terms of the solidarity, distance, or power existing between the addressor and the addressee (cf. Brown and Gilman, 1960) and it reflects the meanings from the interpersonal metafunction.

The need to perceive language along the cline of instantiation is fundamental to the theoretical grounding of SFL. This helps in establishing that language is a living meaning-making resource which is in a constant process of evolution. In this way, SFL is able to describe the system as it relates to actual instances of language. Since each text instance is a probability among many others within the system, SFL provides the means for investigating a text not just as a window on the system but also as an object in its own right. A focus on the text as an object will reveal why the text means what it means and why the text is valued as it is. Focusing on the text as a window will be asking what the text reveals about similar texts and the system of the language in which the text is produced. These two angles of exploration are, nevertheless, complementary because "we cannot explain why a text means what it does, with all the various readings and values that may be given to it, except by relating it to the linguistic system as a whole; and equally, we cannot use it as a window on the system unless we understand what it means and why" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004:3).

3.3 Postmodern literary theory

Being at the cutting-edge of every discipline, postmodernism generates different shades of meaning and interpretations in the attempts of individual subject areas to theorize its manifestation and implications. As it takes on different cultural

significations within specific discourses, postmodernism proves to be a completely "snake-like concept whose twists and coils are difficult to pin down" (Woods, 1999:6).One fact that the different polemics on the postmodern do not, however, deny is that it (the postmodern) directs our attention to the changes taking place in contemporary society and culture. The major transformations in the contemporary culture, according to postmodern theorists, indicate the emergence of a new postmodern culture. In a way, this suggests that postmodern culture designates a particular time and age in history. As an epochal term, postmodernity describes the contemporary cultural age as a witness of the explosion of media, computers, and new technologies; novel cultural forms and practices; new forms of information and knowledge; political shifts and upheavals; new experiences of space and time, amongst others (cf. Best and Kellner, 1991: 3).

Theorists of the postmodern culture believe that these dramatic turns are responsible for the emergence of the postmodern culture.For a theorist like Baudrillard, the advent of postmodernity is characterized by new forms of technology which are dominated by simulations and images from the mass media. Baudrillard also believes that the simulations and images of the electronic mass media shape the manners of lives in the postmodern culture. Trowler (2000:949) therefore submits that "the postmodern world is "media-saturated" and the media are not just one aspect among many…but are its intimate, defining aspect." So also, Poster (1995: par.1) asserts that "a viable articulation of postmodernity must include an elaboration of its relation to new technologies of communication." In this realisation, digitization, together with its various manifestations of which hyperfiction text is one, maintains intrinsic relationship with the postmodern and, therefore, cannot be interpreted independent of postmodernist ideologies.

Theorists maintain that the prefix "post" indicates that postmodernism is intricately bound to modernism (cf. Hutcheon, 1988:18; Woods, 1999:6; Hicks, 2004:7). This relationship suggests that postmodernism is either a replacement of modernism or the chronological successor of modernism. Generally, modern culture is held as the era associated with the European Enlightenment Project which began from around the mid-eighteenth century. The basic preoccupation of the project is to present a stable, coherent, knowable self who is conscious, rational, and universal. The confidence reposed in the power of reason enables this self to know itself and the universal world such that no physical conditions or differences could affect how this

self operates. Reason is thus posited as the highest form of mental functioning and the only true objective form.

In the modern world governed by reason, science, being the primary form of knowledge, provides universal truths and the truths are one and the same with the good, the right, and the beautiful and there is no conflict among these paradigms. Modernism is thus fundamentally concerned with the issues of order, rationality, and re-ordering of chaos. It is assumed that reason will create rationality which will in turn produce order. And, the more ordered a society, the better, stable, and united the society will be. Because the modern society is in constant pursuit of order, it is also constantly in contest against anything fitting into the term 'disorder' by setting rigorous definition of the standards of intelligence, coherence, unity, and legitimacy.

For philosophers like Kant and Hegel, the Enlightenment Project placed a great deal of faith in the ability to ensure and preserve order and truth for humanity. However, twentieth century philosophers, beholding Hiroshima and the Holocaust, discovered that this pretentious faith in reason is misplaced since reasoning and logic could lead to both the loss and the attainment of freedom. In reaction, the postmodern evolved as an attack of modern culture's longstanding conception of the universality and rationality of reason. Postmodernism therefore rejects modernist assumptions of social coherence and rather pits reasons as plural, multiply, fragmented, and incommensurable. The autonomous, rational, and unified subject postulated by modernist theory is abandoned in favour of polymorphous, destructured, decentred, and dehumanized subject positions. The standpoint is that "the centre no longer completely holds. And, from the decentered perspective, the "marginal"… [takes] on new significance in the light of the implied recognition that our culture is not really the homogenous monolith (that is middle-class, male heterosexual, white, western) we might have assumed" (Hutcheon, 1988:12).

While articulating a discussion on postmodernism, Lyotard (1984: xxiv) defines it as "incredulity toward metanarratives." Simply put, postmodernist theory rejects modern culture's supposedly universal metanarratives or foundational theories of religion, philosophy, science, and gender that have defined our culture and behaviour and conditioned our existence in the past, and, instead, organizes cultural life around "mini-narratives" which are fundamentally situational, unpredictable, local, plural, de-totalizing, fluid, fragmentary, temporary, "making no claim to universality, truth, reason, or stability" (Klages, 2003: par.4). The ideology behind

69

postmodernisttheory's rejection of the metanarratives or foundational theories of modern culture is that the metanarratives "[tend] to homogenize the absolute heterogeneity and specificity of singular events, thereby robbing the event of its full ontological or historical status and… denying the possibility of genuine thinking" (Docherty, 1998: 480). However, "the local, the limited, the temporary, the provisional are what define postmodern truth" (Hutcheon, 1988:43). Although, postmodernism, as Hutcheon (1988:43) explains, does not say that it is impossible and useless to try and establish some hierarchical order or system of priorities but that "there are all kinds of orders and systems in our world – *and* that we create them all" hence we should recognize them all without centring one and scandalizing/stigmatizing the other.

What postmodernism therefore questions and challenges are the ideologies of the dominant modern culture because they are profoundly "exclusivist", in the sense that "it [modern culture] takes one historically and culturally specific inflection of reason for the universal form of all Reason; and adjudges all competing forms of reason to be , *ipso facto,* unreasonable" (Docherty, 1998: 492). In this way, modern culture legitimates itself by first identifying the Other and then stigmatizing and victimizing it (cf. Docherty, 1998: 492). For postmodernists, totalizing culture and reasoning in this way portrays nothing other than injustice and a failure, on the part of modernism, to recognise and accept the possibility of the plurality of both culture and reasoning.

The conclusion of postmodernists is thus that the totalizing metanarratives cannot be divorced from injustice since totalization/consensus is easily and quickly achieved through repression, or worse still, oppression. However, postmodernism advocates justice: the justice that would not stigmatize or scandalize its Other; the justice that would give voice to the Other; the justice that would eventually cancel the boundaries between Self and Other, and between all other supposedly opposing binary concepts. Consequently, in the postmodern culture, there is no judgment! Nothing is adjudged to be high/low form of art or culture; good/bad; coherent/incoherent; true/false; reasonable/unreasonable; sanity/insanity; orderly/disorderly; reality/simulation. All boundaries have been wiped out and each term exists as a mini-narrative to reflect "that all cultural practices have an ideological subtext which determines the conditions of the very possibility of their production of meaning" (Hutcheon, 1998: xii). It must be understood, however, that the plurality postmodernism preaches is not just a tolerance of differences, rather, it is "a profound

70

sense that the self has no meaning except in interrelation with the others, and that the lived experience of the self can only be expressed through determined efforts to evoke the otherness with which the self continuously interacts" (Gregson, 1996: 3).

The underlying goal of postmodernist pursuit for justice and plurality is freedom. This freedom defines the "pragmatic and experimentalist attitude" (Docherty, 1998: 479) of postmodernism and provides for the ability of the postmodern philosopher, artist, or writer to create and "work without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done *after the event:* that is to say thinking was to be radically experimental and ostensibly undirected in order to allow for the unpreprogrammed, for the unforeseen, to take place" (Docherty, 1998: 479). As postmodern freedom refuses pre-existing structure and stricture, it becomes absolutely experimental. And, the experimental, according to Federman (personal email, Essay 3: Introduction) is "unusual, difficult, innovative, provocative, intellectually challenging, and even original." It is at the heart of this experimentation that one finds the freedom obtainable in the postmodern.

Postmodernist agenda and processes have been of tremendous influence in the field of literary studies, in relation to fiction, particularly. The various motivations realising the emergence of postmodernism will reflect in postmodernist fiction in several ways. While defining postmodernist fiction, Mepham (1991: 132) provides four distinct descriptions:

> What is postmodern about postmodernist fiction? The first is historical…. It defines the postmodern in terms of its movement away from, or rejection of, some aspects of modernism. The second is philosophical and sees postmodernist fiction as arising on a site cleared by philosophy (or 'poststructuralism'). All sorts of conceptual slums have been demolished, it is said by the realization that 'meaning is undecidable' and that 'reality is constructed in and through language'. What is postmodern about postmodernist fiction is its allegiance to these philosophical positions….The third can be called ideological (or pedagogic). It defines postmodernist fiction in terms of its intended effects, which are that it should 'problematise reality', 'unsettle the reader's sense of "reality"…or unmask or lay bare 'the process of world-construction'. What is postmodern about postmodernist fiction is its aim to teach us a lesson in how worlds are made. The fourth definition is in terms of the textual strategies which it employs. These strategies are designed to foreground the textuality of the fiction… to force constant reinterpretation by 'reframing', or to generate multiple ontologies, a plurality of worlds.

71

Although postmodern writers are not homogenous in their modes of writing, their works, by Mepham's first definition, put to question the entire series of interconnected concepts associated with modernism – autonomy, transcendence, certainty, authority, unity, totalization, system, universalization, centre, continuity, closure, hierarchy, origin, etc. By putting to question all the terms associated with modernism, postmodernist fiction challenges mainstream realist aesthetic ideology in modernist fiction (cf. Woods, 1999:50). In challenging realist fiction, postmodernist fiction subverts narrative continuity and pits narrative as fragments which is not only an inquiry into the nature of narrative but also into the very nature of subjectivity because "the perceiving subject is no longer assumed to a coherent, meaning-generating entity. Narrators in postmodernist fiction become either disconcertingly multiple and hard to locate …or resolutely provisional and limited – often undermining their own seeming omniscience" (Hutcheon, 1988:11).

In the contest against a unified and coherent subject, what is really the issue is the concept of totalizationtogether with its homogenizing system. As subjectivity is challenged, postmodernist fiction privileges a decentred and fragmented subject that undermines the concepts of order, causality, space, time, narrative sequence, narrative closure, and genre boundaries. Since the centre no longer holds, decentred narration and plot; fragmented subjectivity, space and time; multiple and wandering points of view; and digressions become the fashion in postmodern fiction.

In his 1968 seminal essay (reprinted in Federman, 1981: 9-33), John Barth, using the novels of Vladimir Nabokov, Samuel Beckett, and Jorge Luis Borges as archetypes, defines postmodern fiction as "Literature of Exhaustion." He emphasises that literature has "used up" the conventions and disguises of fictional realism. In this wise, postmodernist fiction, as true literature of exhaustion, searches for new possibilities by abandoning traditional elements such as character, plot, metaphor, meaning, narrative sequence and closure and move in "an inexorable movement towards silence" (Woods, 1999:52). Many postmodernist works feature fiction without character and stable pronominal referents. Some appropriate objects rather than reveal subjects while some others play tricks on their readers (cf. Federman, 1981b:301). This literature of silence, in Federman's (1981b:301) term, is a journey into nonsense and "LESSNESSness".

In other words, postmodernist fiction is situated within the tradition of rebelling against Tradition and is, in Bakhtian's term, a "carnivalesque" which is

characterized by incoherence, loss of genre distinction, play, repetition, simultaneity, nonce and nonsense words, loss of narrative connectedness and sequence, loss of narrative closure, collage, bricolage, to mention just a few. Ryan (2001: 186) explains that postmodernist fiction exhibits the nature of the carnivalesque in forms of:

> chaotic structures, creative anarchy, parody, absurdity, heteroglossia, word invention, subversion of conventional meanings (*à la* Humpty Dumpty), figural displacements, puns, disruption of syntax, *melange des genre*, misquotation, masquerade, the transgression of ontological boundaries (pictures coming to life, characters interacting with their author), the treatment of identity as a plural, changeable image – in short, the destabilization of all structures, including those created by the text itself

In terms of its carnivalesque nature, Barth (1981: 31) posits postmodernist fiction as a type of Borges' "Library of Babel" which

> houses every possible combination of alphabetical characters and spaces, and thus every possible book and statement, including …refutations and vindications, the history of the actual future, the history of every possible future… the encyclopedias …of every imaginable other world – since, as in Lucetius' universe, …the number of instances of each element and combination of elements is infinite….

In this regard, postmodernist fiction demonstrates itself as "inconsequential babble"instead of "agonized silence" (Mepham, 1991: 142) which provides the space for everything, anything, and nothing to be said in any and every possible way.

Where modernist fiction synthesises order into beginnings and endings, postmodernist fiction embraces multiple openings, multiple endings, and multiple plots. Postmodernist fiction accomplishes this through the construction of forking paths in the narrative. According to McHale (1987: 106), forking paths in postmodernist fiction is one of its strategies for self-erasure which has Borges' "The Garden of Forking Paths" as its paradigm: "Borges analyses narrative into a system of branchings. At each point in a story, the narrative agent is faced with a bifurcation, two possibilities, only one of which can be realized at a given time; choosing one, he is faced with another branching; choosing again, he is faced with yet another…".

With the forking paths therefore, postmodernist fiction takes fiction to its limits through "the possibility for endlessly reconstructing context as a general metaphor for

the openness of all texts" (Mepham, 1991: 147). Borges identifies the proliferation of meaning generating from his forking pathas the image of the labyrinth, the story of potential and actualised events:

> In all fiction, when a man is faced with alternatives he chooses one at the expense of the others. In the almost unfathomable Ts'ui Pen, he chooses simultaneously – all of them. He thus creates various futures, various times which starts others that will in their turn branch out and bifurcate in other times. This is the cause of the contradictions in the novel (cited in McHale, 1987: 107)

Postmodernistfiction, with their labyrinthine nature thus resists any semblance of order, creates semblances of disorder and incoherence, and offers itself for orders and re-orderings. On this account, McHale (1987: 108) submits thatlabyrinthine narratives "violate linear sequentiality by realizing two mutually-exclusive lines of narrative development at the same time". In this regard, labyrinthine postmodernist fictions are self-erasing narratives which erase one narrative path through the contradictory turns in the other narrative paths. One implication of mutually-exclusive narrative lines is the destabilisation of linear time order. Emphatically, readers of such texts would on many occasions find out that narrative lines float free of temporal markings while at some other times narrative lines introduce inconsistencies in the narrative sequence. Such inconsistencies do not, however, occur as errors but are self-erasing strategies which deliberately attempt to reject modern culture's notion of linear time and to deny modernist essence of reality and world-construction. Thus where modernist fiction places emphasis on the world as constructed in and by consciousness and the world as lived experience of time, memory, and history, postmodernist literature conceives the world in terms of the possibilities and limits of language.

Since the reality of forking paths leaves readers to continually create their own narratives from the multi-semiotic base of the labyrinthine text through the rearrangement of narrative elements during reading processes, "undecidability of meaning [arises] from the fragmentation of pluralization of contexts" (Mepham, 1991: 147). In this way, labyrinthine multilinearity fosters narratives with a sense of non-ending. Such narratives would normally contain contingent closures and readers can only arrive at one of such contingent closures during any reading session. Mutually-exclusive endings actually constitute one of the ways through which postmodernistfictions celebrate self-erasure through the sense of non-ending. McHale

(1987: 111) identifies the "ouroboros-structure" as another way of denying the text of the sense of closure. The "ouroboros-structure" can occur as circularity as in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* which, according to McHale (1987: 111), "has its tail in its mouth, the unfinished sentence on its last page resuming on its page, and so "continuing indefinitely.""

A very important aspect of postmodernist literary theory that cannot be overlooked is the treatment of language. There are instances of where postmodernist fictions distract the attention of readers from the world of the narrative to fix it on the linguistic medium employed for the construction of the world. Culler (cited in McHale, 1987: 149) has identified "labor theory of value" as one of such distraction strategies. The "labor theory of value" describes the situation "whereby the aesthetic value of the verbal art is to be measured in terms of the amount of work that has gone into the production of the linguistic surface." Barthes' (1975: 32) notion of the "writerly" text has been a very useful term in describing how postmodernist fictions direct attention from the world of the text to the words of the text. While explaining the character of the writerly text, Barthes (1975: 32) indicates that

> The aim of such a text is not to prevent the reconstruction of a world – which, in any case, it could not do – but only to throw up obstacles to the reconstruction process, making it more difficult and thus conspicuous, more perceptible. To accomplish this, it has at its disposal a repertoire of stylistic strategies, including lexical exhibitionism, the catalogue, and "back-broke" and invertebrate sentences

Thus, postmodernist fictions, through different writerly strategies draw the attention of readers to the construction of meaning. Such strategies make readers to be conscious of the text and their efforts at decoding its semantics.

Another postmodernist effect on language concerns how its practitioners exploit the space of the text. McHale (1991: 182) submits that "Postmodernist texts are typically spaced-out, literally as well as figuratively. Extremely short chapters, or short paragraphs separated by wide bands of white space, have become the norm." The spatial displacement of words arising from the exploitation of the writing space in postmodernist texts thus produces the displacement of the conventions of fiction, the discontinuity of narrative, and the fragmentation of language. The various textual strategies deployed for postmodernist agenda in fiction all indicate that where modernist fictions propagate values of seriousness, purity, and autonomy,

postmodernist literature projects and celebrates play and eclecticism and privileges the pleasures of form and style rather than of content and meaning.In this way, postmodernist fiction handles language as a plaything thereby transforming the text into a game and the reader into a player.

As a highly influential literary postmodernist theorist, Ihab Hassan adopts his neologism of "indetermanence" to designate "indeterminacy" and "immanence" as two central tendencies in postmodern works which are manifested in the workings of language (cf. Woods, 1999:59). Hassan also goes a step further in tabling the distinguishing characteristics of postmodernism in juxtaposition to those of modernism as revealed in Table 3.1 below. Although this schematization is not ripped of some problematics, especially as there appears to be an unspoken approval of postmodern characteristics, the schema provides great illumination on the nature of postmodern fiction and the aesthetic values many of them usually portray.

Woods (1999: 65-66), in summarizing the various manifestations of postmodernism in literature, identifies eight key characteristics which postmodernist fictions often portrays:

1. a preoccupation with the viability of systems of representation;
2. the decentring of the subject by discursive systems, and the inscription of multiple fictive selves;
3. narrative fragmentation and narrative reflexivity; narratives which double back on their presuppositions;
4. an open-ended play with formal devices and narrative artifice, in which narrative self-consciously alludes to its own artifice, thus challenging some of the presuppositions of literary realism;
5. an interrogation of the ontological bases of and connection between narrative and subjectivity;
6. an abolition of the cultural divide between high and popular forms of culture, embracing all in a mélange;
7. an exploration of ways in which narrative mediates and constructs history…;
8. the displacement of the real by simulacra, such that the original is always already linguistically constructed….

On a final note, it is necessary to indicate that postmodern literary theory generally relates to new modes of writing, representation, and textuality consequence of the rejection of modernist fiction's reliance on the ideology and psychology of realism. In such circumstance therefore, the works of theorists like Derrida, Kristeva, Barthes, Federman, Deleuze and Guattari, Baudrillard and Lyotard articulate new

Table 3.1. Hassan's juxtaposition of the distinguishing characteristics of modernism and postmodernism (Source: Woods, 1999: 60)

Modernism ⇅	Postmodernism ⟷
Romaticism/Symbolism	'Pataphysics, Dadaism
Form (conjuctive, closed)	Antiform (disjunctive, open)
Purpose	Play
Design	Chance
Hierarchy	Anarchy
Mastery/Logos	Exhaustion/Silence
Art Object/Finished Work	Process/Performance/Happening
Distance	Participation
Creation/Totalization	Decreation/Deconstruction
Synthesis	Antithesis
Presence	Absence
Centering	Dispersal
Genre/Boundary	Text/Intertext
Semantics	Rhetoric
Paradigm	Syntagm
Hypotaxis	Parataxis
Metaphor	Metonymy
Selection	Combination
Root/Depth	Rhizome/Surface
Interpretation/Reading	Against Interpretation/Misreading
Signified	Signifier
Lisible (Readerly)	*Scriptible* (Writerly)
Narrative/*Grande Historie*	Anti-narrative/*Petite Historie*
Master Code	Idiolect
Symptom	Desire
Type	Mutant
Genital/Phallic	Polymorphous/Androgynous
Paranoia	Schizophrenia
Origin/Cause	Difference-Differance/Trace
God the Father	The Holy Ghost
Metaphysics	Irony
Determinacy	Indeterminacy
Transcendence	Immanence

models of theory, practice, and subjectivity, affirm new developments, and describe movement into new textual terrains. In Hutcheon's (1988:54) argument, the works of these theorists "share with the more specifically "literary" texts of postmodernism a desire to interrogate the nature of language, of narrative closure, of representation, and of the context and condition of both their production and reception." This is why Derrida's notion of "difference," Barthes' "writerly text," Federman's "Surfiction," Deleuze and Guattari's "rhizome and schizoid hero," and Baudrillard's "simulation", for example, institute postmodernist logic and socio-cultural conditions of fragmentation and decentring.All together, these theoretical stances form parts of the matrix of the postmodernist theory.

In this regard, we uphold postmodern literary theory as an inclusive theory which, in the characteristic nature of its ideology of pluralism, incorporates diverse theoretical positions which in one way or the other reject the positions of modern culture and offer alternatives to modern models (cf. Best and Kellner, 1991: x). Such diverse theoretical positions are those which especially reflect in textual structures and strategies.

3.4   Applied media aesthetics

Herbert Zettl of the San Francisco State University, a communications scholar whose research emphasis have always been media aesthetics and video production, developed applied media aesthetics (AMA) as a branch aesthetics in order to cater for the way in which texts are becoming increasingly multimodal, especially in digital culture. Unlike the traditional concept of aesthetics, AMA is not limited to the traditional philosophical understanding and appreciation of beauty and the ability to judge it consistently. AMA specifically deals with how we perceive and interpret images and sounds in video, film, electronic, digital and other media display screen.

According to Zettl (2011: 12-13), AMA is modelled after the theories and practices of Wassily Kandinsky, a Russian painter and teacher who holds that "abstraction did not mean reducing a realistic scene down to its essential formal elements. Rather, it meant that an inductive process of building a scene by combining the "graphic elements" – the fundamental building blocks of painting – in a certain way." Following Kandinsky's inductive approach, Zettl identifies five fundamental and contextual aesthetic elements: light & colour; two-dimensional space, three-dimensional space, time/motion, and sound. Zettl believes that these aesthetic elements

78

will help for the contextual perception of audio-visual "complexities, subtleties, and paradoxes of life and to clarify, intensify, and interpret them effectively" (Zettl, 2011: 11).

AMA is designed is such a way that it provides for both analysis and synthesis. In essence, gaining the understanding of the five fundamental aesthetic elements will not only help in moulding or encoding audio-visual messages but will enhance a thorough knowledge on focus selection, framing of a shot, the employment of colour, and the selection of sound/music, and how to properly use or manipulate all of these to achieve the intended meaning of the audio-visual message. Following from this, it becomes obvious that the type, amount, degree, and direction of light; the degree of colour hue, saturation, and brightness; the selection of the camera and its optical/angle settings; and the selection and manipulation of sound and its layering are no mean activities or careless decisions because they greatly bear on the meaning of the text. Recognising this fact, van Leeuwen (1996: 89), while discussing the semiotic implications of the selection of the camera and its optical/angle settings/distortions submits that:

> …the position of the camera creates a relation between the viewer and what is depicted in the image. The camera can make us look down on people, places or things, or to look up at them; it can bring us close to them or put us at a distance from them…. the camera can zoom into a closer shot, or out to a wider shot; it can crane up to a high angle or down to a low angle

Thus, the camera can be manipulated and distorted in various ways – point of view (POV), subjective point of view (S-POV), close-up (CU), extreme close-up (XCU), and imbalance screen resolution, amongst others – to convey context-based messages of the image text.

The hue, saturation, and brightness of colour can also be manipulated to realise intended and contextualized meanings. Saturation/desaturation can both define the modality of a screen event, that is how real/surreal/unreal an event is and what the reaction of the viewer is expected to be. With saturation, a screen event can be presented as being real to the extent that the viewer is persuaded to key into the reality of such an event. Zettl (2011: 77), in this connection, says that "Color on recognizable images (people and objects) emphasizes their appearance; thus our attention is directed toward the outer, rather than the inner, reality of an event." Where desaturation occurs,

the encoder of the message may be drawing attention of the viewer to the psychology of the event rather than to its outer reality as saturation will usually do.

The implications of sound selection as well as its layering are of great importance in both the analysis and synthesis of a multimodal text. Depending on the context of an event, sound can bring warmth, indicate the psychology of an event, or orientate the listener about an event. At some other time, sound selection and combinations can be manipulated to predict an impending occurrence. The multimodal nature of a text makes it an imperative to interpret every screen event in relation to the various sounds noticeable in the environment.

The manipulations possible to undertake with aesthetic elements such as light and colour, space, time/motion or sound, indicate that audio-visual messages may take several inconceivable turns. However, the context of the event will guide the interpretations and the conclusions that the listener/viewer will arrive at. In this regard, AMA not only places great importance on the influence of the medium on the message, it equally holds that our perceptions and conclusions about the message are guided by context. In essence, context plays a significant role in decoding the message of the medium.

3.5   Modifications to the theory

As earlier indicated in Section 3.1, our concern in this Section is to modify SFL to accommodate insights from postmodern literary theory and applied media aesthetics in order to provide a neat frame for a functional analysis of the selected text. Our adoption of a functional analysis of the hyperfiction texts is premised on the fact that the postmodern nature of the texts resists any form of a guaranteed meaning. Since reader choices made in the processes of reading determine the text that will be encountered at any point in time, the selected hyperfiction texts are dynamic and therefore need an analytical model that will be able to recognize that language is continually evolving in the texts and so will give adequate attention to language within every particular context of the texts. Coincidentally, this postmodern nature of the texts accentuates SFL's point that although texts are equal, their distinguishing factor is the way language resources are deployed within the context of each text.

As already pointed out in Section 3.3, postmodernism directs our attention to the changes taking place in contemporary society and culture. In Hutcheon's view (1988:53), this reveals postmodern "interest in interpretative strategies and in the

situating of verbal utterances in social action" and equally affiliates postmodern aesthetic practices with a contemporary linguistic theory like SFL. For Best and Kellner (1991:26), postmodernist theory, in this way, gives primacy to discourse theory since "discourse theory sees all social phenomena as structured semiotically by codes and rules, and therefore amenable to linguistic analysis, utilizing the model of signification and signifying practices." Best and Kellner (1991:26) therefore conclude that "postmodern theory follows discourse theory in assuming that it is language, signs, images, codes, and signifying systems which organize the psyche, society, and everyday life."

Characteristically, SFL believes that language is contextualized among other semiotic systems we denote by the term "culture" be it patterns of behaviour, belief systems, visual and other art forms, self-presentation and representation, and so on. With the belief in contextualizing language, SFL is thus competent to interpret the extent to which language functions as a connotative semiotic through which other semiotic systems are presented. A particular culture or aspect of culture will determine how language is used, the meanings likely to be expressed in language, and the language likely to be used in expressing those meanings.

Postmodernist theory and SFL thus share purview about the crucial nature of context. While the postmodern engages language in representing the society as it really is, SFL holds that the recognition of the context of a particular text will provide explanations for the use to which language is put in the text and to what end/purpose. Taking the postmodernist fiction, for example, postmodernists would believe in representing the world they have seen whether bizarre or usual while SFL, would contextualize and locate such a work within the context of postmodern culture in order to account for the way language is used in achieving postmodernist aesthetics. Catherine Belsey (cited in Hutcheon, 1988:53) relatedly asserts that "assumptions about literature involve assumptions about language and about meaning, and these in turn involve assumptions about human society. The independent universe of literature and the autonomy of criticism are illusory."

When one examines hypertext from the viewpoint of its demand for readers who would immerse themselves in a mass of shifting textual and graphical objects, it would be discovered that hypertext actualizes the fragmentary, non-linear, and plural inter-weavings and textuality characteristic of postmodernist works. Thus, hypertext arguably provides the instantiation of what have previously been somewhat mere

esoteric projections of postmodernists. In this regard, we appropriate hypertextuality into postmodernist theory and hold that hypertextualityis an artefact of the techno-savvy postmodern cultural age.

Whereas AMA is concerned with how audio-visual communication elements encode our experiences of the world, SFL holds that language is just one of the semiotic resources that can be engaged in encoding human experiences. In this regard, the semiotic base of SFL ably appropriates the concerns of AMA. Taking this sort of approach, van Leeuwen (1996: 81) believes both image and sound can:

1. represent what is going on in the world (ideational meaning)
2. bring about interaction and relations between the communicating parties (interpersonal meaning)
3. form the kinds of meaningful wholes we call 'texts' or communicative episodes… (textual meaning)

In another perspective, AMA can be built into SFL is in relation to issue of context. AMA is of the view that the consideration of the context is highly pivotal to the message and the interpretation of an aesthetic element. In essence, just as both SFL and PLT are considerate of context, AMA also shares the opinion that context is highly significant to the interpretation of any message. In this regard, SFL, PLT, and AMA build into one another as far as context is concerned. Since PLT has been expanded to accommodate hypertextuality, it becomes easier to also incorporate the concerns of AMA into PLT since AMA is, in this study, concerned with the hypermedia/multimedia hyperfiction characteristic. By this, AMA is partly incorporated into PLT which is in turn incorporated into SFL.

In our further bid to properly contextualize the selected hyperfiction texts within SFL, we return to the issue of instantiation depicted in Figure 3.3. Thus, in Figure 3.3b below, we recognize the "context of culture" as cyberspace, hypertextuality/hypermediality, and postmodernist experimental tradition on the system pole while on the text pole, the data selected for the study (*afternoon, a story* and *of day, of night*) are configured within the contextual situation of hyperfiction. At the intermediate pole, the aesthetic characteristics of postmodernist and hypertext fictions will serve as the window system through which the selected postmodern hyperfiction texts can be properly examined.

Hyperfiction texts
(context of situation)

Postmodernistand hypertext fiction
(institution – situation type)

instance

Cyberspace, hypertextuality/hypermediality
and postmodernist experimental tradition
(context of culture)

subpotential – instance type

*afternoon, a story;
of day, of night*
(texts)

potential

aesthetic characteristics of postmodernist
and hypertext fiction
(text window)

system (of language)

Figure 3.3b. Thecline of instantiation modifiedto reflect cyberspace, hypertextuality/hypermediality, and postmodernist experimental tradition as the context of culture for *afternoon, a story* and *of day, of night*, the texts for the study

As language system interfaces with postmodern culture and all its semiotic constructs and ideologies, the domain of SFL is adjusted to accommodate and account for language uses and functions within the selected hyperfiction texts. Equally, with the appropriation of AMA into SFL, SFL will be able to interpret other semiotic constructions such as visual aesthetics and multimodal codes that have become integral parts of the media-saturated postmodern cultural age.Usually SFL studies texts from either the system level or from the instance level. Since postmodernist theory is reactive against metanarratives, our analysis of the texts will be from the instance level as it aligns with postmodernist desire for mini-narratives.

3.6   Conclusion

Our obligation in this chapter, so far, has been to construct the framework for analysing the selected hyperfiction texts. We adopt SFL, complementedwith insights from postmodern literary theory and applied media aesthetics. By incorporating insights form both postmodern literary theory and applied media aesthetics into SFL, we believe that the theoretical model will be able to answer for all the experimental nature of creativity in the selected hyperfiction texts especially because the postmodern is representative of all theories which project new models of theory, affirm new developments, and describe movement into new textual terrains. In this regard, hypertextuality, poststructuralism, surfiction, andvisual aesthetics, to mention just a few, are upheld in the study as matrices of postmodern literary theory.

The adoption of SFL is premised on its functional value of language in specific contexts.SFL holds that context provides for the how language means and is made to mean in texts. The grammar of a language is therefore not form-based but function-defined; language cannot be confined into a set of rules, it is a resource for making meaningsaccording to the dictates of particular contexts.Language therefore interacts with the socio-cultural environment and adjusts to them to yield meanings.In this picture, the metafunctions of language depend on context for their workings. The ideas the metafunctions will reflect, for example, will be against the backdrop of context. The ideologies, beliefs, and views of a culture will thus dictate what is experienced, how it is experienced, and how it is represented in language.

By incorporating postmodern literary theory and applied media aesthetics into SFL, the cline of instantiation which pictures how texts evolve from the resources of the language system is readjusted so that cyberspace, hypertextuality/hypermediality,

and postmodernist experimental tradition stand as the 'context of culture' while the texts selected for the study are located as instances of hyperfiction texts. With this specific delineation of the cultural context of the texts, we believe that SFL will be able to interpret not only the language of the texts but also other semiotic codes deployed in the texts.

CHAPTER FOUR

HYPERTEXTUAL EXPERIMENTATION

4.1   Introduction

We have submitted in the preceding chapters that the emergence of hypertext evinces new forms of textuality that are otherwise alien and absurd in the history of the textual world. In Chapter Two specifically, we explained that hyperfiction texts not only establish hypertext as a medium for a new of kind of flexible fiction but also continue the experimentations in literary tradition and channel new and unprecedented courses. Hypertextuality and experimentations are therefore the fundamentals of hyperfiction texts because they not only result in redefining our notions and perspectives about narrative; but channel a redefined perspective of the notions of narrative, its composition/writing and its reading. It is therefore our obligation, in this chapter, to examine the techniques employed in creating the selected data both as hypertexts and as postmodern/experimental narratives/fiction.

4.2   Overview of the selected hyperfiction texts

4.2.1   *afternoon, a story*

Michael Joyce's *afternoon, a story* (henceforth *afternoon*) was created in 1987as a "test file" for Storyspace™, an authoring system whichMichael Joyce collaborated withJay David Bolter and John B. Smith to create (cf. Bolter and Joyce (1987), Moulthrop (1989)). As a matter of fact, these three scholars created Storyspace™in the bid to demonstrate that a hypertext system could as well serve as a medium for creating a new kind of flexible and interactive fiction. With this, *afternoon*emerges as the first hypertext fiction which, over time, has evolved as a canonical text in the various discussions of hypertext. Significantly, *afternoon* demonstrates the evolution of hyperfiction texts as the continuation, in digital culture, of the experimental tradition in literature.

afternoon has undergone five editorial processes; the fifth edition is the version selected for this study. Basically, *afternoon* is alphanumeric in nature and contains 539 readingspaces (i.e., lexias) and 951 invisible links. The nodes and the links work

within a combinatorial logic that allows the combination and permutation of the nodes in such a way that the story exists at various levels depending on the choices made by the reader while traversing the text. The combinatorial logic within which *afternoon* worksis adequately captured in Joyce's explanation of the major driving force for writing the text:

> I wanted, quite simply, to write a novel that would change in successive readings and to make those changing versions according to the connections that I had for some time naturally discovered in the process of writing and that I wanted my readers to share. In my eyes, paragraphs on many different pages could as well go with paragraphs on many other pages, although with different effects and for different purposes. All that kept me from doing so was the fact that, in print at least, one paragraph inevitably follows another. It seemed to me that if I, as author, could use a computer to move paragraphs about, it wouldn't take much to let readers do so according to some scheme I had predetermined (cited in Landow, 2006:216).

Accordingly, this statement parallels similar epistemological dialogues made for some previous experimental works and thusinstitutes *afternoon* as a literary work within the tradition of experimentation. In Ronald Sukenick's novel titled *Out*, for example, a character bearing the author's name says: "I want to write a novel that changes like a cloud as it goes along" while Raymond Federman in his *Take It Or Leave It* explains thus: "I want to write a novel that cancels itself as it goes along."

In one other way, Joyce's submissionreveals *afternoon* not only as a multiply malleable story but also as a typical postmodernist text which builds on the aesthetics of self-erasure. With this possibility of variable structures, *afternoon,* according to Moulthrop, (1989:262) possesses "a rich field of fictive possibility" that "invites the reader to circulate digressively among a matrix of characters and events that are never quite what they seem on first presentation." So also, the mechanics of recursions, repetitions, and multivalence amongst others are necessary models of the re-cycle which the reader will and must inescapably encounter in the circuitry world of *afternoon*'s narrative.

Within the web of *afternoon,* one encounters Peter (a writer), Wert (a company owner and Peter's employer), Lolly (Wert's therapist wife), Lisa (Peter's ex-wife), and Nausicaa (Peter's co-worker). In sum, *afternoon* traces, from the memory shards of Peter, the uneven and fragmentary story of a car accident that occurred, seemed to

have occurred, may possibly have occurred, or simply did not occur on his way to work early on in the morning. Peter's ex-wife and son are involved in the accident, could have been involved, or are simply not involved it. Believing the duo died or are seriously injured in the accident, Peter is in a frenetic search for them. In some other readings, however, Peter simply goes about his business, nothing having happened. Equally, Peter is having an affair with Nausicaa or simply did not. In other readings, Wert is sleeping with Lisa, may have slept with her, or none of this at all. Nausicaa is double-dating Peter and Wert, may be dating either of the two, or neither of them.

Because of the machinery of indeterminacy at work in *afternoon,* this interactive narrative embodies all these possibilities as well as other narrative strands without anyone taking priority over the other. The "central thrust" of the indeterminacy and plurality in *afternoon*, according to Douglas (1994:173), derives "from the narrative dialectic of discovery and concealment which drives events in nearly every narrative strand." From this, we understand that *afternoon,* like many other hyperfiction texts,typically requires readings and re-readings in order for the readers to be able to construct their own meanings and text, however provisional, from the fragments making up the text. Thus, *afternoon* reiterates Bernstein's (2009) proposition that "hypertextuality is perceived through rereading and reflection."

4.2.2 *of day, of night*

Megan Heywardcreated *of day, of night* (henceforth *of day*) in the year 2004 as her second multimedia narrative work, her first being *I am a singer*.Unlike *afternoon* which is basically alphanumeric, *of day* demonstrates that the age gap of 17 years existing between our two data texts have been eventful and have been anything other than stagnant for the field of hypertext. *of day* thus employs written text, speech, music, still pictures, video, animation, and graphics in telling the story of Sophie, a young woman of 35 years who is suffering from an uncommon condition of an inability to dream. The text contains two parts – "day" and "night" – and traces how Sophie wanders through the "day" as she sets herself a series of creative tasks across various settings in her environment to help her spark her unconscious into dreams again. Readers are able to proceed into the "night" part only after the wanderings through the "day" and the readers' active participation in Sophie's activities. *of day* displays the intersection of dreams with everyday life and objects and offers the promise and reward of being able to proceed into the "night" after the reader must

have performed a series of tasks. These two factors, among many others, practically define *of day* as partly narrative, partly game, partly dream, and partly memory.

Interactivity in the text is participation and submersion par excellence. It naturally turns out that as Sophie explores her immediate geographical environment in search of objects that will help restore her dream life, the explorations immediately transcend the borders of Sophie's personal salvation task and transform into the reader's own search and wanderings. The reader's interaction gradually shifts away from the physical encounter with the computer interface into a conceptual and emotional plane where Sophie's journeys and wanderings become those of thereader thus making the reader responsible for whatever defeat or victory Sophie will get at the end of the day. As such, *of day*'sinteractivity transfers the responsibility of the search to readers, they decide where Sophie goes, what object Sophie sees and examines, and which object Sophie describes.

The employment of other semiotic resources like music, sound, speech, animation, graphics, still pictures, and video not only represents the advance in hypertext systems but also exhibit the move towards the convergence of written text, cinema, television, and computer games in literary experimentations. As a new media narrative, *of day* is a hybrid of cinematic, textual and interactive elements that explores the intersections of narrative and interactivity. Heyward's remark in the introductory part of the work titled "[about the work]" states her motivation for creating the work and equally describes the expectations and actualizations of *of day* as a narrative:

> For several years I have been interested in the intersection of narrative and interactivity – the implications of interactivity on narrative, and vice-versa, the sorts of texts that are made possible when narrative is shaped in new media…
>
> When it comes to developing work, I have a particular attraction to themes, experiences, narratives that seem inherently suited to new media expression. Fragmentation, multiplicity, collision, non linearity, wandering – these are the sorts of qualities I am seeking in terms of narrative forms and contents.
>
> …. More broadly, I am interested in exploring the terms "interactivity" and "engagement", and a participation of the audience in new media works…. I … think of an interactive work as being responsive, inviting participation as coaxing an audience inside it, and whispering back. Allowing a fluid relationship between narrative and interactive elements, where participation appears seamless. Participation, for me, is a very useful term for conceiving ways in which an audience might engage with a new media work.

In actualizing her objective for participation and interaction in the narrative process, the text is designed in such a way that the writer's choices unavoidably collide and converge seamlessly with those of the character and the readers.

4.3 Navigation strategies and link patterns

Characteristically, hypertexts launch readers into the realms of choices and freewill such that they are able to move through the materials of the text in a manner most suitable for them. These hyperfiction texts exhibit this trait by providing readers with various traversal potions. Our focus here then is to explore these navigation strategies and examine the link patterns in the texts.

4.3.1 Journeying through *afternoon*

That *afternoon* is basically alphanumeric does not underscore the fact that the dynamics of digital technology during the time of creating the text are maximally utilized in creating the text and in making exploration options available to the reader. While readers have the prerogative of deciding how to move through the text in the ways most appealing to them, the text still provides the option of a "default reading path." The default reading path is pursued by continuously pressing the return (ENTER) key. Pursuing the text of the default path creates a feeling very much similar to that which reading traditional print texts will generate since the reader follows the reading path so designed by the author and continues tapping the return key as if opening book pages one after the other. Equally, because the default path is for the most part chronologically presented, it launches the text and gives the reader necessary background information and guiding clue for piecing together the disjointed nodes to be encountered in subsequent reading session of the text. In view of this, readers may need to sacrifice their freedom at one time or the other to tread the default path in order to gain this background information.

Apart from the default reading path, there are several other facilities available to readers to journey through the text as captured in Plate 4.1 below. The buttons "Y" and "N" at the base of the node can be employed by the reader to move through the text and to explore other narrative possibilities in the text. Also, readers can respond "yes" or "no" to questions either by clicking on these two buttons or by typing in the text entry space following immediately after the letter buttons.Each answer would determinethe nodes readers would thereafter encounter. For example, the node titled

Plate 4.1. Screenshot of the start-up lexia in *afternoon, a story* showing some of the resources for traversing the text.

"[begin]" ends with the question "Do you want to hear it?" If readers answer "yes" they are immediately led to the node titled "[yes]" while they move on to the node titled "[no]" if they decide to click "no" button. In the lexia "[her hand]" as well, answering "yes" to the question "Everything begins there, don't you see?" which ends the lexia would lead readers to the node titled "[here]" whereas a "no" would lead readers back to "[begin]". In all the cases, readers continue to follow different treads even when they keep reading the text with the return key.

Immediately after the text entry space is the "Links" menu button which helps readers to view all the other nodes to which a particular node links to. With this, reader could choose any favoured node and thereby institute a preferred path in the reading session. The "History" button helps readers to view the sequence of the nodes they visit in the reading session and provides them with the opportunity to re-visit those past nodes either to make choices different from the ones earlier made or to re-pursue the path. The paper clip symbol helps readers to bookmark any node while the symbol of the sheet of paper provides them with the opportunity to make side notes for each node. With the arrow button, readers could page back on those nodes they had earlier read.

One significant and unique navigation facility in *afternoon* is the "words-that-yield." "Words-that-yield", as Joyce indicates in the lexia titled "[read at depth]", are those words which have "texture". Although the "yielding word" is not cued or demarcated from the other words in the nodes, a click on a yielding word will automatically lead the reader away from that current node into a new one. Invariably, the workings of the "yielding words" build on the logic of invisible links among the nodes of the text. Ordinarily, every word in the text would lead the reader to another node when clicked upon. However, "words-that-yield" are differentiated from unyielding words in the text in that where unyielding words lead the reader to the consecutive node in the default path, the yielding words lead the reader to nodes entirely different from that node which the default path leads readers to. The implication of this is that readers must be conversant with the default path to be able to differentiate the yielding words from the non-yielding ones. In another dimension, readers may playfully explore the texture of each word in a particular node by clicking on each word in order to identify those words which yield. Invariably, the workings of the "words-that-yield" are grounded on the mechanics of "hide-and-seek" which establish that re-reading is inevitable in grasping the depth of any hypertext fiction.

The interplay of the network of alternative links and the mechanism of "words-that-yield" stamp the image of a web on the text. The combinatorial logic working behind the web of the alternatives builds the text into a complex and twisty labyrinth that challenges the most daring of readers. From lexia "[begin]", for example, there are twenty available outgoing links as indicated in Table 4.1 below. With this large number of outgoing links from the lexia, readers come to see the labyrinthine challenge they face in the course of traversing the text especially because all the twenty links have their respective outgoing links too. In addition, this large number of links also demonstrates the potentials of hypertextuality to accomplish various forms of postmodernist literary experiments. Just as "[begin]" has the largest number of outgoing links, it, as well, has the largest number of yielding words. Table 4.2 below indicates that "[begin]" contains 15 "words-that-yield".

A thorough examination of Tables 4.1 and 4.2 indicates that recursion is at work among the link facilities of *afternoon* as there is no destination link of the various yielding word that does not manifest as one of the available links in the lexia. Recursion is further noticeable among many of the destination links of the outgoing links. We may take lexia "[she]" as a typical example. The three available links in "[she]" are "[her hand]", "[Nausicaa2]", and "[everything rhymes]". A further traversal indicates that "[her hand]" has five available links: "[octopi]", "[ceremony]", "[here]", "[begin]", and "[three]". Invariably, the inclusion of "[octopi]" and, more importantly, "[begin]" among the available links in "[her hand]" makes it obvious that readers of the text are entrapped in a circuitry labyrinth. In some other cases, readers do not have to traverse far into the text before the recursion in the web of the alternatives is made obvious to them. For example, the only available link in "[winter]" is "[poetry]" while "[she]", one of the links in "[begin]", features as one of the two links available in "[poetry]".

This mechanism of recursion pervades *afternoon* and moulds the text into a web, thereby creating the feelings of merry-go-round; inscribing the pattern of the cycle; and establishing the motif of the recycle. As Bernstein (1998: 22) indicates, the pattern of the cycle pervades the atmosphere of *afternoon* because "the reader rejoins a previously-visited part of the hypertext and continues along a previously-traversed trajectory through one or more spaces before the cycle is broken." This circularity reveals the aesthetics of self-erasure and non-ending and thus demonstrates *afternoon* as a typical example of a postmodernist text.

Table 4.1. Twenty outgoing links from "[begin]" with the respective number of the links also out-going from them

S/N	Outgoing links from "[begin]"	Number of links in the lexia
1	she	3
2	no	4
3	octopi	3
4	yes	7
5	winter	1
6	poetry	2
7	the essence of wood	3
8	shrapnel	1
9	moaning	3
10	yesterday2	4
11	blacktop	3
12	Lethe	1
13	fenceline	1
14	fragments	1
15	relic	3
16	CT	1
17	gift of hearing	1
18	blacktop	3
19	Werther	1
20	I want to say	4

Table 4.2. The fifteen "words-that- yield" within "[begin]" and their destination links

S/N	Word that yields	Destination link
1	winter	winter
2	she	she
3	blacktop	blacktop
4	crystal	Lethe
5	octopi	octopi
6	moaning	moaning
7	fenceline	fenceline
8	shrapnel	shrapnel
9	relics	relic
10	thundering	CT
11	the essence of wood	the essence of wood
12	fragments	fragments
13	Poetry	poetry
14	she	she
15	hear	yes

In Table 4.3 below, there are three navigation paths that are possible to be arrived whenever the return key is employed for reading at different times. A critical study of the Table clearly indicates some of the cycles the reader will likely experience in the course of reading and re-reading *afternoon*. As the Table shows, the reader inescapably comes across nodes previously traversed in "default path 1" along subsequent default paths 2 and 3. Nodes 1-6 and 1-9 of the default path 1 are encountered as cycles - ↻ - in paths 2 and 3, respectively.Another cycle occurs along default path 2 with the nodes 15-21 of default path 1 featuring as the nodes 22-28 of default path 2. Along default path 3, nodes 32-36 of default path 1 recur as a cycle in nodes 22-26.

Within default path 3, the reader equally encounters a very wide cycle as its nodes 9-39 recur in nodes 54-84. Default path 2 depicts another circumstance that stamps a cyclic structure on the text. This situation manifests where the reading path, rather than proceed into new or fresh nodes, identifies a particular nodal point and stubbornly makes the reader to go round and round the unbreakable cycle, symbolized as ⟳.Unless readers opt for another strategy to traverse the text, theywill continuously be entrapped within the cycle. In this way, nodes 14-28 of default path 2 continue to be recycled if reader continue to tap the return key. Both the text and the reader are inescapably circulated among these 14 nodes. There is no break or escape from the circle unless the reader decides for another navigational facility and makes an active choice.

As nodes 36 and 84 of default paths 1 and 3 respectively show, another pattern that exists in *afternoon* apart from the cyclic one is that of the "dead-end" symbolized as ⊥. Unlike in the traditional print text where readers easily identify the end of the text, readers of *afternoon* know that a particular reading path has been exhausted either when they are entrapped in the unbreakable cycle of nodes or when new nodes refuse to come up. In the first default reading of the text, readers encounter 35 nodes after the initial node "[start]". On getting to the last node "[I call]", the path refuses to default any longer. Readers immediately recognize that they have reached a dead-end because neither the tap of the return key nor the click on any word would yield any node again. As the navigational facilities of the return key and "wordsthat yield" fail because of the dead-end in the reading path, readers have no option other than to launch another navigational strategy.

Table 4.3. Three navigation paths depicting instances of the cycle pattern in *afternoon*

S/N	Default path 1	Default path 2	Default path 3
1	**Start**	start	start
2	**begin**	begin	begin
3	**I want to say**	I want to say	I want to say
4	**1 want 1.**	I want 1.	I want 1.
5	**I want 2.**	I want 2.	I want 2.
6	**asks**	asks	asks
7	**yesterday**	CT	yesterday
8	**Werther3**	Doing things together	Werther3
9	**Die**	Art Worlds	**Die**
10	He, he says	texture	**I see such wonders**
11	a bet	gift of speech	**simplicity**
12	the odds	me*	**The Sun King**
13	Whom	what Lolly said	**Jean Tinguely**
14	Love	what I say	**metamechanics**
15	**thank you**	yesterday2	**Siren**
16	**you're welcome**	brown	**Hermes**
17	**no end**	touching myself	**Scylla**
18	**what she can say**	monsters	**bimmie**
19	**Lost in the Funhouse**	self-destruction	**the rapture**
20	**what I see**	naked	**2/**
21	**what I say**	storm tossed	**synchronicity**
22	I would have asked	thank you	**relic**
23	adagio	you're welcome	**can I help you?**
24	ax player	no end	**no, I say**
25	1	what she can say	**transcript**
26	2	Lost in the Funhouse	**I call**
27	3	what I see	**Lolly**
28	4 what I see	what I say	**Lolly2**
29	5		**Lolly3**
30	staghorn and starthistle		**Wouldn't you**
31	fenceline		**Dora**
32	**relic**		**three**
33	**can I help you?**		**Lolly4**
34	**no, I say**		**Faulkner**
35	**transcript**		**she wasn't sure**
36	**I call**		**remoulade**
37			**out law**
38			**anchoring devices**
39			**Blowup**
40			Always
41			RedDesert
42			Still
43			Chaiken
44			me*
45			what Lolly said
46			music
47			Peter, Peter
48			air
49			nuncio
50			I want to say
51			here
52			begin
53			blacktop

54	Die
55	I see such wonders
56	simplicity
57	The Sun King
58	Jean Tinguely
59	metamechanics
60	Siren
61	Hermes
62	Scylla
63	bimmie
64	the rapture
65	2/
66	synchronicity
67	relic
68	can I help you?
69	no, I say
70	transcript
71	I call
72	Lolly
73	Lolly2
74	Lolly3
75	Wouldn't you
76	Dora
77	three
78	Lolly4
79	Faulkner
80	she wasn't sure
81	remoulade
82	out law
83	anchoring devices
84	Blowup

From the foregoing, it is noteworthy to state that the various navigational strategies available to the reader of *afternoon* clearly demonstrate that the dynamics of the digital technology were maximally employed for the uniqueness of the basically alphanumeric text. In the same manner, the navigational strategies and the traversal patterns of the text as made possible by hypertextuality considerably help in actualizing the author's dream of writing a story that changes in successive readings.

4.3.2 Mapping *of day*

In creating *of day,* Heyward explores the affordances of the digital technology in her time such that virtually all the semiotic resources for communication are combined with hypertext technology to realize the work as a highly multimodal text. On initiating the text, a reader first encounters a set of introductory transitions. Right from that transition stage, that reader becomes fully aware of the interplay of different semiotic resources in the text. At that transition stage, motion pictures, still images, written text, spoken text, instrumental music, and animations are all employed in succession to introduce the title of the text, its author, and its crux. The interwoven relationship existing between creative writing and programming in the digital media space is immediately made visible at this transition stage where readersfind it difficult to entirely jump over the prefacing text as many readers of traditional print texts usually do. The extent readers could go in jumping over the preface is an escape from the speeding collage of still and motion pictures which precede the unavoidable spoken and written texts parts of the preface text. Interestingly, it is the unavoidable written and spoken texts that are even the most patience-tasking part because they evolve slowly, according to an obvious pre-programmed time.

At the expiration of the transition stage, readers are launched into the day map which comes up with three nodes: "[before]", "[realise]", and "[halfway]". As designed, the map wears a cold face while the traces of the nodes disappear as soon as the map comes up. However, the place where each of the nodes is located becomes visible and glitters in an inviting manner as readers roll the mouse over the face of the map. Although theorists have pointed out that one of the basic differences between print and digital texts lies in the ability of the reader to enter into the digital text from any direction, the organization of the first three nodes along a descending horizontal axis, as depicted with the line drawn under the three nodes in Plate 4.2 below, seems to be suggestive of the order in which the author wants the text to be explored.

Plate 4.2. Screenshot of the "day" map at come-up showing the suggestive horizontal reading order for the first three nodes in the day map

It is in view of this suggestibility that Rustad argues in the seventh paragraph of his 2009 essay titled "A Four-Sided Model for Reading Hypertext Fiction" that "[t]he order tells us how we might read the hypertext fiction. It recommends a precise sequence of reading, a sequence confirmed because we get access to several sections as we read."

However, the text works in a very unique way that readers are able to access other nodes of the texts only when reading progresses. As nodes come up, they keep occurring along obvious organized linear orders on the screen. This, nevertheless, is not to say that the text is denied the characteristic of the digital space in which it is located. As could be inferred from Heyward's submission in one of the metatextual nodes in the text, that is "[about this work]," her objective for the creation of the text exists very much outside such traditional linear writingprinciple that usually specifies the particular textual traversal order for texts:

> … I have been interested in the intersection of narrative and interactivity – the implications of interactivity on narrative, and vice versa…. I am interested in exploring the terms "interactivity" and "engagement", and the participation of the audience in new media works…. The assumption that an audience must act in order to be engaged…. I prefer to think of an interactive work as being responsive, inviting participation, as coaxing an audience inside it, and whispering back. …. Participation, for me, is a very useful term for conceiving ways in which an audience might engage with a new media work.

From this submission, it is implied that Heyward is mostly interested in readers' interaction with and participation in the text. This is stressed by the fact that neither the hypertextual nature nor the narrative content of the text is disrupted or affected by the reader's order of traversing the nodes. The condition for the gradual access to other nodes has nothing to do with readers' conformity to the suggestive traversal orders. Rather, the number of nodes traversed during particular reading stages will determine whether the map will update to make new and more nodes available.

In the instance of the first three nodes, the reader needs to read any two before the map can update to open up the spaces of nodes "[act]" and "[collect]". Immediately the reader clicks on either of these two new nodes, the map will further be updated to make nodes "[market]", "[street]", "[café]", and "[river]" available to the reader. To enable the map update further, the reader is required to visit between two and three of the four new nodes and take active part in Sophie's task of searching for, collecting,

and examining objects. It is only after then that the node "[describe]" will come up. When the reader goes further to traverse "[describe]" and to describe some of the objects, s/he will gain access to lexias "[peruse]" and "[arrange]". The last condition that needs to be fulfilled for the translation of the reader into the night map is the reader's arrangement of the objects collected into the dreaming space of the cabinet located in "[arrange]." By this, it isnot the reader's compliance to a specified navigational order but the reader's fulfilling the pre-programmed conditions of a minimum level of engagement and interaction with the text that provides access to the other lexias in the text.

Unlike the situation in *afternoon,* links in *of day* are immediately visible. The mechanism employed for the presentation of links in the text somehow resembles the manifestation of words-that-yield. In *of day*'s case however, the yielding words are cued with animated glitters and they produce sounds effects whenever the reader rolls the mouse over such words. Most of the time, the sounds produced by the words have a direct relationship with the meanings of the yielding words. Apart from the yielding words, there are two other categories of animated words in the text. We identify the first category as "words-that-bounce". This type of animated text is usually visible and always responds to the touch of the mouse by shining the more, bouncing on the screen, and producing sound effects related to the meaning of the words. Unlike words-that-yield however, "words-that-bounce" do not lead readers into new nodes. The other category of animated text is what we term "words-that-float". This category of animated text is not always visible on the screen; it is only the reader's painstaking mousing over the space of the screen that would reveal the text floating on the screen. What "words-that-float" characteristically do is to emphasise and elucidate the message of the spoken and written texts.

In all the circumstances of words-that-yield, words-that-bounce, and words-that-float, Heyward takes the full advantage of the facilities of technology to create what Theo van Leeuwen (cited in Rustad, 2009: para. 9) terms "elaboration" and "specification" in his theory of multimodal coherence. When the reader clicks on "before", one of the first three nodes, a guitar is heard playing on at the background while a written text: "There was nothing particularly unusual about my life before any of this" appears on the screen. Here, "before" is cued as the yielding word. A click on the link leads the reader to a new screen where the inset video of Sophie is placed at

the background of a wide still picture, while a voice-over is heard expounding the previous electronic written text thus:

> There is nothing unusual about me, all my life, before any of these happened: nothing remarkable nor strange. My name is Sophie. I'm 34years old. I work as a photographer in a Government Department. …

The reader's painstaking movement over the background of this node reveals "nothing strange", "land and environment dept", and "work as a photographer" as the three sets of the words-that-float within the node. Categorically speaking, the meaning of the word "before" actually presupposes the nature of the narrative the reader will encounter in the text. The floating words elaborate on the speech narrative with one particularly specifying that the Government Department mentioned in the voice-over text as the working place of Sophie is the Department of Land and Environment.

The reader's traversal of "act" also illustrates how various semiotic resources function for multimodal coherence in the text. A click on "act" leads to the screen of the text: "By now it's clear I need a different approach. I have worked out a series of small tasks." With "tasks" cued as the available link, a click on the word leads the reader further into a new screen captured in Plate 4.3 below where a sheet of paper where the different tasks the speaker wishes to embark upon are listed in hand writing. As the page comes up, a voice-over in a woman's voice is heard saying: "By now it's clear I need a different approach: something less to it, more search, entirely. I have worked out a series of small tasks." As revealed in Plate 4.3, mousing over the first task "wander to places that you haven't visited before" brings up a floating sentence which repeats the written task with emphasis and specificity: "wander through unfamiliar places and location." The emphasis created by the emergence of the floating sentence is further enhanced by the utilization of the affordances of multimodal resources such that the sound of footsteps is made to accompany the floating sentence.

Mousing over the second task "collect objects or things which appeal" produces the floating sentence "find and collect objects… things which appeal" which is accompanied by the sound of someone rustling through items and thereafter placing the object on a hard surface. "Describe the objects… imagine their traces and history"floats over the third task "describe the objects, write their histories" while the sound ofsomeone scribbling on a sheet of paper accompanies the sentence. The last

task "arrange them into a display, cabinet… a cabinet of dreams" has "arrange the objects
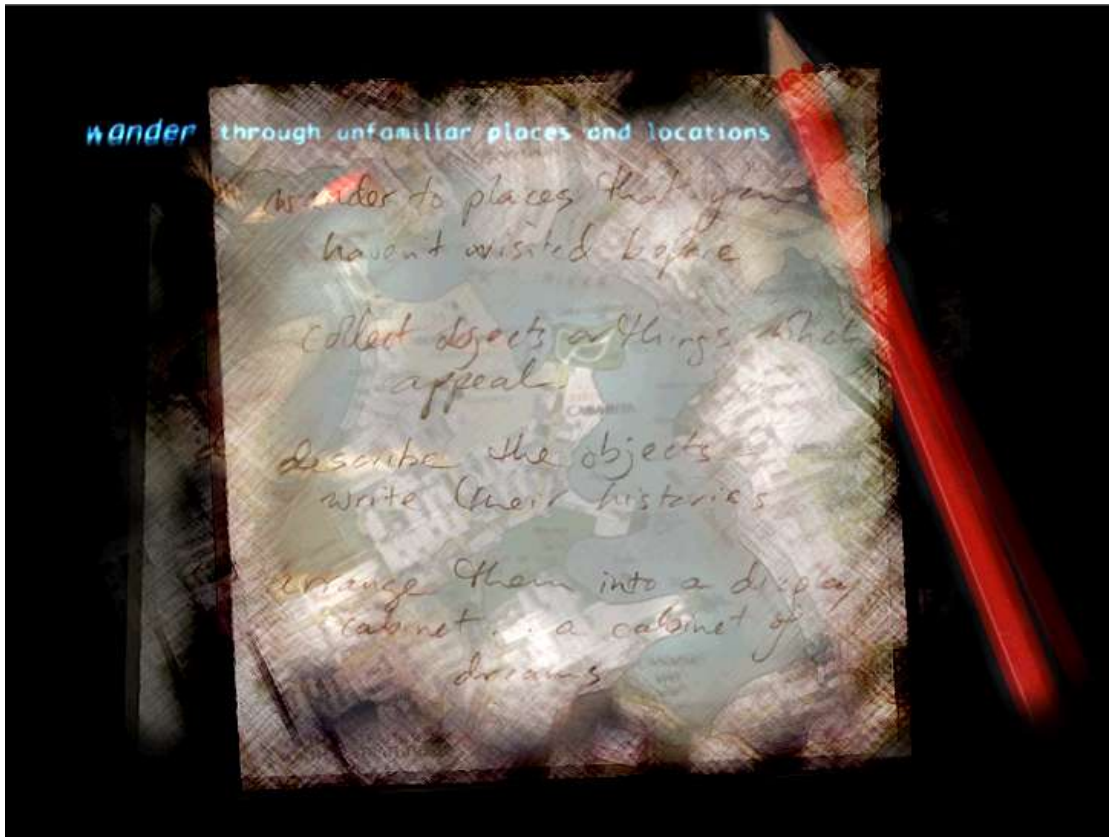
Plate 4.3. Screenshot of the "tasks" node showing a floating sentence

and their stories into a cabinet… a dreaming space" floating over it while the sound of someone opening and placing items in a cabinet is heard accompanying the sentence.

The mechanisms of elaboration and specification employed for the presentation of links in *of day* constructs an axial pattern for the links. The reader is led deeper into the text along a straight plane; no web-like or twisty experience is generated at anypoint in time. The constant positioning of the "return-link" at the base of each screen helps in maintaining a bi-directional axial relationship between each of the links and the map. The axial pattern of the text notwithstanding, the text employs the affordances of technology in demanding for the reader's non-trivial traversal through the text. Also, the text, through the facilities of technology, demands and compels the reader's participation for its gradual and full evolution. The reader's conditional and conditioned interaction with the text, which may not often be easily recognizable until after few trials, must be put in place for the full realization of the text, else the reader will keep merry-go-rounding in the text, its axial pattern notwithstanding.

4.3.3   Temporal bordersand dimensions

In traversing hypertexts, one cannot afford to ignore temporal dimensions. This is because time, to a large extent, is primal to the dynamic nature and characteristics of a digital text. In fact, Koskimaa would submit in the second paragraph of his online essay: "The Experience of the Unique in Reading Digital Literature" that "The dynamics and variability of digital texts are tied to the temporal potentiality in programmable media." Because Luesebrink (1998: 106) argues that the consideration of time constructs cannot be ignored in the study of hypertext literature as time most often influences the programming, writing, and reading of hypertext literature, he submits that time factors should "be viewed as important elements in the way hypertexts are conceived and received." For our selected data, *afternoon* and *of day*, the engagementand exploration of the borders and dimensions of time are clear factors in the uniqueness and dynamicity of the texts.

Luesebrink (1998: 107) indicates that the temporal aspects of hypertext literature can be considered under the two categories of "interface time" – "the physical span of time that the reader interacts with the text – and "cognitive time" – "the span of chronological time that the reader constructs or reconstructs… the content of the… narrative." He further sub-divides the interface time into three: mechanical

time, that is "the time occupied by non-content computer processes such as booting, loading, transfer of data, downloading applications, and mouse command/response"; reading time, "the duration of time the individual is physically and mentally engaged with the text… reading a lexia, looking at graphics, listening to music"; and interactive time, "the time the reader is engaged in a meaningful exchange with the text." In the third paragraph of Koskimaa's essay referred to above, he states that experimenting with "textual time", Luesebrink's "interface time" category, in hypertexts could occur in four basic ways: limiting reading time; delaying reading time; limiting reading opportunities; and temporally evolving texts.

One very clear temporal experimentation strategy employed in *afternoon* is that of temporally evolving text. *afternoon* is designed in such a way that the reader's previous action or non-action will determine the evolution of the text in successive reading sessions. True, the text provides the reader with a default path. However, the reader's previous actions will determine those nodes that will be encountered along the default path in successive readings. Because the navigation threads could be temporally-determined, it is the case that the reader's first launch of the text leads the reader through 36 nodes in the default path. However, if the reader, on completing the default path, re-negotiates to the start-up node – "[start]" – the default path to be later encountered contains a different succession of nodes.

Table 4.4 below illustrates certain instances of time-determined texts in *afternoon*. While all the paths are read with the return key, it is the actions or non-actions on the text that results in the temporally dynamic reading sessions. The "default path 1" in the Table designates the first succession of nodes readers encounter while reading the text with the return key immediately after its initial come-up. "Default path 2" is the successive nodes readers will encounter immediately they re-negotiate to the cover page after completing the reading of default path 1. "Default path 3" refers to the successive nodes readers will come across when they re-launch to "[start]" and read with the return key after they have first explored the text using the "N" button. For "default path 4", we have that reading session which follows after exploring the text with the "Y" button and readers launch back to the cover page.

As the four default paths are markedly different from one another, it becomes clear that one cannot categorically discuss the default path in *afternoon* without signifying the particular one. While path 1 spans through 36 nodes, path 2 contains 27

places with its last 13 nodes entering into the realm of the unbreakable cycle. Path 4has

30 readingspaces and, like path 2, recycles its last 10 nodes within the trap of an

Table 4.4. Instances of four time-determined evolution of text in the default path of *afternoon*

S/N	Default path 1	Default path 2	Default path 3	Default path 4
1	start	start	start	start
2	begin	begin	begin	begin
3	I want to say	I want to say	I want to say	I want to say
4	1 want 1.	I want 1.	I want 1.	1 want 1.
5	I want 2.	I want 2.	I want 2.	I want 2.
6	asks	asks	asks	asks
7	yesterday	CT	yesterday	yesterday
8	Werther3	Doing things together	Werther3	Werther3
9	Die	Art Worlds	Die	He, he says
10	He, he says	texture	I see such wonders	As if
11	a bet	gift of speech	simplicity	false beginning
12	the odds	me*	The Sun King	blacktop
13	Whom	what Lolly said	Jean Tinguely	me*
14	Love	what I say	metamechanics	Peter, Peter
15	thank you	yesterday2	Siren	Henry Ford
16	you're welcome	brown	Hermes	Dominoes
17	no end	touching myself	Scylla	air
18	what she can say	monsters	bimmie	nuncio
19	Lost in the Funhouse	self-destruction	the rapture	I want to say
20	what I see	naked	2/	here
21	what I say	storm tossed	synchronicity	begin
22	I would have asked	thank you	relic	blacktop
23	adagio	you're welcome	can I help you?	me*
24	ax player	no end	no, I say	Peter, Peter
25	1	what she can say	transcript	Henry Ford
26	2	Lost in the Funhouse	I call	Dominoes
27	3	what I see	Lolly	air
28	4 what I see	what I say	Lolly2	nuncio
29	5		Lolly3	I want to say
30	staghorn and starthistle		Wouldn't you	here
31	fenceline		Dora	begin
32	relic		three	
33	can I help you?		Lolly4	
34	no, I say		Faulkner	
35	transcript		she wasn't sure	
36	I call		remoulade	
37			out law	
38			anchoring devices	
39			Blowup	
40			Always	
41			RedDesert	
42			Still	
43			Chaiken	
44			me*	
45			what Lolly said	
46			music	
47			Peter, Peter	

48	air
49	nuncio
50	I want to say
51	here
52	begin
53	blacktop
54	Die
55	I see such wonders
56	simplicity
57	The Sun King
58	Jean Tinguely
59	metamechanics
60	Siren
61	Hermes
62	Scylla
63	bimmie
64	the rapture
65	2/
66	synchronicity
67	relic
68	can I help you?
69	no, I say
70	transcript
71	I call
72	Lolly
73	Lolly2
74	Lolly3
75	Wouldn't you
76	Dora
77	three
78	Lolly4
79	Faulkner
80	she wasn't sure
81	remoulade
82	out law
83	anchoring devices
84	Blowup

unbreakable cycle. Path 3 is the longest of the four as it contains 84 nodes although the 30 nodes contained within its 9th and the 39th places recur as its last 30 nodes before translating into a dead-end. With this sort of disparity existing in the number of nodes along each path, it turns out that one must qualify each reference to a default path in the text since the text can evolve and vary along the borders of time.

Again in Table 4.5 below, there is another instance of time-determined reading path. The "yes path 1" indicates the succession of nodes encountered with a continuous click of the "Y" button immediately the text comes up. "Yes path 2" designates the succession of nodes one would read if one opts out of the circuitry path of "yes path 1", re-negotiates to the cover page, and re-reads the text with the yes button. If after the default path 2, the reader re-negotiates to the cover page and re-reads the text using the "yes" button, the nodes in "yes path 3" are the ones the reader will encounter. Although paths 1 and 2 are very much alike, a keen consideration will reveal that the nodes 13-16 of path 1 are replaced by the node titled "[obligations]" in path 2. Thus, path 1 ends in 34 places where path 2 ends in 31 places.

With the possibility for variations in reading threads because of the text's temporal dimensions which determine reading sessions according to previous actions or non-actions, it is understandable why Joyce submits in "[a hypertext]" that:

> The story exists at several levels and changes according to decisions you make. A text you have seen previously may be followed by something new, according to a choice you make or already have made during any given reading.

No doubt, the variability occasioned by the temporal dynamics of *afternoon* leads the text into the realms of puzzle and quest. As the reader is caught within mazy and twisty pathways, the unconquerable is waiting patiently to be challenged and deciphered by the most daring reader in the hope that it (the text) might be discovered however slim the chances may be. Joyce establishes this fact about the text when he submits in "[in my mind]" that:

> …the story, as it has formed, takes on margins. Each margin will yield to the impatient, or wary, reader. …. These are not versions, but the story itself in long lines. Otherwise, however, the center is all…. I've

discovered more there too, and the real interaction, if that is possible, is in pursuit of texture. There we match minds."

Table 4.5. Time-determined threads evolving from the exploration of *afternoon* with the "yes" button at three different action times

S/N	YES PATH 1	YES PATH 2	YES PATH 3
1	start	start	start
2	a hypertext	a hypertext	a hypertext
3	read at depth	read at depth	read at depth
4	in my mind	in my mind	in my mind
5	work in progress	work in progress	work in progress
6	begin	begin	begin
7	yes	yes	yes
8	yes1	yes1	yes1
9	yes2	yes2	yes2
10	yes3.	yes3.	Checker
11	yes4.	yes4.	Faulkner
12	scars	scars	she wasn't sure
13	yes6	obligations	remoulade
14	Lovers	self-destruction	out law
15	touching myself	The Good Soldier	anchoring devices
16	monsters	dream pools	Blowup
17	self-destruction	star wars	
18	The Good Soldier	Lolly's monologue	
19	dream pools	1/	
20	star wars	2/	
21	Lolly's monologue	white afternoon	
22	1/	4 what I see	
23	2/	5	
24	white afternoon	staghorn and starthistle	
25	4 what I see	fenceline	
26	5	relic	
27	staghorn and starthistle	can I help you?	
28	fenceline	no, I say	
29	relic	transcript	
30	can I help you?	I call	
31	no, I say	fenceline	
32	transcript		
33	I call		
34	fenceline		

Clearly, this mechanics of texts evolving in time, together with the various navigational facilities in *afternoon*, especially the logic of "words-that-yield," impresses upon the mind of readers the feelings that many other threads exist behind them. In the belief that the text cannot be conquered, readers are encouraged to be at peace with themselves and the text as soon as they are able to construct some meaningful discourses from the reading sessions they have pursued.

In *of day,* the mechanics of temporally evolving text is employed in the way the nodal day map updates as a result of readers' previous actions. Immediately the text is launched, the day map appears with three links: "[before]", "[realise]", and "[halfway]". After readers must have visited at least two of the nodes, the map updates and adds additional two other places: "[act]" and "[collect]". When readers have visited one of the two new nodes, the additional four places of "[market]", "[street]", "[river]", and "[café]" will automatically evolve on the map. The map continues to update itself and evolve in time in this fashion until lexias "[describe]", "[peruse]", and "[arrange]" finally come up. The active participation of readers in arranging objects in the dream space located in lexia "[arrange]" would determine whether readers would be launched into the night map and gain access to the fully updated day map with all its 13 links, the "[night]" link being the 13th.

In the third paragraph of his essay "The Experience of the Unique in Reading Digital Literature," Koskimaa explains that the temporal possibility of limiting reading time occurs when a text "appears on screen only for a limited period of time. The period may be long enough for a thorough, focused reading, but it may also be used to challenge the reader, force her to read on the limits of apprehension." This mechanism of "limited reading time" features in *of day* at those instances where the readers launch or re-launch to either of the two maps. There and then, the various nodal links appear in twinkles in less than a second and thereafter disappear behind the map. In this circumstance, readers' rapt attention and concentration are demanded. Not that alone, readers are challenged into a non-trivial exploration of the surface of the map and only the readers' previous concentration at the time of the flash would help for a quick discovery of the links at the points which such links disappear. One feeling that cannot be detached from the employment of this mechanism when readers traverse the text is

whether they have discovered all the links or whether there are still some others that have escaped their attention and scrutiny. *of day* also employs this mechanism in those circumstances of floating words which appear within mille-seconds and thereafter disappear behind the screen. Since Heyward has indicated that the engagement of the reader with the text is of primal importance to her, it thus turns out that the text goes into a standby mode if after about six minutes readers do not make any active move in the text. If reader were located within a specific node of the text before the interregnum, they have the option of either returning to the beginning of the text all over again or returning to the map. A return to that specific place and node where they were in time is, however, absolutely impossible.

As several other instances of time-conscious programming exist in the two texts, we come to see that temporal dimensions play a major part in the characteristic nature of the digital text. In fact, the dependence of programming on time and the experimentation with time are basic to the technologies creating worlds of differences between print texts and digital texts.

4.4   Moulding the [w]reader

Ordinarily, when considering the distinctive features of hyperfiction texts in contrast to traditional print text, two issues that usually arise are multi-linearity and interactivity. Multi-linearity defines the text as a labyrinth which installs the possibilities of reading hyperfiction texts along various paths, especially because the reader is not compelled to follow a pre-installed order. In view of this, Calvi (1999: 102) argues that the hyperfiction text entails "the postmodern idea of fiction as a construction for both author and reader" as it equally "legitimizes reference to Borges' ideas of labyrinthine, multiple storylines and possible developments, and of combinatorial processes". As Calvi (1999: 102) further argues, the reader's escape from the labyrinth requires that such a reader "must not simply understand the labyrinthine, combinatorial construction chosen by the author experiencing it directly, but also build one herself abductively on the basis of the clues she can discover in it." A critical study of the workings of the lexias in *afternoon* most clearly indicates the labyrinthine nature of the text.

In the case of interactivity, it is the belief that hyperfiction texts demand active participation from their readers. That is, the text demands actions and reactions from the reader for the onward formation and realisation of the text. Thus, unlike in

traditional text where the reader holds the completed text, the reader of most hyperfiction texts is required to perform definite actions which transpire the turning of pages so as to open up the paths to the evolution of the whole text. These interactions could involve taking time to consider and decide moves and paths in the text; it could as well involve the reader practically using the computer interface for the evolution of the text. With the text's call for the reader's intervention in the progression of its discourse, *of day* demonstrates the interactive nature of the hyperfiction text.

Either way its nature is considered, a hyperfiction text demonstrates that the reader plays a very significant role for textual evolution. As a matter of fact, the full potentials of a hyperfiction text cannot be comprehended until when a reader has made a "dive" into the text. Since the text cannot fully evolve without the participation of readers, they (readers) are somewhat taken as authors of the narrative thread they create during their reading sessions. With this, readers are theorised as co-authors, "wreaders" whose creative prowess is made manifest in the process of reading.

In this section, therefore, our obligation is to examine our texts in the light of these two assumptions. For the web-like pattern of *afternoon*, we examine its varied implications as a multi-linear text. For *of day*, on the other hand, we investigate how the affordances of technology are exploited in making the [w]reader's engagement with and participation in the text conditions for the progress of narrative and for the evolution of the text.

4.4.1 The twisty mazes of the labyrinthine fiction machine

Experimental novels like Cortazar's *Hop Scotch* and Pavic's *Dictionary of the Khazars* are attempts at creating mechanized narratives which are designed to "revolutionize the traditional economy of story (or narrative potential) and discourse (or actual telling)" (Moulthrop, 1989: 261). In the case of hyperfiction texts, many of them not only continue the objectives of such experimental works, but are taken as the first real step towards the construction and engagement of actual fiction machines.

For Moulthrop (1989: 261), a fiction machine refers to fictional works which "[i]nstead of offering a single, exclusive arabesque through a universe of possibilities …allow readers to choose among multiple paths. Given divergent choices, the narrative may differ markedly from one reading to the next." Since one of the primal intentions of Joyce in writing *afternoon* is to create a work of fiction which changes at successive readings, we come to see the text as a real fiction machine which provides

its reader with multiple pathways. This image of the fiction machine in *afternoon* is equally intensified by the web-like relationship existing among the links in the text as well as by its cycle patterns and its re-cycle motifs.

Within the fiction machine of *afternoon*, every choice is highly significant and unique in that each brings an absolutely unique picture upon the narrative. As no two mazes within the labyrinth lead to one and the same place, each choice made in the text, more often than not, gives the reader an entirely different insight into the narrative of the text. Take the first default reading of the text for example, the reader meets with Peter sitting through lunch with his employer, Wert and worrying that the car accident he drove past on his way to work earlier in the morning most probably involved his ex-wife, Lisa and their son, Andy. For this reason, Peter makes series of phone calls and searches to ascertain their safety or otherwise but without any success. He revisits the scene of the accident and then decides to call Lolly. The default path thereafter ends in a dead-end at "[I call]". In the course of this reading session, the reader sees Wert amusingly trying to distract Peter's attention from his worries about the possibility of the accident involving Peter's ex-wife and son thus:

> He asks slowly, savoring the question, dragging it out devilishly, meeting my eyes.
> <How … would you feel if I slept with your ex-wife?>
> It is foolish. She detests young men – **"[asks]"**
>
> <Would you like to make a bet on something?> I ask.
> <Mine's longer by a full inch!> he laughs preposterously.
> <No, seriously.> I say.
> He nods. I am boring him. He would rather consider the probabilities of one of us sleeping with the other's wife – **"[a bet]"**
>
> The waitress brings around a pot of water-processed decaffeinated coffee. She is very blond, very tan.
> <Yes please… > he says, and when she bends to pour, he says <Nice tits… > …. Wert steals a glance to see if I have laughed. He has done this to delight me, I know. It is coltish and vulgar and he means in this fashion to cheer me – **"[thank you]"**

As the excerpt above shows, Wert continuously tries to cheer Peter with jokes and banters so that the latter would not give much thought to the certainty of the accident. On Peter's re-visit to the scene of the accident, he sees obvious marks of the places where the bodies have been lying on the field before they were rescued and also finds a

sheet of paper with his son's handwriting on it. In "[can I help you?]", a woman who equally wants to ascertain the extent of the crash meets him at the scene of the accident.

> <The sheriff's?> she asks. I nod, not lying. <It really was a nasty crash, wasn't it?> she says. <I was at the office but the cleaning girl said there were two ambulances. I saw nothing in the paper… were there?> - **"[can I help you?]"**

Peter's meeting with the woman at his re-visit to the accident scene builds up the conclusion that whoever was involved in the accident was either dead or unconscious. Whichever the case, the accident occurred and the victims had to be rescued with ambulances.

With the default path ending at "[I call]", the reader has the options of either re-navigating to the cover page to institute another reading session or to look up the network of links outgoing from the lexia and go for the most preferred of the ten links. Each of the ten links brings a new direction into the discourse of the narrative. The reader may decide to go for the lexia titled "[then I woke]" which reads thus:

> I keep wanting it to be one of those stories in which one wakes up – not as a cockroach, not from a trance of twenty years, but rather in the way you wake to your mother when you are a child, still hesitant about the propriety of having such a dream, yet vastly relieved that it is over. …

Coming upon this lexia, the reader comes to understand, in a clearly twisty turn, that the whole of the preceding narrative in the thread is nothing other than a nightmare. In this way, the postmodernist aesthetic of self-erasure at work in the text is revealed. McHale (1987: 101) submits that with self-erasing postmodernist fiction, "a "world of fixed and discrete objects" is given and taken away, with the dual effect of destabilizing the ontology of this projected world and simultaneously laying bare the process of world-construction." Although there are many strategies that can be employed to achieve self-erasure, the particular type at work in this narrative thread is that which narrates events and then explicitly rescinds and cancels them. In this case, therefore, no accident occurred; Peter was not on his way to the office, neither was he sharing lunch with Wert; he was not in any frenetic search for his ex-wife and son; all the characters in the narrative could as well be non-existent as they belonged to the realm of the dream and the configuration of the mind. The choice of the lexia "[then I

woke]" thus institutes a completely new and converse understanding on what the default path has meant up till the lexia "[I call]".

Another option the reader could go for is the thread "[I call Lolly] → [I know] → [projection]". This narrative thread introduces Lolly not just as the wife of Wert but as the therapist Peter consults for professional counselling on how to handle the traumatic of the accident. Further into the path, we see Lolly trying to identify the fears of Peter as the usual symptoms of anxieties that plague the minds of new divorcees; in which case the accident is less likely to have involved Lisa and Andy. The implication is that an accident occurred, but Lisa and Andy are not the victims. Peter's belief that the duo are the victims is a mere product of his anxiety about life after divorce for Lisa, Andy, and himself.

At the lexia "[projection]", the reader has two options: "[white duck]" and "[then I woke]". A choice of the latter option, no doubt, washes off the supposed anxiety of Peter as the narrative translates into a mere dream. Whereas the choice of "[white duck] → [naked] → [storm tossed] → [obligations] → [we read] → [salt washed] → [Penelope] → [suitors] → [Chançon]" indicate that Peter and Lolly are into an affair which is unknown to Wert. The following are clues to this assumption:

> <I have never seen you like this.> I say.
> <You recall, I was quite reluctant that you do so now.>
> I think she sees my lip quiver, I think she fears that I will start up again.
> She retreats from the admonishing tone. <Now you see…> she says, stretching her arms out, <Naked.>
> She smiles, my lip still quivers.
> <What would you like me to do?> she asks.
> <Make it better.> I say.
> <That's refreshing – she says – for a man…> - "**[naked]"**

The scene in "[naked]", the excerpt above testifies to the fact that Peter and Lolly are into an affair and this most probably answers for Peter's resort to Lolly at this critical time. Peter's coming to meet with Lolly is therefore not really about a client seeing his therapist; rather it is about him coming to his secret lover for refreshing and a temporary escape from the reality of his missing ex-wife and son. The issue of this secret affair is further reinforced in the following discussion about Wert which is opened by Peter:

> <Sometimes he will hint that we ought to be lovers, you and I.>

<And how does that make you feel?>
<Inauthentic.> I say and smile.
She laughs wonderfully, womanly. -- **"[suitors]"**

From the title of the lexia – "[suitors]," to the conversation in the lexia, we can establish that there is an affair going on between Peter and Lolly. It is the factuality and the indisputability of the affair that is most probably responsible for Peter's feeling inauthentic whenever Wert jokingly indicates that he and Lolly should have been lovers. The traversal into "[Chançon]" finally consolidates the assumptions of the reader about an on-going affair between the two:

We are drinking Stag's Leap Fume Blanc, a little too cold, yet still flinty, an echo of lilac and oak leaves, a following sweetness.

Lolly's thighs are muscular and smooth but not enticing to me. Even so she has an animal quality, a fervid presence. It is more exciting to see her like this, paired with Nausicaa's spare calves, her searching eyes. I began to feel a stirring in my center, and I think that Nausicaa's breasts will have a taste very much like this. -- **"[Chançon]"**

Rather than moving from "[suitors]" to "[Chançon]", the reader could tread another path: "[suitors] → [steadfast] → [home] → [(home)] → [yes]". In this path, though Peter and Lolly are into an affair, they are still both concerned about the implications of Lisa and Andy being the victims of the accident. In "[steadfast]", we hear Lolly asking with concern "What if they have been harmed?" while Peter asks "What if they are dead?" in "[home]". To ease the tension and quench the anxiety of both, we thereafter hear Lolly in "[yes]" saying:

There is an end to everything, to any mystery.
<Why don't you call—she says—and then you will know….>
It is good advice. Even so, I still wish I could lie on the white sofa and think.
I wish I were the Sun King – **"[yes]"**

The possibility of Peter and Lolly having an affair is quite reinforced by the path names of the links within the threads considered so far. As Table 4.6 below indicates, the links exist within paths named "secret Lolly2", "secret Lolly", and "fucking" which all suggest the secret relationship existing between Peter and Lolly as well as the depth of the relationship. As with the other threads, the affair existing between Peter and Lolly can as well pass for a mere dream because the reader has an alternative

to move on to "[then I woke]" instead of following on to "[(home)]". In the event that

the readerprefers to move on to "[then I woke]", the secret affair between Peter and

Table 4.6. Links' path names indicating and reinforcing the notion of a secret affair between Peter and Lolly in *afternoon*

S/N	Node title	Path name
1	I call Lolly	continue2 Lolly
2	I know	secret Lolly2
3	Projection	secret Lolly2
4	white duck	secret Lolly2
5	Naked	secret Lolly2
6	storm tossed	secret Lolly2
7	Obligations	secret Lolly2
8	we read	secret Lolly
9	salt washed	secret Lolly2
10	Penelope	secret Lolly2
11	Suitors	secret Lolly2
12	Chançon	Fucking
13	Steadfast	secret Lolly2
14	Home	secret Lolly2
15	(home)	secret Lolly2
16	Yes	secret Lolly2

Lolly which is conveyed in the meaning of the previous threads, is a total foil; nothing other than a mere long dream.

The pursuit of the default path shows Peter worrying about his ex-wife and son being victims of the accident that occurred in the morning. However, in the following path: "[begin] → [Werther] → [Werther1] → [Werther2] → [Werther3] → [Werther4]", we encounter a very relaxed atmosphere different from the tension pervading the world in the first default reading. Peter is right in a lunch with Wert in the outer reception of a pub house. Through the mind of Peter, Wert's origin, personality, and physique are introduced to the reader. Further on, the reader sees the two men and one Mrs. Porter, the owner of the pub house, engaging in banters as usual with the pub house clients:

> …. We are all there in the outer reception area, out from our walnut-panelled and leather tufted caves as on any of several afternoons talking dirty, evil, politics, sex, weather, actuarials, hysterectomies, Yankees; …. **"[Werther1]"**

The carefree attitude experienced at the outset of the reading session is maintained through to the end as the following excerpt from "[Werther4]" shows:

> <How … he asks slowly, savoring the question, dragging it out devilishly, meeting the eyes of the whole afternoon cluster in the reception area, <would you feel if I slept with your ex-wife?>
>
> It is foolish. He doesn't know her, has never met her. She detests young men.
>
> <As if I were your father> I say – **"[Werther4]"**

As Wert banters with the question, Peter refuses to take him serious but merely brushes the question aside in his mind, taking into account that Wert neither knows his ex-wife nor has ever met her. Meanwhile, Lisa detests young men like Wert and would rather not go near him. In view of this, Peter merely answers that he is not Wert's father and thus has no obligation to ensure his civility.

We may consider the following reading session in comparison to the preceding one: "[begin] → [yes] → [yes1] → [yes2] → [yes3.] → [yes4.] → [scars] → [yes6] →

118

[Lovers] → [touching myself] → [monsters] → [self-destruction] → [The Good Soldier] → [dream pools] → [star wars] → [Lolly's monologue] → [1/] → [2/] → [white afternoon]". This reading session, in a twisty manner, establishes that Wert is having an affair with both Lisa and Nausicaa and Peter is equally into a relationship with both Nausicaa and Lolly. These indications are overt in the following excerpts:

> These differences make them attractive. Wert – so self-centered, rash, raw – is all energy and comes like a sinner, sometimes weeping for all the guilt her (sic) feels, sometimes laughing in the pure joy of what he imagines it must be to conquer.
> There is an undeniable benefit to his youth, and, if I had to choose, I would not give him up. ….
> Which doesn't make Peter second, not at all. He is more complicated, more like me in his rhythms and misgivings. I am apt to dream with him in me or upon me – **"[Lovers]"**

> It is a great blessing to have a lover your age, but one with a poet's sensitivity, trained by women. With Peter I am able to merge into something continuous. It is very nearly masturbatory, the sense of warm familiarity, the willingness to extend. I do not need to see him for weeks; while with Wert it is urgent and cyclical, like the need for cigarettes, for heroin, and just as transitory. That makes him fun.
> I am certain they both believe they have me. They share that man's sense of the cliché: wife and whore, and I am the woman without complications. Neither understands that I choose them – **"[touching myself]"**

> I have, like her, come to love Peter in my own way. Obviously, I came to love Werther long before that, and long before her also – **"[Lolly's monologue]"**

The excerpts from "[Lovers]" and "[touching myself]" represent Nausicaa's voice while the voice in "[Lolly's monologue]" is that of Lolly. As a matter of fact, Lolly is aware of Nausicaa's relationship with her husband, Wert; all the same she is not perturbed as she is equally enjoying her relationship with Peter.

The various contradictory mutually-exclusive narrative threads are all postmodernist strategies to put the narrative world under erasure and destabilise modernist elevation of narrative realism which builds on the concepts of narrative as "vision" and "mirror of the world." Joyce, being a master of his own kind of art, pits the height of this self-erasing aesthetics in *afternoon* in the more astounding and twisty revelation that Peter really causes the accident which claimed the lives of both Lisa

and Andy. In that account, Peter is worried about both Lisa and Andy because of the accident that occurred earlier in the morning and because the school authority could not locate either of the two. In his dejection, he drives away only to be distracted by the sight of Lisa inside Wert's truck. Because he has never suspected that both of them are acquainted with each other let alone being in an affair, the shock of the discovery causes Peter to lose control of the vehicle. He hits Wert's truck and accidentally kills Lisa and Andy thus, the investigator finds him guilty in "[white afternoon]":

> Nausicaa tends to think the accident was caused by distraction, and she doesn't blame either of them. I am less sure – **"[Lolly's monologue]"**
>
> We can grant the truth as Peter conceives it. Let us agree, with him, that he was concerned about Andrew and distracted because the school said they could not locate Lisa. Let us stipulate that, in his anxiety, he might have lost concentration – perhaps spilling something on himself – at exactly the spot where he sees Wert's truck and her in it.
> Let's agree that it is shocking, unexpected, to see this particular woman with him. Yes, I know that, for anyone else this should not be unexpected, that Peter should, at least, have suspected; but we nonetheless ought to grant him his truth. It is all he has, and so it is authentic. Let's agree he must feel abandoned – even, literally, out of control – **"[1/]"**
>
> The investigator finds him to be at fault. He is shocked to see the body so beautifully there upon the wide green lawn. The boy is nearby – **"[white afternoon]"**

No narrative world can be put under erasure more than this revealed fact that Peter, who at one time is seen in a desperate and frenetic search for Lisa and Andy, actually caused the accident that claimed the duo's lives. This revelation totally violates and erases the world and the time of the previous narrative threads where Peter is in a frenetic search for the duo. Thus, as the text erases the world it creates, it also erases time and history.

The reader's deep search into the labyrinth of *afternoon* as a fiction machine continues to yield several self-cancelling and self-erasing perspectives on the narrative of the text. In many sessions, the reader comes upon narratives in the voices of Lolly, Lisa, Nausicaa, Peter, Andy, Wert, and Desmond Larry (Lisa's new husband). Each of the voices adds to the complexity of the text as each character's stories seem to be told in the presence of the others in which case the issue of an accident occurring or some people dying or getting injured in the accident would be practically impossible. This

complexity will further be enhanced by the lack of clear temporal indications. The thread "[Lolly] → [Lolly2] → [Lolly3] → [Wouldn't you] → [Dora] → [three] → [Lolly4] → [Faulkner] → [she wasn't sure] → [remoulade] → [out law] → [pillars] → [Gunslinger] → [strawberries] → [flowers in his hair] → [Canterbury Tales]" all feature along the path named "Lolly" and the reader finds Lolly talking in the thread about her childhood, her family background, and her marriage to Wert. As the excerpt indicates, Lolly is narrating her story with Nausicaa and Wert obviously present.

> <Also − Lolly adds − you just had to ask yourself why a man like daddy ended up teaching at the junior college… >
> <Ask her, did she.> Wert suggests.
> <Did you?> Nausicaa asks.
> <What?>
> <Question him?> Nausicaa says.
> <Of course not!> Lolly and Wert answer in unison.
> <He was my daddy… > she says.
> <And it was still Mississippi then.> - **"[out law]"**

In "[Canterbury Tales]", Lolly ends her story saying "That's me…. Now what's your story?" Someone thereafter asks "Me? Or Nausicaa." A browse of the links outgoing from the lexia, captured in Plate 4.4 below, indicates that the person who asks the question is not Wert as one may have be tempted to assume.

The paths of the links do not in indicate that Wert is the one who responds after Lolly completes her story. From all indications, it is most probable that Peter is the one who responds. In this regard, it implies that Peter is equally present in the convivial setting. Aside the few narrative strands considered in this sub-section, various other narrative strands exist in *afternoon*. Every choice made by the reader is a significant determinant in the evolution of the narrative thread of each reading session. Every click is a move; be it intentional, accidental, or regretted: everymove counts and has implications on the discourse of the narrative encountered during any reading session.

Indeed, *afternoon* has established itself as a canonical hyperfiction text and has proven that the fiction machine that traditional experimental fiction tried so hard to construct, howbeit mechanically, is creatively and technologically enabled by the facilities of the digital technologies. As free will and free play interplay to behove the text with different shades of meaning, we not only see the prolific productivity embedded in the labyrinth of *afternoon* as a fiction machine, we, once and again, come to realize the how hypertextuality is accomplishing different forms of postmodernist

agenda. As hypertextual link strategies conflate with postmodernist textual aesthetics for forking paths in *afternoon*, the projected world in the text is perpetually placed
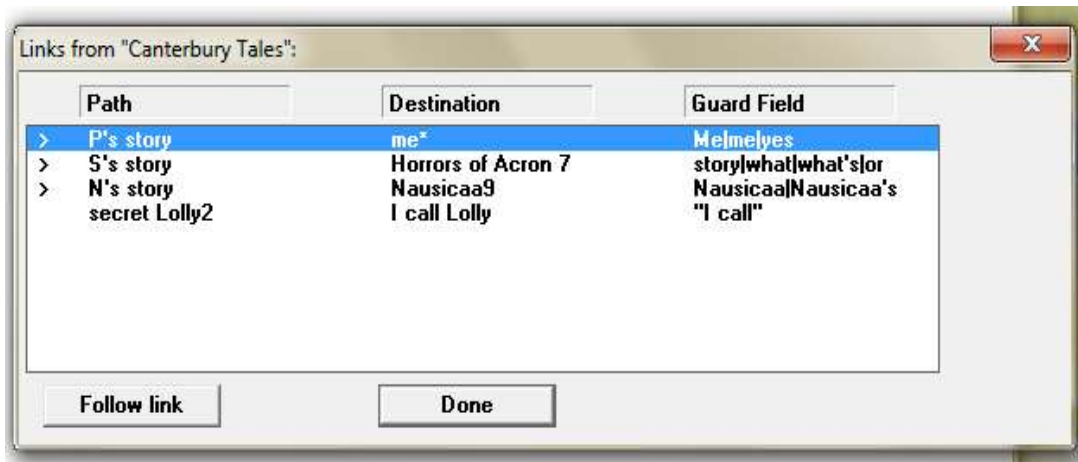
Plate 4.4. Outgoing links from "[Canterbury Tales]" suggesting that Wert is not the one who asks a question after Lolly concluded her story

under erasure by the multiplicity of mutually-exclusive narrative threads. In this way, *afternoon* stands as a typical example of an inexhaustible and unconquerable fiction machine, a true postmodernist fiction.

4.4.2 Interactivity and engagement

In the discussions in the previous sections, we have iterated the fact that one of the goals that informed Heyward's creation of *of day* is the curiosity to experience and experiment with the intersection of narrative and interactivity. Because of this, *of day* calls for and compels the participation of the reader as a trajectory for the revelation of the total text. *of day* thus yields to its fullest only when the reader has performed some specific tasks which implied the reader's interaction and engagement with the text.

In the preceding sections, attempts have been made to describe how reader's involvement with *of day* opens new traversal opportunities. This, no doubt, reveals the mechanism of interactivity working in the text. It is the case that the reader's failure to traverse the first few revealed links will place a barrier on the progress of both the text and the reader. In this circumstance, it becomes obvious that the interaction of the reader with the text via the computer interface is totally indispensable.

Already too, it has been indicated that the possibilities of technology are exploited for the animated texts like "words-that-float" which usually invite the reader to attentively explore the space of the text for the revelation of hidden texts and "words-that-yield" which, when interacted with, usually lead the reader further into the text by bringing up new text screens. For "words-that-bounce" readers discover that although their interactions with the words do not produce new screens, they are still led further into the text because such words are inlets into the text at the auditory level since they always yield music and sounds that are relevant to the meanings of the bouncing words. In all of these circumstances, the reader's interactions are highly consequential for the full and exhaustive realization of the text.

More importantly, a reader's compulsory participation in *of day* is visible in those instances where Sophie launches a search into her environment for the restoration of her dream experiences. There, Sophie's searches through the market, the street, the café, and the river for the objects of her interest transform into the reader's

searches as whatever object the reader clicks on in any of the four locations becomes the object Sophie picks, examines, and collects.

Plate 4.5a below captures the stall where Sophie collects items from at the market location in the text. A reader's first step in interacting with the text begins with the decision, atthe day map, to traverse the market node. The reader's choice and click on the "market" link leads Sophie into the market. Readers not only see her walking into the market, they hear the sounds of her footsteps as well as the background noise of other shoppers. Thereafter, readers see Sophie walking to the side of the stall captured in Plate 4.5a and bending in readiness to start selecting the items that interest her. From this juncture, readers realize that their choice of the market location involves a lot more. First, they have to understand that not all the items in the stall could be examined or collected. Second, they must expectantly and attentively explore the space of the market stall to discover those items with floating words which signify the items that can be picked. Lastly, and most importantly, readers must realize that their decisive click on any of the items that could be picked not only sees Sophie picking up the items as captured in Plate 4.5b, but such an action consequently expands the borders of the narrative since it will grant readers access to the text historising the item and will eventually allow the item to manifest for placement and arrangement within the dreaming space of the cabinet.

With the reader's click equalling Sophie's decision to pick up an object and examine it, it implies that the participation of the reader is integral to the manifestation of the expanse of the text. For the importance of the reader's participation, one sees that Sophie keeps picking and examining a particular item until the reader takes another decisive step which could be clicking on another item to be examined orclicking the return button to move back to the map node to make yet another participatory decision.

The height of readers' consequential participation in the text is obvious in the node titled "[arrange]". As Plate 4.6a shows, the reader, in this node, is expected to arrange into the space of the dream cabinet, those items that Sophie has examined and collected in the course of her search through different locations in her environment. Interestingly, there is no specific order for the arrangement of the item and the manner of the arrangement is of no consequence on the narrative. What is really of consequence for both the reader and the text is the reader's arrangement of the items into the cabinet in their chosen and preferred order as Plate 4.6b below illustrates. It is

the reader's arrangement of object label that proves to be the only link into the "night" map.

Plate 4.5a. Screenshot of the items' stall in the "market" lexia

Plate 4.5b. Screenshot of Sophie picking up and examining the small
box as a result of the reader's click on the item

Plate 4.6a. Screenshot of "[arrange]" showing the empty dream cabinet and the unorganized labels of the collected items awaiting the reader's participation and arrangement

Plate 4.6b. Screenshot of the fully arranged cabinet which opens up the traversal route to the "night map"

It has already been established that the level of interaction in *of day* demands a very high level of participation from readers. The author expects the reader's engagement withthe text to the point that the subjectivities of Sophie and the reader continuously intersect and merge. Although the text is still constrained by the author's decisions and wishes especially in terms of programming skills, readers nonetheless exist as "wreaders," co-authors with the author since their actions and non-actions have effects on the full realization of the text. Characteristically, therefore, *of day* displays the extent to which the facilities of technology can be exploited in co-opting readers as co-authors and in distinctively marking out digital texts from traditional print counterparts.

4.5   Genre borders and the nature of the narratives

The digital location of the selected texts and their hypertextual structures combine to confer the tradition of experimentation on the texts. One major implication of the hypertextual and virtual nature of the selected texts is their subversion of the traditional notion of physical books. The subversion of the notion of a physically held book paves way for the actualisation of other forms of genre experimentation which echo postmodernist agenda.

In its characteristic nature, the postmodern project sets out to subvert all modern constructs for judging truth, reality, and rationality. Since modernism takesnarrative as a "central form of human comprehension, of imposition of meaning and formal coherence on the chaos of events" (Hutcheon, 1988: 121) postmodernist fiction, in rejecting this totalizing nature of modern metanarratives, will many a time disrupt narrative conventions and upset basic structuring notions as causality and logic. According to Hutcheon (1988: 121), "[n]arrative is what translates knowing into telling, and it is precisely this translation that obsesses postmodern fiction."

In several ways, *afternoon* exists as a typical experimental narrative. In fact, the facilities of technology will boost and enhance experimentation in the text. A critical examination of the text reveals that the system of nonlinearity and/or multi-linearity is greatly at work in the text. *afternoon* exemplifies a form of textuality that resists a preconceived order and, as such, acknowledges and celebrates postmodernist embrace of diversity and plurality. With readers able to decide and inscribe their

preferred reading orders in the text, hypertextuality becomes significant in liberating and decentring narrative structures. With its continuously shifting centre, it becomes obvious that fundamental constructs like story, plot, fiction, and narrative need to be redefined if they will be relevant in describing the nonlinear/multilinear textuality evident in *afternoon* (cf. Aarseth, 1994: 83).

One major effect of the multilinear nature of *afternoon* is that the notion of a definite well-structured storyline that is defined by causality is downplayed in the text. This destruction of the plot is not just an experimentation grounded in the facilities of technology but it will further attest to the postmodernist nature of *afternoon*. As a matter of fact, Federman (1981b: 310) has noted that the elimination of plot is highly significant in postmodernist fiction since it (the plot) is the substance "which sustained the fiction from beneath and served to convince the reader of its truth." With the rejection of the plot, *afternoon*, like many otherpostmodernist fiction, subverts the make-believe structure that has sustained the art of modernist fiction. Consequently, *afternoon* gives readers the latitude to personally construct the lines of their stories. On many occasions, the different storylines created across readers' reading paths have contradictory and, sometimes, impossible turns since readers are made to tread along unmarked and unguided tracks.

In order to continue with the elimination of a well-developed storyline, *afternoon* experiments with the concealment of information and the absence of details. There are almost no details about characters, events, and the locations/settings of events. The only element that informs readers that they are being told a story occurs at that instance where Peter, the main character in the fiction, assumes that the accident he witnesses on his way to work earlier in the morning might have involved his ex-wife and son. At no time, however, is the accident described in the text. This absence of the description of the accident provides a solid foundation for the multiple fictive narratives that whirl round Peter, his anxieties, his fears, his memories, his dreams, and his entire life.

The lack of details about the geographical and temporal settings of events will also pave way for the dream-like atmosphere which pervades the text. For this singular reason, it becomes quite hard for the reader to be able to precisely mark out real and present events from memories, dreams, anxiety, hallucination, flashbacks, facts, imaginations, amongst others. Calvi (1999: 104) submits that the dream-like atmosphere in *afternoon* is "achieved masterfully by the frequent recourse to analepsis,

both within and between nodes, which produces a stream-like effect, a constant flow of memories which is ultimately also responsible for connecting the separate lexias. In both cases, it is only after analepsis has taken place that the reader can recognize it."

As the discourses of past and present events merge and diverge continuously, so do narrative voices and events. As narrative voices continue to merge, identifying specific narrators becomes quite tasking for the reader since the text contains different layers of narrative currents. There is a set of first person narratives which could be credited to any of Peter, the central character; Michael Joyce, an omniscient narrator; and Michael Joyce, the author. The first person narratives will jam with the shards of Peter's memories, dreams, imaginations, and flashbacks which cut across different stages of his married, love, and work life and with non-narrative materials like quotations from books and divergent issues on marriage, politics, therapy, history of cinema and filmmaking, myths, computing and agriculture.

To further condense the disorienting atmosphere of the text, readers will also continually run into the narrative voices of Lolly, Nausicaa, and Lisa. Since the nodes containing these narrative currents are not linked together based on chronology, temporality, or causality, readers are faced with the task of continually constructing and reconstructing storylines in the text as they read on. The fact that readers pursue the preconceived linear reading order obtainable in the default path does not provide an escape route. This is because nodes are continually and unexpectedly juxtaposed and alternated throughout in the text. This is why Aarseth (1994: 69-70) argues that:

> Although within most of the individual scriptons the voice of a first person narrator relates events to a narratee in a traditional manner, the unpredictable changing of scenes (as one trail of related scriptons abruptly stops and another begins) constantly undermines the would-be reader's attempt to identify with the narratee, as well as the identification of the narrator and the (implied) author or exo-narrator, as it were. ...the distance between the user and the narratee on one side and narrator and author on the other is stretched to the limit by the unreliable links.

The fact that nodes follow one another does not guarantee that there is any relationship of causation or chronology among the successive nodes. To be able to understand the narrator in each node, the reader must necessarily undertake several re-readings of the text. The information and messages garnered in the past reading sessions will then help

in readjusting the reader's conclusions and in being able to mark out where a narrator's voice either starts or ends.

Because one particular disorienting art employed in *afternoon* is the circulation of phrases, sentences, and even paragraphs across reading paths, it is thus the case that a statement uttered by one narrator at one time is repeated by another narrator in another circumstance. Since nodes occur haphazardly, readers may read the new narration as that of the old narrator. However, where re-reading is prioritised, readers will be able to decipher the pranks being played by both the text and the author.

In essence, nonlinearity/multi-linearity, the subversion of a well-developed storyline, unmarked and haphazard switches between narrators, absence of details about characters, events, geographical settings and temporal situations, circulation of similar sets of linguistic items among narrators, nodes, and reading paths, among many others indicate the various intricate means through which Michael Joyce accomplishes his experimentation agenda in *afternoon.* In the same vein, these factors go a long way in establishing *afternoon* as a literary work with postmodernist agenda.

As a hypertext fiction, *of day* takes the axial form and thus somehow works along the conventional linear path for narrative presentation. This notwithstanding, Heyward extensively engages the facilities of technology for the creation of her text such that *of day* emerges as a combination of the narratives of written fiction, oral fiction, game, and film while, at the same time, integrating materials from the fields of music and the visual arts. *of day*, therefore, not onlyrequires the attention of the reader, but also demands that the reader performs the functions of a listener-player-viewer. As *of day* merges various genre borders, it demonstratively reconfigures our ideas about the fictional text and seems to be establishing a new genre of its own kind. The fact remains that from the outset, the "users" of *of day*, to use Heyward's term for the consumer of her text, realizes that they are encountering a very unique and unusual fictional text.

In the presentation of the narrative of the text, a pantomimic structure predominates. Within the day map, there are instances of both written and spoken texts. The written texts are however scanty and totally fragmentary while the oral narrative does not occur in all the lexias. In all the places where the reader watches Sophie as in a film, she does not talkfor once. Thus, the reader-viewer is constrained to "read" the narrative of the work from the dumb filmic. The pantomimic structure is employed for the entirety of the nodes within the night map. Written texts only appear

in the night mode at the level of the title of the eight nodes in the night map. Howbeit, the names of the nodes – "[in the river I could see]"; "[on the balcony, a man and a woman]"; "[something was written]"; "[slowly, the brush traced]"; "[from the earth I pulled]"; "[an urn filled with]"; "[backward and forward]"; and "[she spoke in a voice]" – only enhance the pantomimic nature of the narrative and reveal that the postmodernist aesthetics of fragmentation, discontinuity, and the sense of non-ending are at work in the text. The oral text in the night mode complements and emphasizes the written titles of the nodes. To properly locate the text in a night setting, the oral texts come out as mere whispers. Since the entire narratives in the night map occur in the pantomimic structure, understanding the narratives of the night is therefore embedded in the reader-viewer's ability to contextualize the narratives as dumb shows; a situation which is entirely different from the traditional form written narratives take.

One other genre *of day* extensivelyexplores is that of the visual arts. Right from the beginning, the text demonstrates that it really sets out to significantly integrate and merge the borders of fiction and the visual arts. In a variety of ways, *of day* shows that it is drawing from the existing congested bank of images in the consciousness and subconscious of Sophie to emphasize the postmodern consciousness of a society saturated in images. With Woods' (1999: 140) explanation that postmodern visual art usually displays "unconstrained use of colours and shapes, along with a wealth of imagination and feeling for decorative effects", it becomes obvious that *of day*'s extensive use of the visuals either identifies the text as a virtual exhibition and catalogue of visual arts or indicates that the texthas succeeded in suspending and merging the genre borders between fiction and the visual arts.

Plate 4.7 below displays few of the instances in which *of day* projects visual art forms within its borders. No doubt, the various screenshots in the Plate demonstrate thatthe text has merged the borders of fiction and the visual arts. Not that only, just as the filmic structures in the text redefine readers as viewers, the visual art forms also invite readers to "read" from viewing. In this way, *of day* redefines the concept of reading and requires different forms of competences from the reader. In addition to the ability to decode the messages of the written and the spoken codes as well as the filmic structures of the text, the user of *of day* must be able to read-view, that is decipher the structure of messages in its visual art forms and pictorial texts. Marin (1980: 294) whose work centres on how to "read" paintingsconcludes that the act of reading-viewing and the position of the reader-viewer are bi-dimensional in nature:

131
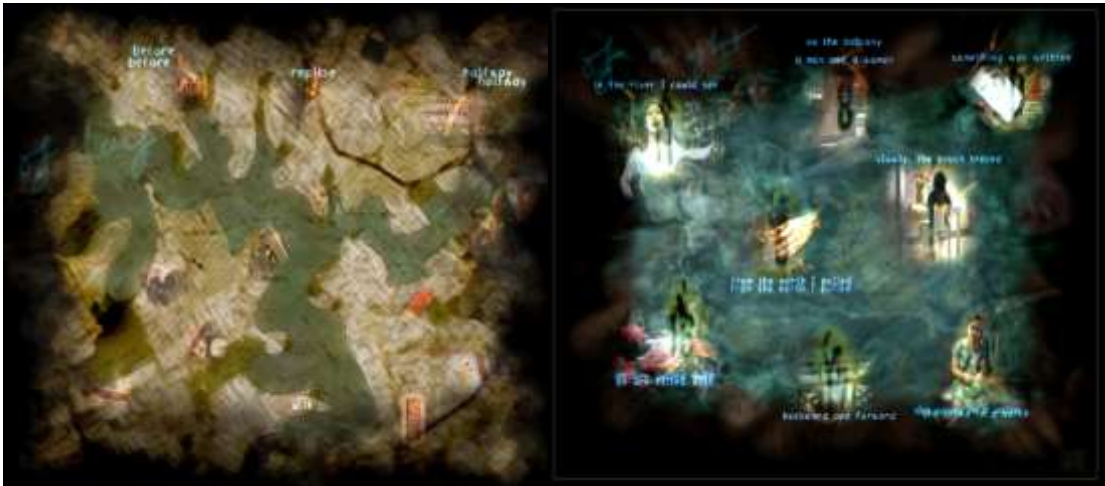
Plate 4.7. Six different screens depicting the nature of the visual art in *of day*

…on the one hand, *competence*, whose structure is constructed from the messages produced by codes and received by the viewer in the process of reading that particular painting as an example among many others or as a cluster of visual "quotations" of several pictorial and extrapictorial codes; on the other, *performance*, whose system depends on that painting as a unique object of contemplation, which organizes it as an individual reading and is appropriate only for it in a unique situation of reception.

As the screenshots in Plate 4.7 show, *of day* typically could be said to be a form of postmodernist art because, as Woods (1999: 140) explains, "In postmodern art, the ego is displayed unrestrainedly and demonstratively, sometimes in a narcissistic or exhibitionistic way, sometimes radiating a polymorphous eroticism not confined by convention". The juxtaposition, eclecticism and plurality of colours, images and pictures in each screenshot both portray an unrestrained ego and define this postmodernist attitude in the text. In view of the postmodern nature of the visual art in *of day*, it becomes very important for the reader-viewer of the text to acquire reading-viewing competence and performance in order to be able to decode the entirety of the message of the text.

One other factor which exhibits *of day*'s objective of experimenting with the nature of its genre is the employment of multiple storyworlds. The text demonstrates at least three storyworlds – the world of Sophie, the world of the objects collected, and the world of night and/or dreams. The storyworld of Sophie is basically concerned with the problem Sophie has with her dream life and the various activities she performs for the restoration of her dream life. Sophie's storyworld is not as simple as it may seem, though. The complexity in Sophie's world arises from the compulsory participation of the reader in many of the salvation tasks Sophie engages herself in.

As readers participate in Sophie's activities, it is such that their real world (in real time) interpolates with Sophie's world in fiction time. Demarcating between the real world (of readers in real time); the cyberworld (which translates readers into simulated co-operators with Sophie via the computer interface); and the fiction world (the world Sophie belongs to by virtue of the story being told) becomes quite difficult and problematic. One cannot make reference to Sophie's activities without giving due consideration to readers. Since Sophie and readers belong to different worlds and times, the interpolation of their worlds and times make Sophie's world a problematic. Problematizing Sophie's world is evidently a postmodernist aesthetic for world erasure

especially because the narrative takes the form of an autobiography from the outset. Since autobiographies usually narrate past experiences, they project the sense of totality, completion, and finality. However, with *of day* inviting and compelling readers to participate in the unfolding of the narrative of a completed and autobiographic experience, the text, as a typical postmodernist text, puts its projected world under erasure.

The second storyworld is that of the texts in "[describe]" which relate to the histories Sophie imagines for each of the objects she collects. The world where Sophie is narrating her story is significantly different from the imagined world historising the objects she collects across her environment. Unless the reader clearly understands this fact, it may be difficult in properly placing the semantics of the imagined histories. Since the histories of the objects do not belong to the world of Sophie, an attempt to read them (the histories and narratives of the objects) in relation to Sophie's own world will definitely yield erroneous conclusions. As the second world exists at the realm of imagination, the narrator and other characters in the world cannot be interpreted based on one's understanding of Sophie in her world. Thus, pronouns like I, she, he and nouns like pop, dad, and mama which occur across the narratives of this second world must not be read in relation to Sophie at all. At best, the narrator in the storyworld of the objects is the other Sophie, the imagined Sophie. When one comes to terms with the fact that this second world exists only in imagination, it becomes quite easy to read why there is no evidence of coherence, causality, and continuity among the stories and histories of the objects.

The third storyworld is that of the night. This last storyworld is particularly significant in that it is partly memory, partly imagination, and partly dream. The memories of the various places Sophie visits during the day, the objects she collects, and the histories she imagines for the objects all work together to conjure dreams for Sophie and to mould this third storyworld. Like the second storyworld, therefore, the third world belongs to the world of simulacra. Rather than being real in terms of Sophie's storyworld, this third world belongs to the realm of night dreams. So, whatever Sophie is in this world is virtually different from whom she is at the level of the first storyworld.

The fact that the three storyworlds have been discussed separately does not however deny the fact that Heyward succeeded in neatly and tightly knitting the three storyworlds together. However, it is necessary to understand that Heyward is

experimenting with the reader's ability to perceive and properly place the storyworlds for the right semantic placement of the materials of the narrative.

4.6   Summary

The discussions in this chapter have centred on the characteristic nature of hypertextuality as employed in the texts and on the nature of the narrative fiction as founded against the backdrop of hypertextuality. To a great extent, it has been revealed that *afternoon* and *of day* exhibit the extent to whichhypertextuality and other facilities of digital technologies can help in bringing clear demarcations between traditional print texts and digital texts.

Not that alone, the discussions have indicated that hypertextuality has enhanced the studied hyperfiction texts such that the texts chart the course of the postmodernist experimental tradition in literature. The hypertextual nature of the texts thus enables the texts to transcend the borders and constraints of the print page while translating the reader into a "wreader" and a co-operator with the author for the manifestation of the texts. This "wreaderbility" explains why readers and their activities are responsible for the text they encounter during any reading session. In all, the texts have well demonstrated that our notions about traditional concepts like narrative text, writing, and reading either need to be expanded, redefined, re-theorized, or rejected in view of the reality and nature of texts in digital culture especially as hypertextuality facilitates experimentations of various kinds in the selected texts.

CHAPTER FIVE

OPENING UP POMO PATHS

5.1   Introduction

> *We want hypertext narrative to do things*
> *we could not achieve in print*
> (Bernstein, 2009: par.6)

Long before the emergence of hyperfiction texts, Raymond Federman has advocated for and pursued the production of experimental literature. In his understanding, experimental literature stands as that type of literature that is totally strange and provocative but highly creative and original.Federman (1981a:7) describes experimental literature as "that kind of fiction that tries to explore the possibilities of fiction; the kind of fiction that challenges the tradition that governs it; the kind of fiction that constantly renews our faith in man's imagination and not in man's distorted vision of reality…." In the epigram above, Bernstein, himself a prominent and prolific hypertext theorist, declares the manifesto of hyperfiction texts which unequivocally situateshyperfiction texts in the order of experimental literature.

As indicated in the preceding Chapter, the experimental preoccupation of hyperfiction texts is usually labelled "postmodernist." The basic architecture of hyperfiction texts which works by chunking texts and thereafter linking them, as discussed in the preceding chapter, locates such texts within postmodernist tradition. That apart, cyberspace has many capabilities that are alien to the rigidity of print culture. And, creators of hyperfiction texts who explore and exploit these digital possibilitiesarrive at different experimentations which unveil the limits of print technology, exhibit the possibilities of fiction, and chart new reading traditions. This chapter thus investigates the strategies employed in the selected hyperfiction texts to establish and project them (the hyperfiction texts) as postmodernist texts.

5.2   Aesthetics of the jumble

> *...a text is a ... multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend*
> *and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture.*
> *(Barthes, 1977a:146)*

The postmodern project rejects the entirety of every form of grand narrative on the ground that it unjustly stigmatizes the Other and victimizes it by denying it of its voice. Instead, the postmodern pursues mininarratives; giving room for the voice of everything labelled the Other and, in effect, promoting plurality and multivocality. In the arts, the pursuit of multivocality produces various forms of experimentations. A typical example is the experimentalist composer, John Cage, who believes that everything is potentially musical including silence and noise and therefore incorporates all into his music.

In experimental narratives too, this aesthetic of the jumble prominently features as a major postmodern device which results in the idea that anything and everything can, and must, be incorporated into narrative. According to Federman (1981b: 306), this "incredible possibility that everything can be said now, everything is on the verge of being said ANEW," accounts for the current in postmodernist works where one encounters "long, meandering sentences, delirious verbal articulations, repetitions, lists, questions without answers, fractured parcels of words, blank spaces where words should have been written, an entire mechanism of montage and collage." Consequently, while postulating what should constitute the material of the experimental fiction, he(Federman) (1981a:12) submits that:

> … as such, there are no limits to the material of fiction – no limit beyond the writer's power of imagination, and beyond the possibilities of language. Everything can be said, and must be said, in any possible way. …. And since writing means now filling a space …, in those spaces where there is nothing to write, the fiction writer can, at any time, introduce material (quotation, pictures, diagrams, charts, designs, pieces of other discourses, doodles, etc.) … or else, he can simply leave those spaces blank, because fiction is as much what is said as what is not said….

137

The pointer is that experimental fiction is a pot-pouri of everything possible since what really matters in this sort of narrative is to fill the space either with something or nothing, whether related to the narrative thread or not. This sub-section therefore examines the different strategies which build up the aesthetics of the jumble in the hyperfiction texts under study.

5.2.1 Fragmentation

The author mode of Storyspace™ is a structural editor which enables authors to create fiction as a network of textual units. Usually, the system presents authors with the diagrammatic view of the hyperfiction text they are creating such that they could both install and manipulate relationships among the textual units. This structural experiment challenges the traditions of literature and mentally defines the hyperfiction texts as creative objects evolving from the events of sticking shards together.In this regard, Ryan (2001: 7) says

> Thedismantling effect of hypertext is one more way to pursue the typically postmodern challenge of the epistemologically suspect of coherence, rationality, and closure of the narrative structures, one more way to deny the reader the satisfaction of a totalizing interpretation. Hypertext thus becomes the metaphor for a Lyotardian "postmodern condition" in which grand narratives have been replaced by "little stories," or perhaps by no stories at all – just by a discourse reveling in the Derridean performance of an endless deferral of signification.

From this perspective, fragmentation becomes the epistemology and existential "*origo*" of hyperfiction texts.Fragmentation is not only intrinsic to hyperfiction texts; it is the nature and quintessence of the texts.

Apart from being the nature of the hyperfiction texts, fragmentation equally serves as a major postmodern device deployed in the hyperfiction texts under study. For example, *afternoon* has many instances where nodes resist fitting into narrative threads because their occurrences are not based on causality or connectedness. In some other instances, successive nodes appear as mere crumbs with no identifiable narrative or semantic relations. In both circumstances, readers have the task ofstitching the several pieces together in their own ways.

The opening lexia of *afternoon*, that is "[begin]," has a total of 15 "words-that-yield" two of which are "shrapnel" and "fragments". As Joyce himself notes, "words-

that-yield" are those words which have "texture."Consequently, "shrapnel" and "fragments" as wordswith texture have, to a large extent, the capacity to define the ontology of *afternoon* as a text. Readers' interaction with "shrapnel" and "fragments" leads on to 67 and 203 highly significant lexias, respectively. However, the 67 lexias emanating from "shrapnel" coincide with the last 67 lexias of the 203 lexias evolving from "fragments".

A closer view at the form and function of the 203 lexias unveils the fact that lexia "[begin]" more than being a concern with the description of what could be remembered of the nature and experience of winter, is a figurative leap into the aesthetics of the fragments which defines the text in a number of ways:

> By five the sun sets and the afternoon melt freezes again across the blacktop into crystal octopi and palms of ices—rivers and continents beset by fear, and we walk out to the car, the snow moaning beneath our boots and the oaks exploding in series along the fenceline on the horizon, the shrapnel settling like relics, the echoing thundering off far ice. This was the essence of wood, these fragments say…. (*afternoon:* "[begin]", para.2)

After a thorough traversal of *afternoon*, readers come to realise that issues about the "oaks exploding in series," the "shrapnel settling like relics," the "echoing thundering off far ice," and the "fragments saying" are metaphors which collectively impress the image of the fragment on the text.

The 203 lexias significantly fit into the fragmentary nature of *afternoon* in many ways. One, all the 203 lexias exist within the path named "fragments." Two, all the lexias, except six, contain just one word and each word is a repetition of the titles of the lexias. Three, the contents of the lexias do not, in any way, proceed out of either connectedness or causality. Four, the 203 lexias appear as the mental picture of the scattered shatters of the total 114 words which make up the text of "[begin]" as a lexia. Since many of the 114 words are repeated for the evolution of the 203 lexias, it implies that it is the text itself, rather than the "oaks," which explode with its shrapnel echoing and settling as fragments. The text therefore turns out as the relics of these fragments.

As a matter of fact, the fragmentation style employed by Joyce is reminiscent of two major statements on how experimental works of literature could be generated. First is the poet Jean Arp's (cited in Bolter and Joyce, 1987:45) statement on how he writes his poems: "I tore apart sentences, words, syllables. I tried to break down

139

language into atoms, in order to approach the creative." The other statement is that of Tristan Tzara, who, according to Bolter and Joyce (1987:45), proposes "a poetics of destruction" for writing Dada poems:

> To make a dadist poem. Take a newspaper. Take a pair of scissors. Choose an article as long as you are planning to make your poem. Cut out the article. Then cut out each of the words that make up this article and put them in a bag. Shake it gently. Then take out the scraps one after the other in the order in which they left the bag. Copy conscientiously. The poem will be like you

In other words, Joyce's shattering of the text of "[begin]" which he later picks up in a haphazard order clearly demonstrates his employment of the "poetics of destruction and recombination". More clearly, "[Who's music?]," represented in Plate 5.1belowexplains that the "poetics of destruction and recombination" is the principle of fragmentation at work in *afternoon*. Thus, *afternoon* perfectly works within the epistemology of experimentalists.

As already indicated, only six of the 203 lexias contain more than a word. The six lexias are: "[fragments]," "[and?]," "[fragments?]," "[fragments!]," "[moaning]," "[moaning]," and "[fragments]." Like the other lexias, the contents of these lexias are completely fragmentary both semantically and structurally. Where fragmentation is coded through structural outlay of the writing space, the text employs what Simpson (1997:29) calls "perceptual strategy" in denoting the text's engagement with fragmentation. More than that, structural fragmentation is a postmodernist aesthetic for the accomplishment of what McHale (1987: 181) terms "a spatial displacement of words." McHale (1987: 182) explains that "Postmodernist texts are typically spaced-out, literally as well as figuratively. Extremely short chapters, or short paragraphs separated by wide bands of space, have become the norm." Plates 5.2 – 5.7 below, as well as Plate 5.1 illustrate the sort fragmentation that may emerge from the spatial displacement of words.

Actually, the spatial displacement of words is specific of the carnivalesque revolution pushing postmodernist fictions ahead. This is why the fragmentation inherent in the spatial displacement of words will in turn displace the conventions of fiction, the continuity of narrative, the ontological structure of narrative, and the semantics of language. Since narrative discontinuity has one of the hallmarks of
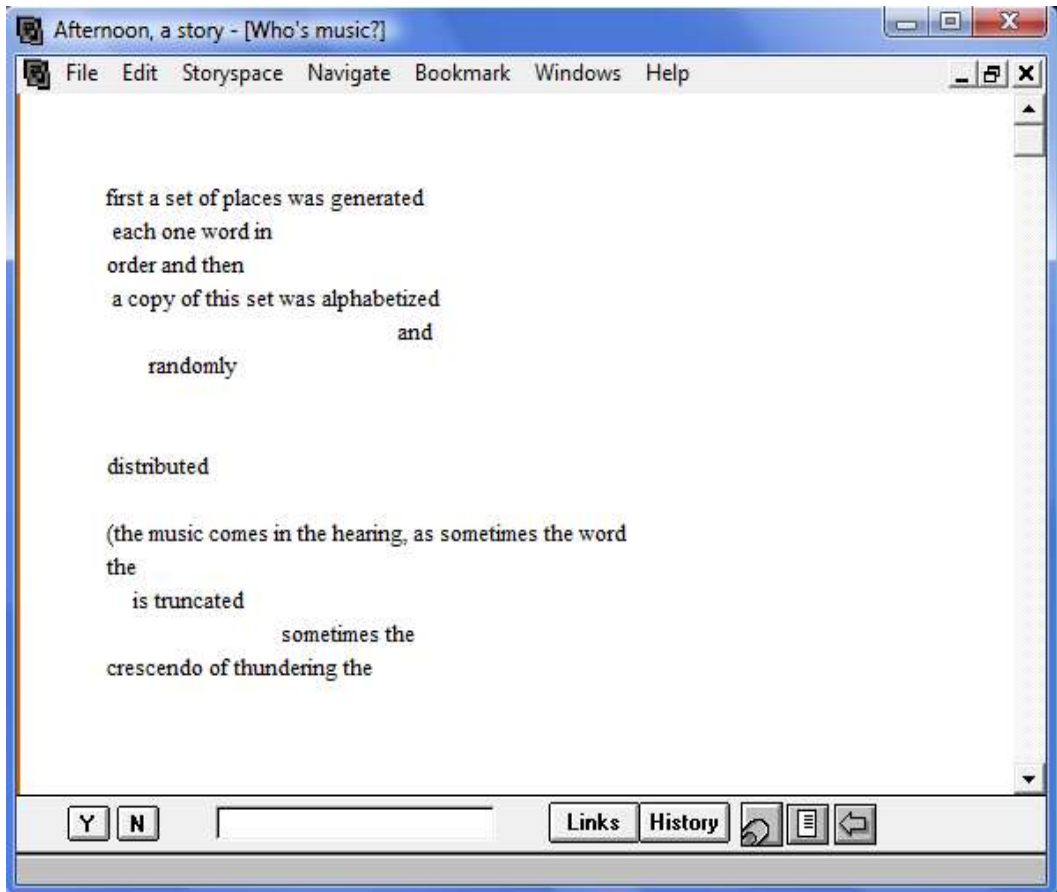
Plate 5.1. Screenshot of "[Who's music]" explaining the nature of the "poetics of destruction and recombination" which Joyce adopts as the fragmentation logic and principle for afternoon
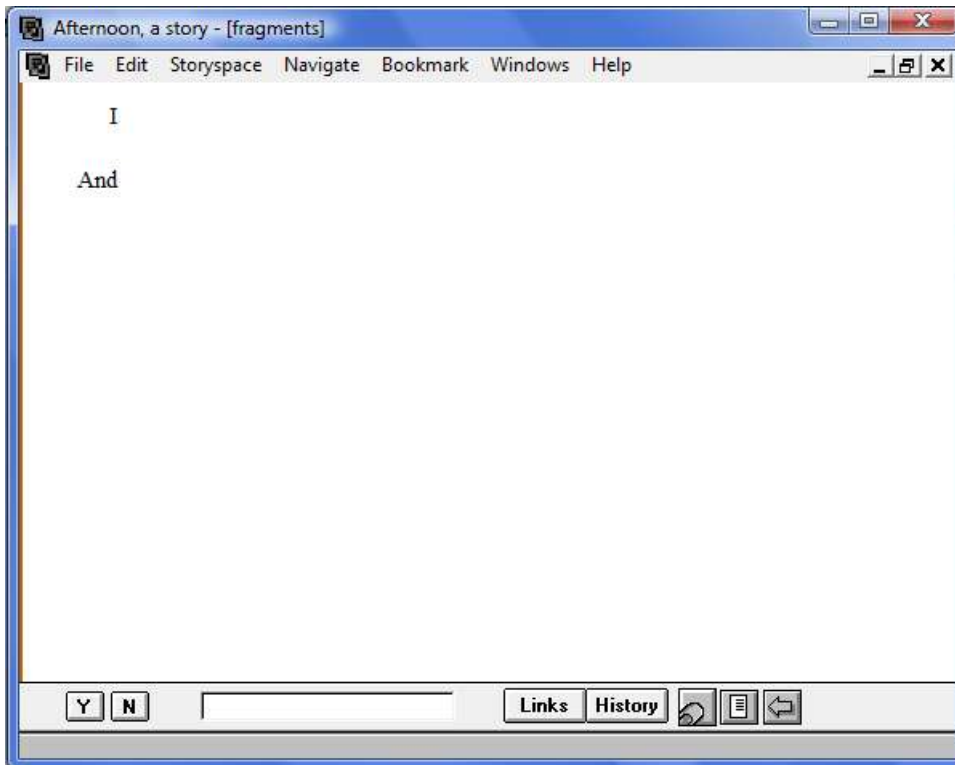
Plate 5.2. Screenshot of the first lexia of "[fragments]" projecting fragmentation from structural outlay
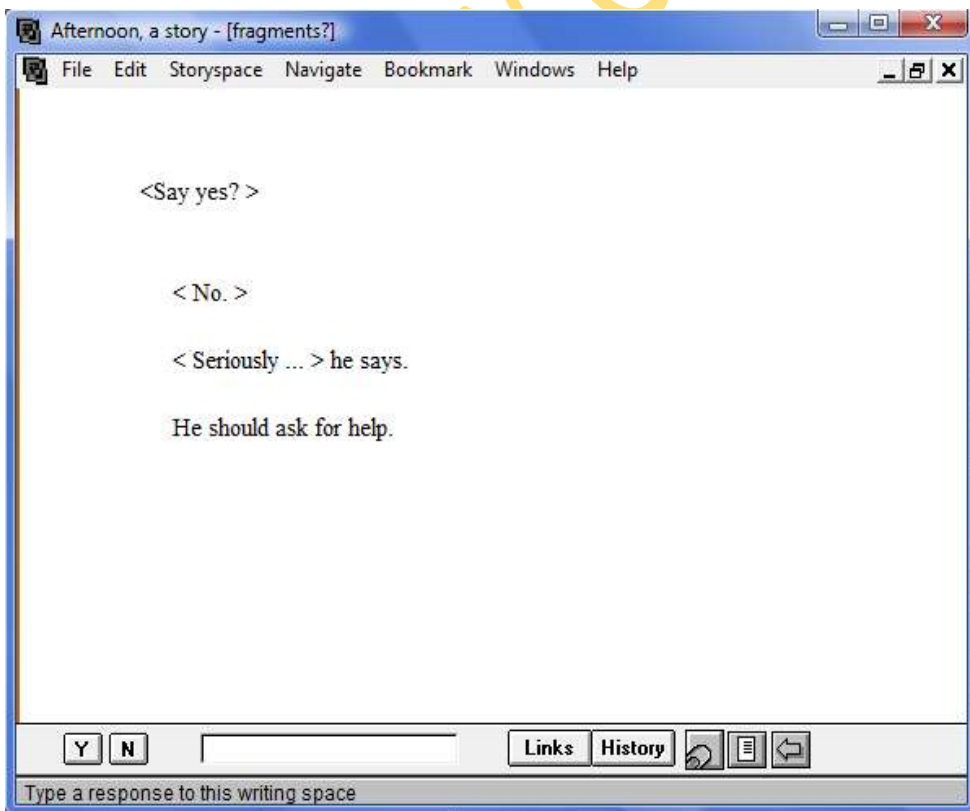
Plate 5.3. Screenshot of "[fragments?]" portraying perceptual fragmentation
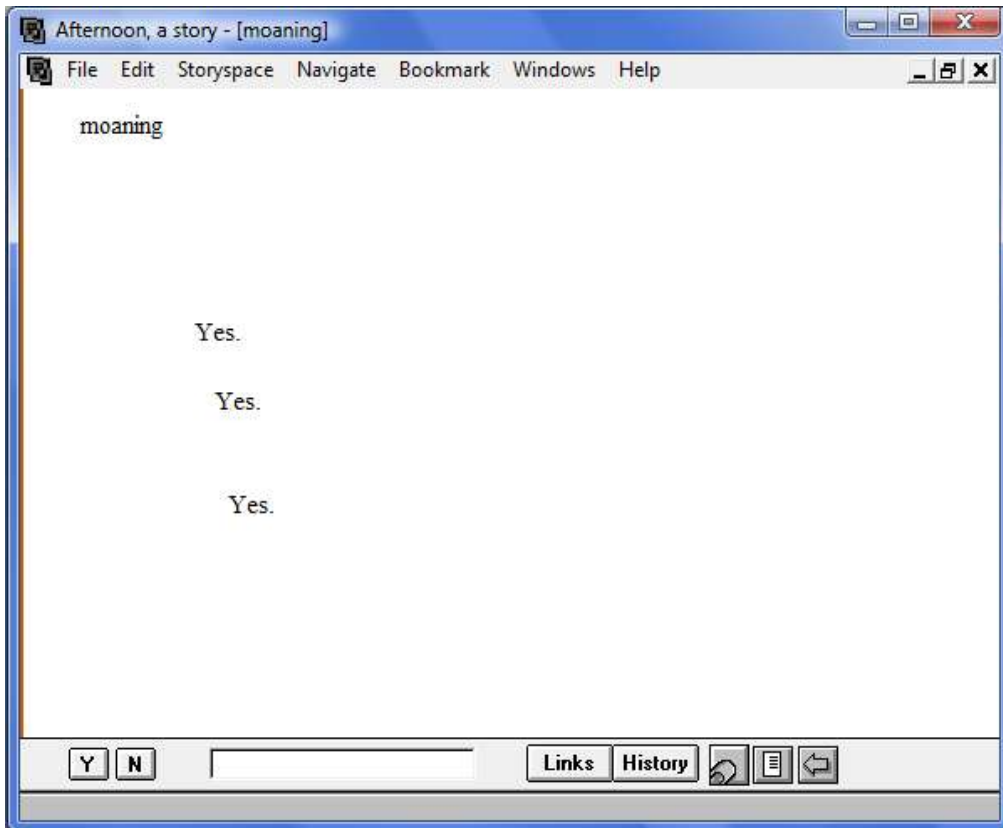
Plate 5.4. Screenshot of the second "[moaning]" lexia displaying structural fragmentation
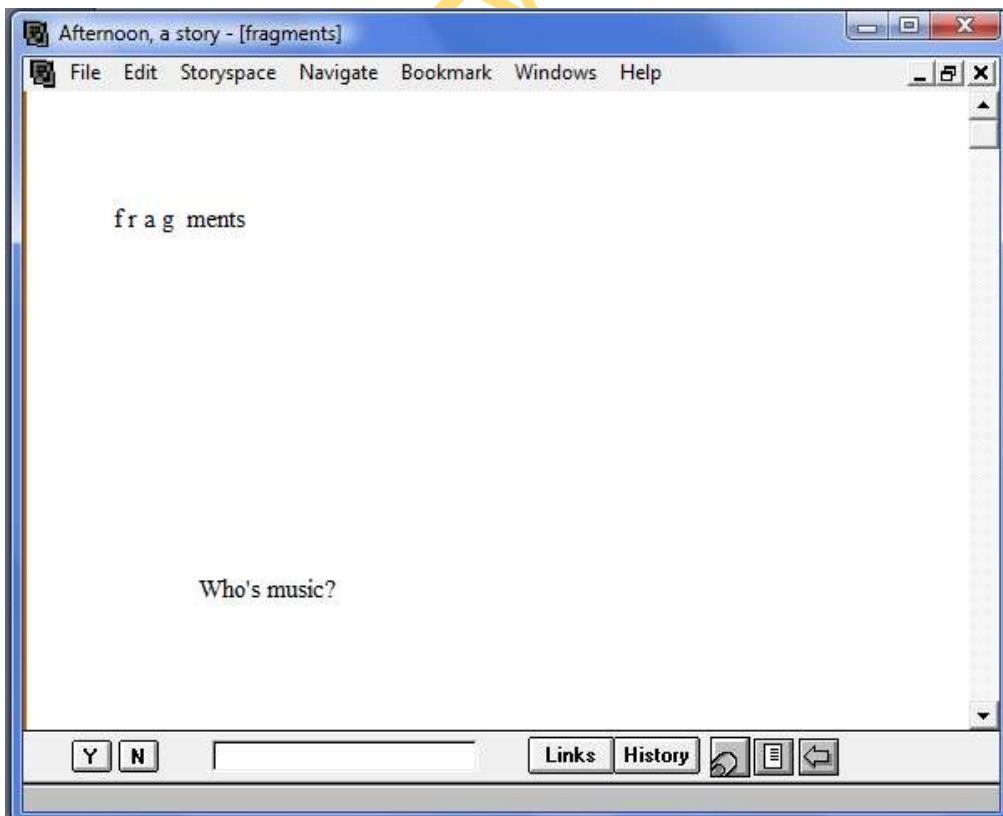
Plate 5.5. Screenshot of the second "[fragments]" lexia illustrating fragmentation in the structural outlay of text

postmodernist fiction, this appropriation of spatial fragmentation into *afternoon*, as a postmodernist text, reveals "the connection between…semantic and narrative discontinuity and its physical "objective correlative," the *spacing* of the text" (McHale, 1987: 181-2).In fact, *afternoon* will further demonstrate this relationship between the semantic and the physical with the existence of blank spaces in the text. Lexias "[backlink]," "[backlink3]," and "[bad fiction]" are handy examples of these blank spaces encountered along reading paths. In McHale's (1987: 183) view the disappearance of the text into blank space is "an ultimate hyperbolic transformation of this [spatial displacement of words] strategy".

Of the 203 lexias, only 16 lexias maintain links to lexias other than their default links: "[yesterday?]," "[not]," "[and?]," "[another]," "[beneath]," "[crystal]," "[fragments?]," [crystal]," "[fragments!]," "[moaning]," "[boots (adv.)]," "[echoing]," "[fragments]," "[way]," "[<]," and "[it?]." Interestingly too, the other links of these 16 lexias further stress the fragmentary implications of the text and reinforce the fact that the poetics of destruction and recombination is at work in the text. For example, the path names of some of the destination lexias include "escape frag0," "escape frag1," "escape frag2," "escape frag3," "frag escape4," "fragments," and "sub f r a g." The "escape frag" paths are suggestive of the fact that the default reading route breeds nothing other than fragments; hence the option of terminating the reading path is the only escape route from the fragments. From the naming of the "sub f r a g" path, readers derive the implications that treading that path is an onward journey into something more fragmentary than even the fragments. If one pursues the "sub f r a g" path from "[fragments!]," for example, the successive nine lexias of the reading path – "[t] → [a] → [m] → [n] → [r] → [s] → [g] → [e] → [f]" – demonstrate the reality and the possibility of something being more fragmentary than the fragments. More significant for meaning is the fact that the combination and arrangement of the titles of these nine nodes in the "sub f r a g" path perfectly form the word "fragments"!

The "[fragments]" lexia represented in Plate 5.5above has three outgoing link destinations: "[Who's music?]," "[culprit]," and "[walk]" (the default link). The readermay jettison the default link to pursue the other two links in the following succession: "[fragments] → [Who's music?] → [mushrooms] → [and]" or "[fragments] → [culprit] → [here]." The first pathway provides self-reflexive and intertextual explanations on the fragmentation experienced within the text. Lexia "[mushroom]"which follows "[Who's music?]" contains just three words: "in their

Cage's" and exists within the "path" named "J. Cage." This intertextual allusion to John Cage further establishes the fact that the text is aligning withexperimentalism.

Apart from shattering and scattering the text of "[begin]" and structurally representing fragmentation within the text of a node, *afternoon,* in a number of places, also deploys fragmentation semantically. As a dreamy atmosphere pervades *afternoon* and the story, many a times, emanates from the troubled memory of Peter, himself a postmodern subject who does not and cannot know his past with any certainty, the reader rides in and out of nodes which do not tie in succession and texts which do not cohere semantically. This situation, for example, explains the nature of text the readerwill come across in lexia "[I had a wife]":"had a wife once used to love me in her in the heat called melover as porpoises in the dog days belly slap and salt."Another example can be found in "[midwife]" lexia as represented in Plate 5.6 below. Discontinuity and semantic fragmentation is employed in the lexia and, as such, one is confronted by a kind of text reflecting the linguistic reservoir of a schizoid hero who, according to Deleuze and Guattari (cited in Eagleton, 1986: 369-370), is given to 'disorder' and 'psychic fragmentation'.

of day, like *afternoon* also employs the principle of fragmentation, although in a quite different way. *of day* evolves from the deployment of what could be named a "piecemeal" or "bits-and-bytes" narrative technique. Before the reader is launched into the map for exploring the work at all, the narrative has established this "piecemeal" technique. The first screen that appears immediately after the text is launched on the computer screen is accompanied by instrumental music and introduces the title of the work in a descending fade in, dim, and fade out animation style at the background of the video clip of a middle-aged woman who is walking alone along a road. After this first screen, six others with interpolated motion and still pictures follow and transit within six seconds. Thereafter, another screen with the inscription: "a new media narrative by Megan Heyward" fades in and then disappears. The next screen appears with the text: "this is a story forwandering" which is accompanied by instrumental music and the voice-over of a woman saying "I have a sense of where this comes from." Thereafter, the text fades out and is replaced with the text "I have a sense of where this comes from" which is accompanied by the voice-over of "though I'm not sure where it all ends."Immediately after this voice-over, another electronically written text "My story starts somewhere in themiddle" joins the previous texton the screen and is coincidentally accompanied by a voice-over repeating the same text. It is
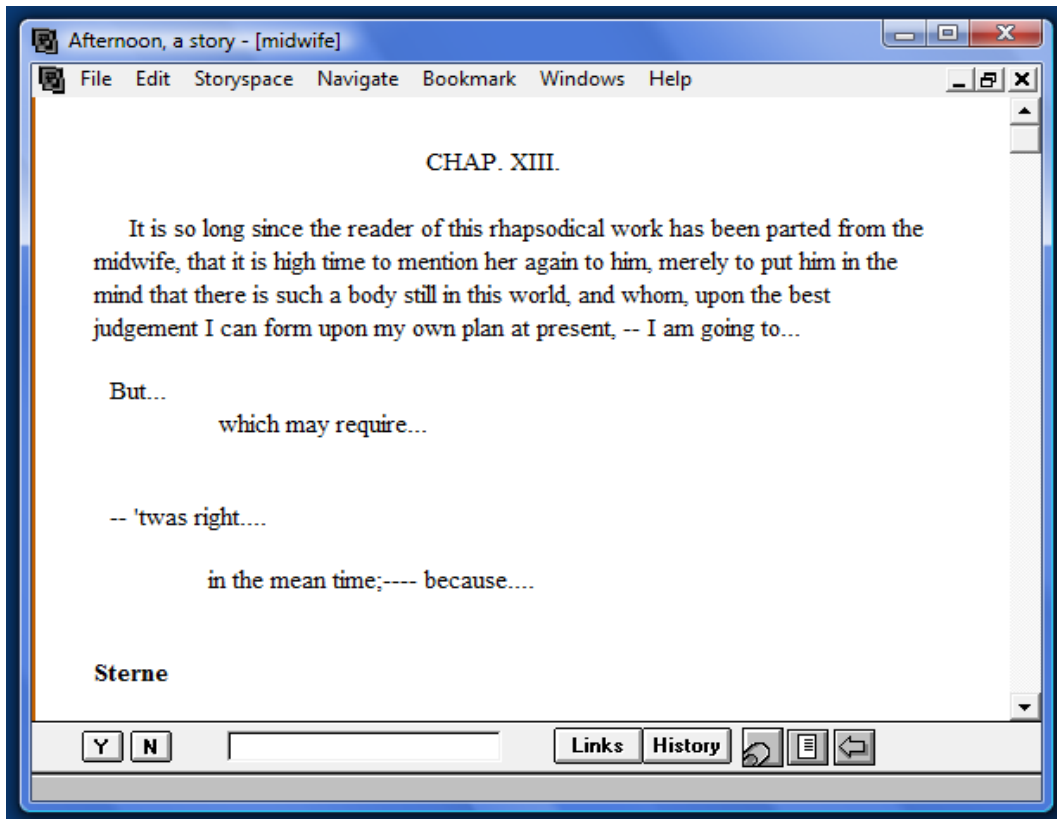
Plate 5.6. Screenshot of "[midwife]" lexia as a typical instance of the employment of semantic fragmentation in *afternoon*

thereafter that the map for traversing the text eventually comes up.

The launch into the narrative continues to stress this "piecemeal" narrative technique as if presenting readers with all the nodes of the narrative at once would likely constipate them; hence the unavoidable need to present more nodes only after the first sets have been "consumed" and well "digested." In the annotation node titled "help," the author explains the "piecemeal" technique in this way:

> At first, only a few of these options will be available to you. As you wander around the work, the *Day* map will update, allowing you access to more places. Eventually, once you've visited many of the *Day*locations and participated in the work, Sophie's dreams will return and you will be thrown into *Night*.
> ….
> Remember to roll the mouse over the *Day* map each time you return to it, because new places and locations may have become available to you.

With this tradition in place the map of the narratives appears with three places/nodes at its initial come-up – "[before]," "[realise]," and "[halfway]." A visit to any two of the three places updates the map and brings up two additional nodes: "[act]" and "[collect]." The day map continues to update in this fashion till all its link places are fully realized (see Plates 5.7a and b below).

Interestingly, the specific style used in introducing the text is continued within the various places in the text. Screens first appear with written texts coming out line-upon-line.After interacting with the yielding words in the texts of such nodes, readers will be taken into the deeper parts of the text where voice-overs tell stories related to the preceding texts on the screen. Traversing "[before]" link for example, the reader first encounters the successive presentation of the two-line text captured in Plate 5.8 with the last line coming up first and "before" cued as the yielding word.Immediately readers click on "before," they are translated to anew screen which has the video ofSophie and comes up with the voice-over of a narrative based on the text in first screen of the node, that is, the text of the screen in Plate 5.8 below thus:

> There is nothing unusual about me, all my life, before any of these happened: nothing remarkable or strange. My name is Sophie. I'm 34years old. I work as a photographer in a Government Department. That sounds more exciting and it really is. I'm the youngest of three children. I have a university degree. I've just always lived a typical sort of life with the normal sorrows and joys before this started.

Plate 5.7a. Screenshot of the "day" map at its initial come-up showing just three links
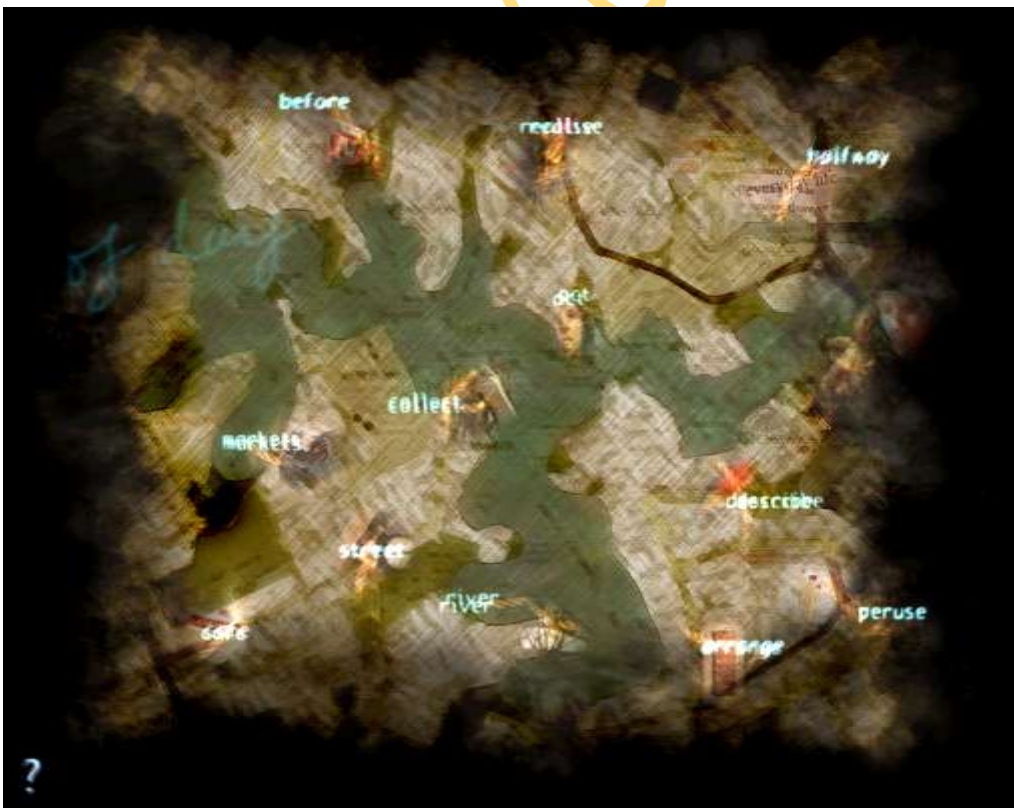
Plate 5.7b. Screenshot of the fully updated "day" map showing 12 places
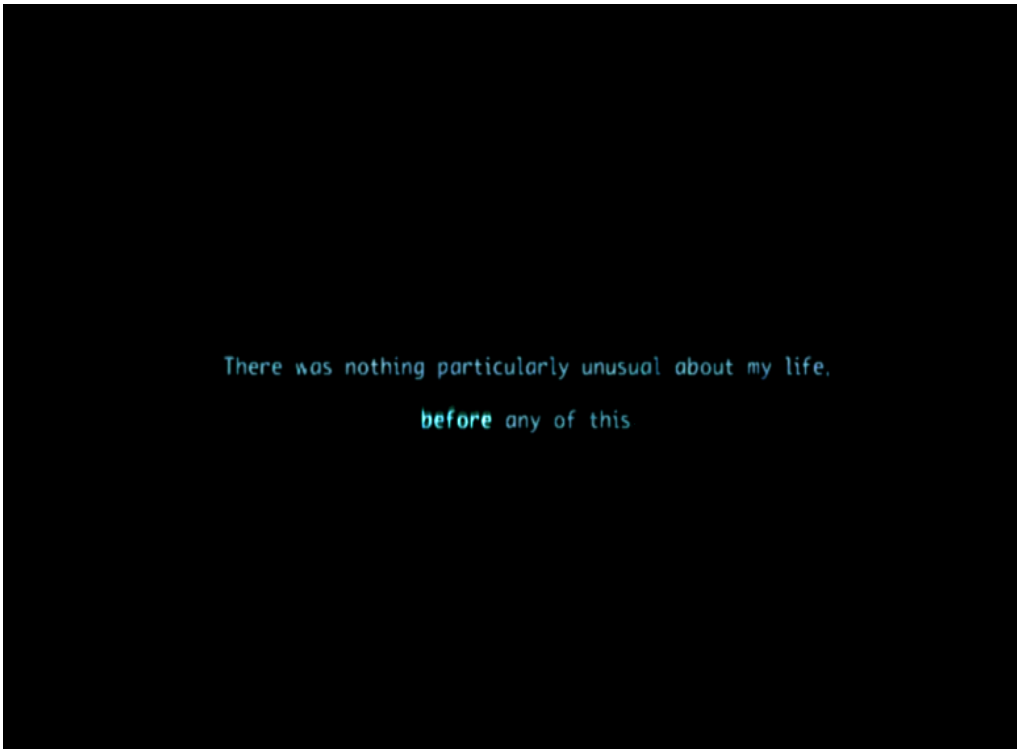
Plate 5.8. Screenshot of the text called up after clicking "[before]" in the day map

Apart from this "piecemeal" technique, *of day* equally visually engages the aesthetic of the fragment through the displacement of words as Plate 5.8 illustrates among a host of others. McHale (1987: 181) notes that "that functional invisibility of space in prose fiction is what distinguishes prose from verse, with its conventions of the unjustified right margin and stanza breaks. *Spacing* is the sign of verse; prose, the unmarked member of the pair, is identified by its *spacelessness*." That the textual space appears as a reverse background type with the usually white textual space appearing as black further emphasises that the vacuity surrounding the centralised text is a deliberate attempt at foregrounding the presence of the text and its "writtenness" and of disrupting the reality of the projected world.

The aesthetics of fragmentation is also visible in *of day* at those instances where the objects which Sophie collects and gathers across a number of places are described. Although the stories told about each of the objects occur as the primary written narrative in the text, the stories, however, exist independent of one another as there is no causal relationship among them. This situation depicts *of day* as a text of fragments. More significant to the aesthetic of fragmentation at work in *of day* is the fact that the work is concerned with the issues of wandering and dreaming: two activities that ineluctably intersect with and are defined by the jumble. Taken from this perspective, it is inevitable that one would continually be confronted by "fragments-of-stories" and "stories-of-fragments" in *of day*. Coincidentally, the initial screen that comes up after initiating the "[describe]" lexia provides a clue to the fragmented stories to be encountered in the work:

> Each object has a history, which I try to imagine,
> I turn each one over and over in my hands,
> to conjure up a fragment

"Fragments-of-stories" indicate that the stories being told about the different items were culled from larger story worlds either because of the interest of the narrator or based on the quantity of available resources which could be temporal, mental, or physical. The "stories-of-fragments" can be perceived from the fact that Sophie, having picked objects from different places, she assembles the objects as the fragments of her world and conjures histories for the objects. In this way, the text is concerned with telling the stories of the fragments.

In the same way, "stories-of-fragments" refers to how different words are foregrounded in the texts of each object's story. Plate 5.9 below is the screenshot of the story calledup for the magazine Sophie picked up in the street showing "magazine," "dances," "stream," and "clanged" as foregrounded words. Each of the foregrounded words tells its own story. For example, "magazine" yields the sound accustomed with the opening of the pages of a book, while "dances" yields instrumental ball music.Thus, the text in Plate 5.9 is not strictly aboutthe magazine but also about other fragments which make up the story script of the magazine.

Another fragmentation strategy employed in *of day* which closely ties to the preceding style is that of "fragments-as-story." With this style, pictures are placed together to tell the story of a particular place or activity. In Plate 5.7b above, the map tells the story of Sophie's world, her place in it, as wellas her preoccupation inlife and with life. With the materials of the map telling the story of the places visited by Sophie together with the various activities she performs for the restoration of her dream experience, the map translates into a metaphoric summary of the whole narrative of*of day*. Plate 5.10, the second screen one encounters in the "[describe]" lexia, equally tells another story as it displays all the objects that Sophie has picked during her wanderings. Sophie has wandered about in the market, the café, the street, and the river as she planned to; she has gathered various items; and she then imagines the histories of the objects for the restoration of her dream experience. Thus, these objects not only make up her world; they determine her existence, having become the elixir on which hersalvation and dream restoration rests.

The texts under study, as we have pointed out so far, go beyond the electronic fragmentation inherent in the segmentation of texts into nodes and links in hypertext technology. In *afternoon,* fragmentation is displayed within nodes of the work both structurally and semantically. In another dimension, fragmentation takes on the style of hacking a text and scattering the pieces all about the work. *of day*, in its own case, employs "piecemeal" technique which doles out narrative in bits and pieces. In some other instances, the narrative of *of day* thrives on the designs of "fragments-of-stories", "stories-of-fragments", and "fragments-as-story".
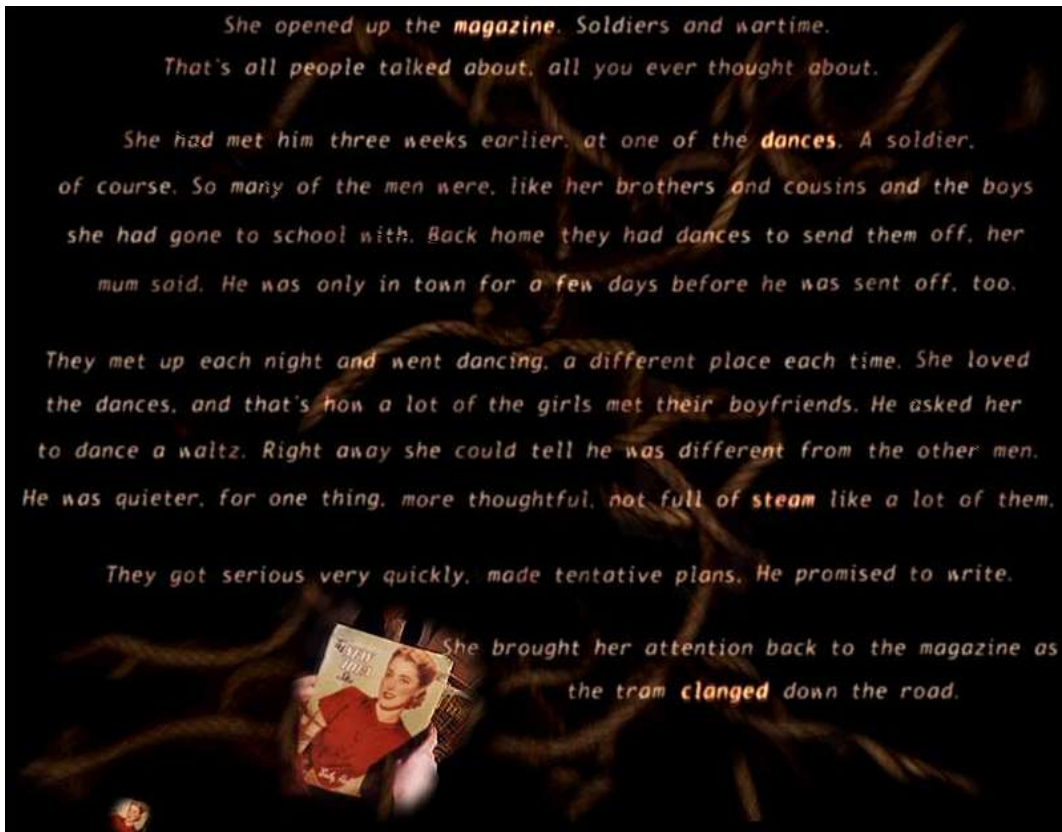
Plate 5.9. Screenshot of the text of the story of "magazine" showing four foregrounded words and illustrating the "stories-of-fragments" style

Plate 5.10. Screenshot of the second screen in "[describe]" lexia as a typical example of "fragments-as-story" style in *of day.*

5.2.2 Collage

Collage is a concept appropriated from a practice in art which is the style of making a picture from juxtaposing and gluing together, on the pictorial surface, items such as photographs, fabric, and pieces of paper. From this perspective, Montgomery, Durant, Fabb, Furniss, and Mills (2000:205), maintain that collage features in literature whenever "different genres (or features of different genres) are placed alongside one another and so implicitly joined together." Where the aesthetic of collage is employed, such a work manifests as postmodernist carnivalized fiction, that is, that type of fiction which is typically "heterogeneous and flagrantly "indecorous," interweaving disparate styles and registers…. [which] interrupts the text's ontological "horizon" with a multiplicity of inserted genres – letters, essays, theatrical dialogues, novels-within-the-novel, and so on" (McHale, 1987: 172).

The employment of different media such as still pictures, video, music, voice-over, and written text amongst others contributes to the effect of collage in *of day*. This new media strategy is alien to print traditions which proceed from a two-dimensional level. With the facilities of the digital technologies, however, literature is smoothly transiting into three- or more-dimensional textual possibilities which give room for the incorporation of every information-capable media into the matrix of the text. Apart from the utilization of different media, *of day* also project collage at the visual level. Plate 5.10 above, for example, bears the impression of collage arrived at visually. In the same way, Plate 5.11 below, the screenshot of "[peruse]", illustrates the art of collage in *of day*.Of the several instances of the deployment of visual collage in *of day*, Plates 5.12 and 5.13 below further illustrate and stress the vast deployment of visual collage in the text.

In *afternoon* the aesthetics of collage is achieved basically through the deployment of multiplicity of genres. Such a situation, in its own way, brings multi-divergent perspectives upon the projected world of *afternoon* and makes the divergent worlds irreconcilably plural. McHale (1991: 153) has, in fact, pointed out that "Different languages, different registers of the same language, different discourse each construct the world differently; in effect, they each construct *different worlds*" in the text. Genres encountered in *afternoon* include prose narrative, poetry, instructional materials and quotations cutting across different disciplines such as science, philosophy, literature, and agriculture. The following are some examples of where different genres crop up within the text:

153

Plate 5.11. Screenshot of "[peruse]" lexia denoting visual collage

Plate 5.12. Screenshot of the "[street]" lexia emphasizing visual collage

Plate 5.13. Screenshot of one of the interlude screens at the eventual transition of the reader from the "day" map to the "night" map which illustrate visual collage arrived at through the superimposition of images

(A) Poetry

    (i)   one perfection within
             another   one   belies
             an   other. perfection
             is one divided by one –("[á]")

    (ii)   grant that I stand
                  as fittingly in his clogs
                  crossing distant summer's hill – ("[Basho]")

    (iii)   these people are too bright
                  for their own good they
                  have minds which ought
                  to seek sparrows, what's
                  happened to us, we ask,
                  and await an answer
                  at the bottom of a well
                  only echoes of sunlight – ("[he recited my poem]")

(B) Tutorial materials

    (i)   Orchid Family   *(Orchidacaea)*

          Our largest and most beautiful northern orchid. The white sepals and petals are in striking contrast to the rose-mouthed pouch. The stout, hairy flowering stem is leafy to the top. 1-3ft. Swamps, wet woods. Ontario, Newfoundland to n. U.S. and locally in mts. Southward. June-July – ("[orchis]") (Field guide in agricultural science)

    (ii)   DROIGHNEACH
          Irish. Syllabic. A loose stanza form. The single line may consist of from nine to thirteen syllables, and it always ends in a trisyllabic word. There is a rhyme between lines one and three, two and four, etc. There are at least two cross-rhymes in each couplet. There is alliteration in each line-- usually the final word of the line alliterates with the preceding stressed word, and it always does so in the last line of each stanza. Stanzas may consist of any number of quatrains.

          The poem (not the stanza) ends with the same first syllable, word, or line with which it begins – ("[Irish]")

    (iii)   now i don't know if that's history at pleasure or whether its
             somewhat more aristotelian   that is   when you think of
             aristotle's idea of poetry   his idea was that poetry was
             essential history   it was the kind of history that had to happen
             or the kind of history that might have happened or the kind of
             history that should have happened – ("[talking at the boundaries]")

(C) Questions

    (i)   (1) What is the answer to question number three?
           (2) Who is sleeping with whom, and why?

(3) What is the answer to question number one?
(4) Define interactivity – ("[twenty questions]")

(D)   Religious rhetoric and philosophy

    (i)   1) The four-fold way begins by living with what is beautiful
             2) Be lean, silent, gentle, and extravagant. Balance
             3) Serve the eternal Brahman with the blessings of the Sun, the cause of
                the Universe. Be absorbed, through Samadhi, in the eternal Brahman.
                Thus your work will not bind you.
             4) Don't look back, something may be gaining on you.
             5) "No" is not necessarily "No," nor is "Yes" "Yes"; but when you miss
                even a tenth of an inch, the difference widens up to one thousand
                miles; When it is :Yes", a young Naga girl in an instant attains
                Buddahood, When it is "No", the most learned Zensho while alive
                falls into Hell.

    (ii)   the failure of a property
             that has been changed
             by an external agent
             to return
             to its original value
             when the cause
             of the change
             has been removed:
             i.e., hysteresis.
             the laws of physics assign
             proximity
             no more meaning
             than absence.
             yet one word
             follows another – ("[womb reamed]")

(E)   Others

    (i)   Radius squared times 3.1416 times height
             divided by age
             times sperm motility divided by .0473
             times IQ divided by per capita income
             times normed Kidder Attractiveness Scale score
             divided by FBI crime incidence rate for zipcode (figure)
                                – ("[the calculations]")

    (ii)   Squares: the antithesis of this.
                    ž
             "Intellectual order as well as intuitive or instinctive order": art.
                    ž
             and yet the colours are not dissimilar to this technique, and,
             ironically, the whole thing is composed (invisibly) of squares
                  ž …   - ("[Albers]")

Theoretically, collage relates to the meaning inherent in the combinations of patterns. Thus, the multi-genre examples given above are typically collage especially because such multi-genre texts do not usually tie with other texts within the reading path wherein they occur. However, these examples do not exhaust the various strategies *afternoon* employs to stamp the image of the collage upon its textuality. One other mechanism of collage observable in *afternoon* is accomplished through the employment of the stylistic device of "bricolage". According to Wales(1989: 53), bricolage refers to the "distorted interweavings of words and phrases borrowed from various languages, registers, and genres." The text of lexia "[via]": "… in der weg… (Charles)", for example, demonstrates the employment of bricolage as a collage device in *afternoon*. Another lexia where bricolage occurs in *afternoon* is "[white dress]" which reads thus:

> Quietly the pale moon cupped, the texture of a hidden thigh, the silken arrangement of limb, and the close cropped clover, Attitude de la dejeuner sur l'herbes d'une accident, sprawled like the tongue of iris, orchis, hooded ladies' -tresses, ivory light, crimson line like silken thread, the men dreaming of moisture, heart throbbing like a hidden wren.

"[litany]" is another example in the text and it reads thus:

> Fuck bubble.
> Cunt wafer.
> Tower of Ivory.
> Star of Lamentation.
> Juno Pronuba.
> Juno Domiduca.
> Juno Nuxia.
> Juno Cinxia.

As a matter of fact, the text of "[litany]" goes a step further in depicting the carnivalizing tendencies of the postmodernist fiction with its conspicuous foregrounding of spatiality and the presence of the text. Further to that, "[litany]" equally employs the catalogue structure, a postmodernist style which disengages words from syntax. The catalogue structure, McHale (1987: 153) will say, "seem[s] to project a crowded world, one so inexhaustibly rich in objects that it defies our abilities to master it through syntax; the best we can do is to begin naming its many parts, without hope of ever finishing."

158

No doubt, these three lexias, "[via]," [white dress]," and "[litany]" display the interweaving of other languages with English, the language of the narrative. Other lexias which indicate the employment of bricolage in the text are "[culprit]," "[expert system]," and "[with a computer]" which are captured in Plates 5.14 - 5.16 below. The bricolage in "[with a computer] arises from weaving English language into programming language. For "[culprit]" and "[expert system]" however, they go beyond displaying the interweaving of English Language with other languages to portray the text's displacement of words as well as the catalogue structure that recalls the carnivalizing arts of postmodernist fictions.

In *of day*, employment of bricolage is noticeable at both pictorial and speech levels. The symbol in Plate 5.17 below is definitely not English but is woven into the language of the text.Bricolage at the level of speech is noticeable in "[she spoke in a voice]," one of the night lexias. Unlike the other lexias where the narrative is presented in written and spoken English, Shanghainese is the language spoken in this lexia although its spoken and written titles are in English. In these two instances, other languages are interwoven into the system of the English language.

The collage effects made possible by the multiplicity of genre and the interweaving of languages are characteristic of postmodernist fictions. Since postmodernism is a means of representing the social changes and developments in our world, it is understandable why McHale (1992: 154) concludes that ""Polyphonic" texts…arise in cultures or periods in which a plurality of languages and discourses, and their associated world-views, jostle and mingle. Such a period is our own". In essence, multivocality in the texts under study becomes the walking site for and a replica of the pluralingualism dominating the world in this postmodern cultural age.

In another dimension, Landow (1994: 37-38) argues that "[c]ollage or collage-like effects, in fact appear inevitable in hypertext environments, and they also take various forms. Including blocks of nonfictional text or images within a hypertext fiction… provides one way that such collage occurs." Thus, the transportation of the reader of *afternoon* from the story to passages from Plato's *Phaedo* in "[PHAEDO]" and Vico's *New Science* in "[homo non intelligendo]" together with various other instances of bricolage, intertextual references, quotations, allusions, juxtapositions, and parody combine to establish the text as a collage writing. Invariably, *afternoon* assumes the nature of the postmodern in rejecting the autonomy of a genre and a recognized workof art, embracing, instead, the idea of a collective and plural
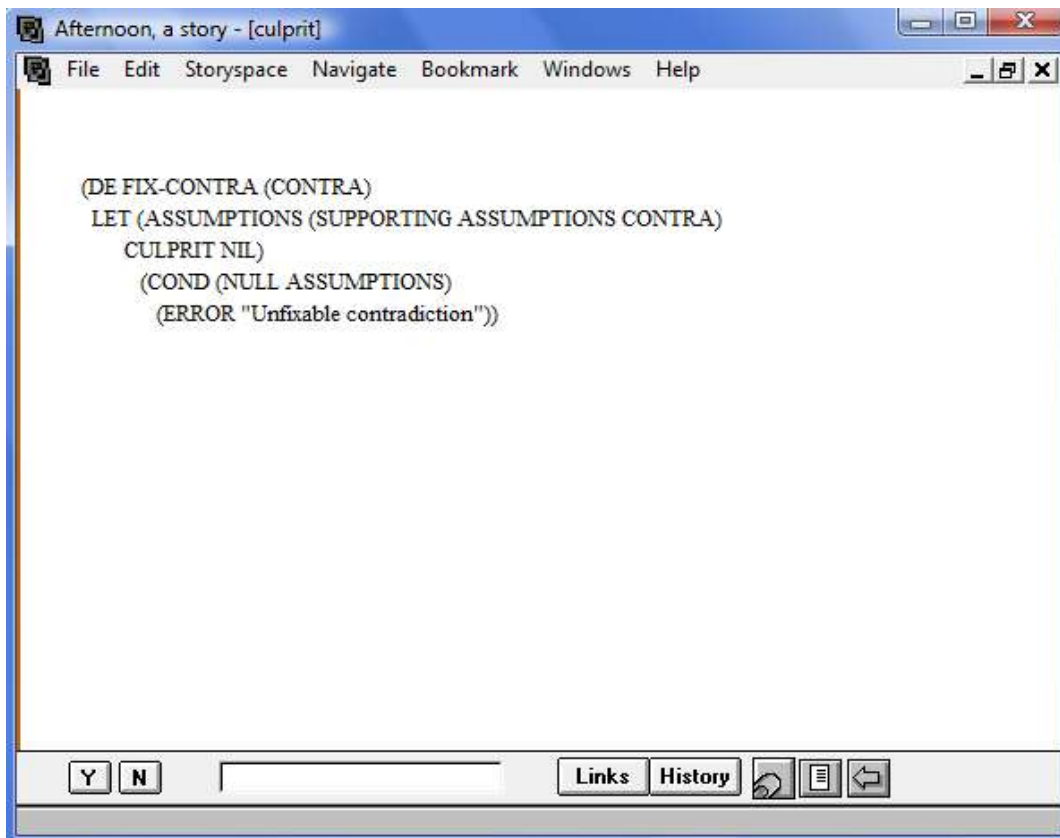
Plate 5.14. Screenshot of *afternoon, story*'s "[culprit]" node exhibiting bricolage

Plate 5.15. Screenshot of "[expert system]" lexia as an instance of bricolage in *afternoon, story*
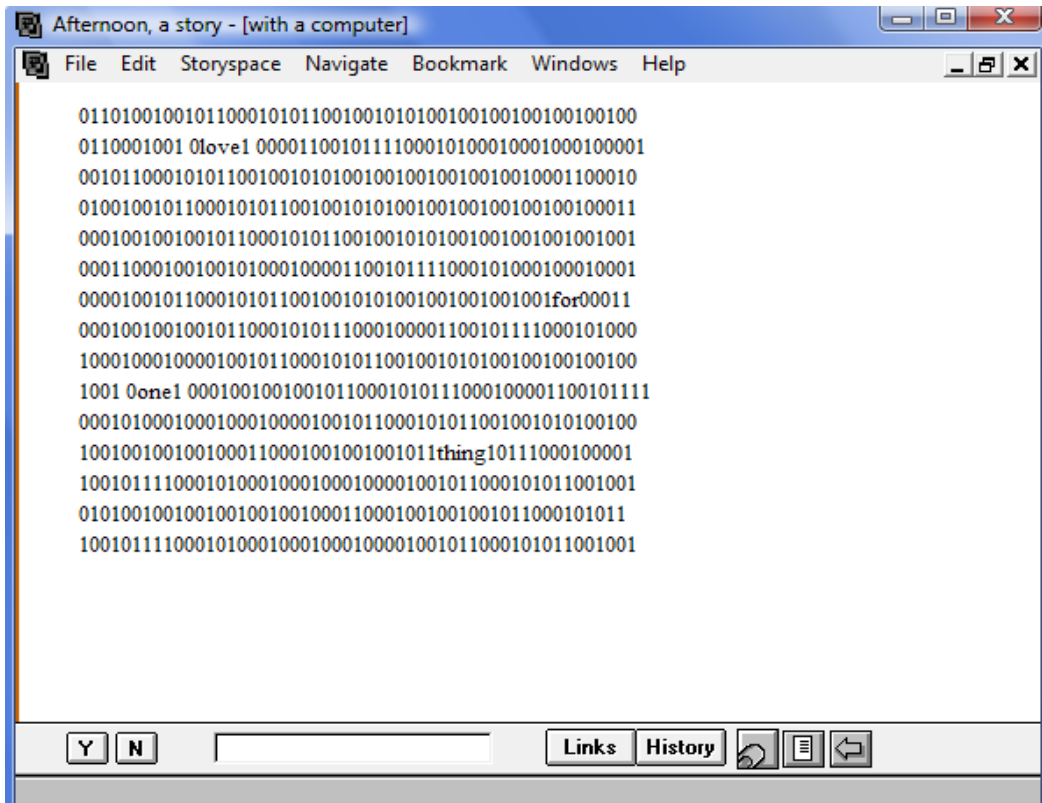
Plate 5.16. Screenshot of "[with a computer]"lexia in *afternoon, a story* illustrating bricolage arrived at through computing and programming language

Plate 5.17. Screenshot of an example of pictorial bricolage in *of day, of night*

subjectivity. In all of these, *afternoon* enters the region of the debate on the previously accepted borders and margins of genres and establishes postmodernist understanding that borders between literary genres and the margins between fiction and non-fiction have become fluid. Thus, the text plays the conventions within the previously perceived borders against one another.

5.2.3 Intertextuality

Kristeva coined the term "intertextuality" based on the assumption that "narratives are woven of echoes and traces of other texts, a web or "mosaic of quotations"" (Sim and Loon, 2001:76). Expounding this notion of the "mosaic of quotation," Morgan (2000: 135) submits that "intertextuality" indicates that "texts mean in relation to other texts which they may quote, or allude to explicitly, parody, or reject – or which they may implicitly engage with as part of a larger conversation whose discourses and genres mingle together in the spaces of a culture." In the same line of reasoning, Hutcheon (1988: 126) takes intertextuality as the "theoretical exploration of the "vast dialogue" between and among literatures and histories" which has made it possible for postmodernism to realize Bakhtin's notion of the "multiple voicings of a text" as projected by his concepts of polyphony, dialogism, and heteroglossia.

In other words, intertextuality indicates the various means through which a text interacts with other texts especially in order to define the literary and cultural contexts which the text assumes. While *of day* shows little or no instance of intertextuality, it is a major device that intersperses the textual topography of *afternoon*. A closer look at *afternoon* shows that intertextuality is arrived at through explicit and direct quotations, references to experimentalists and experimental works, parody, and allusions. The intertextual relationships maintained in *afternoon* thus define and reinforce the text as an experimental work of literature.

According to Moulthrop (1989: 262), Joyce was "loosely inspired by Cortazar and Antonioni" in creating *afternoon.* Against this backdrop,the references to Cortazar's *Hop Scotch* and Antonioni's "Blow-up" and "Zabriskie Point" enact kinship ties between *afternoon* and the experimental works. Michelangelo Antonioni is the Italian film director and producer who, in the nature of the postmodern project, is noted for his deliberate avoidance of realism in his films. Reference to "Blow-up" in

the "[Cortazar]" lexia is therefore an intertextual strategy for defining *afternoon* as proceeding from a literary tradition which rejects the ideas and ideals of realism.

Lexias "[Cortazar]" and "[Hop Scotch]" equally serve as intertextual means of locating *afternoon* within the experimental tradition which informed Cortazar's writing *Hop Scotch.* Douglas (1992: 14) has indicated that *Hop Scotch* is representative of that type of experimental narrative classified as "mosaic narratives." Douglas submits that mosaic narratives usually "consist of narrative fragments, conflicting perspectives, interruptions, and ellipses which impel their readers to painstakingly piece together a sense of the narrative, with its full meaning apparent only when viewed as an assembled mosaic, a structure embracing all its fragments." Further to this, Moulthrop (1989:261) classifies *Hop Scotch* within the class of "fictive machines," that is, all those "mechanized narratives" which "set out to revolutionalize the traditional economy of story (or narrative potential) and discourse (or actual telling)." Arguably, *afternoon* considerably builds on the experimental traditions of *Hop Scotch* as a mosaic narrative and a fictive machine. In this regard, the reference to *Hop Scotch* in *afternoon* is therefore not accidental but intentional for the proper contextualization of *afternoon* within this sort of experimental tradition.

The particular portion of *Hop Scotch* quoted in *afternoon* further stresses the intertextual relationship existing between *Hop Scotch* and *afternoon*:

> In its own way, this book consists of many books, but two books above all. The first can be read in normal fashion and it ends with Chapter 56… The second should be read beginning with Chapter 73 and then following the sequence indicated… ("[Hop Scotch]")

No doubt, the divergent choices and universe of possibilities existing in *Hop Scotch* arguably inform the navigational logic and possibilities working in *afternoon* as the following passages indicate:

> You move through the text by pressing the Return key to go from one section to another (i.e., "turn pages"); …
> The story exists at several levels and changes according to decisions you make. A text you have seen previously may be followed by something new, according to a choice you make or already have made during any given reading – ("[hypertext]").

> In my mind the story, as it has formed, takes on margins. Each margin will yield to the impatient, or wary, reader. You can answer yes at the beginning and page through on a wave of Returns, or page through directly – again using Returns without that first interaction.
>
> These are not versions, but the real story itself in long lines. … – ("[in my mind]").

Thus, the default story in *afternoon* which could be paged and read through with the return key is akin to the "normal fashion" of reading in *Hop Scotch* wherein the story ends at Chapter 56. Meanwhile, other navigational possibilities in *afternoon* function in the order of *Hop Scotch'*s non-sequential reading possibilities.

Apart from mosaic narratives, the other type of experimental narratives which acts as a precursor to hyperfiction narratives is identified by Douglas (1992: 14) as "narratives of multiplicity." Narratives of multiplicity exhibit indeterminacy at the heart of multiplicity and simultaneity of mutually exclusive sets of narrative strands. One notable example of this type of experimental narrative is Borges' *The Garden of Forking Paths.* Borges' idea and projection of the image of a labyrinth and the interconnection of multiple reading paths in the narrative have been major influences for the deployment of what Calvi (1999: 101) calls a "combinatorial calculus" in postmodernist fiction. In *afternoon,* lexia "[The Garden]" is an allusion to Borges' *The Garden of the Forking Paths* especially as the lexia contains a direct quotation from the book. Existing within Borges' labyrinthine tradition and combinatorial calculus, therefore, *afternoon* exists as a malleable and multiply narrative which embodies all possibilities.

Another important text which *afternoon* maintains an intertextual relationship with is the Chinese oracular book: *I Ching* or *Book of Changes* which, in Aarseth's (1994:64) submission, is "[w]ithout doubt, the most prominent and popular nonlinear text in history." *I Ching* is said to have originated from the symbol system invented over fifty centuries ago by the legendary king, Fu Hsi and itconsists of 64 hexagrams which are the binary combinations of six whole or broken lines. According to Aarseth (1994: 64), this book of antiquity works "[b]y manipulating three coins or forty-nine yarrow stalks according to a randomizing principle, textons from two hexagrams are combined, producing one out of 4096 possible scriptons." With this, Aarseth (1994: 65) concludes that *I Ching* "is certainly the first expert system based on the principles of binary computing."

In this perspective, there is an implicit intertextual allusion to *I Ching* in lexia "[and]" captured in Plate 5.18 below. The allusion to *I Ching* draws from the hexagram which is notable of the oracular book and the origin signature following immediately after the hexagram. Clearly, the signature "V. Hsu" is a parody of the name "Fu Hsi". This allusive and parodic reference to *I Ching* and "Fu Hsi" strategically helps to locate *afternoon* within the combinatory and manipulative logic working within *I Ching*.

In several other ways, *afternoon* alludes to many other experimentalists and their works either within lexias, or as lexia or path names. The lexia "[intimate promises]" for example, contains a direct quotation from Basho's *The Narrow Roads through the Provinces* and the lexia maintains a link titled "[Basho]" within a path bearing the same name. Basho, being the supreme Japanese haiku poet master who popularized the 17-syllable haiku form and made it an acceptable medium of artistic expression and innovation, the lexia titled "[Basho]" contains a haiku poem. Lexia "[V Woolf]" is not only an allusion to Virginia Woolf as the lexia name suggests, the lexia equally maintains an intertextual reference to Estlin Cummings, the experimental poet and Djuna Barnes, the avant-garde American writer. In "[here]," allusion is made to the avant-garde poet, Robert Creeley while the lexia containsone of the poems in his collection titled "Pieces." "[talking at the boundaries]" is another intertextual lexia which directly relates to the title of one of David Antin's collection of poems and quotes one of his works while at the same making mention of his name.

Other instances of intertextual references to experimental works or their creators include (i) the use of the experimental Swiss sculptor and artist Jean Tinguely's name as a lexia name; (ii) reference to Anais Nin in "[music];" (iii) the use of the title of John Barth's novel, *Lost in the Funhouse* as a lexia name; and (iv) thereference to John Cage, the experimental composer, in "[mushroom]" and the employment of his name as a path name, amongst many others. In all, the intertextual references to experimental artists and their works inscribe *afternoon* within the tradition of experimentation and depict the text as a digital contribution to the ontological dialectics that experimental works create within literary traditions.

afternoon not only employs intertextuality in order to describe itself as an experimental work of literature, there are instances where the text also deploys intertextuality to comment on its digital status. For example, "[Turing's Man]" is Bolter's description of the creativity and feelings of pleasure a programmer gets from
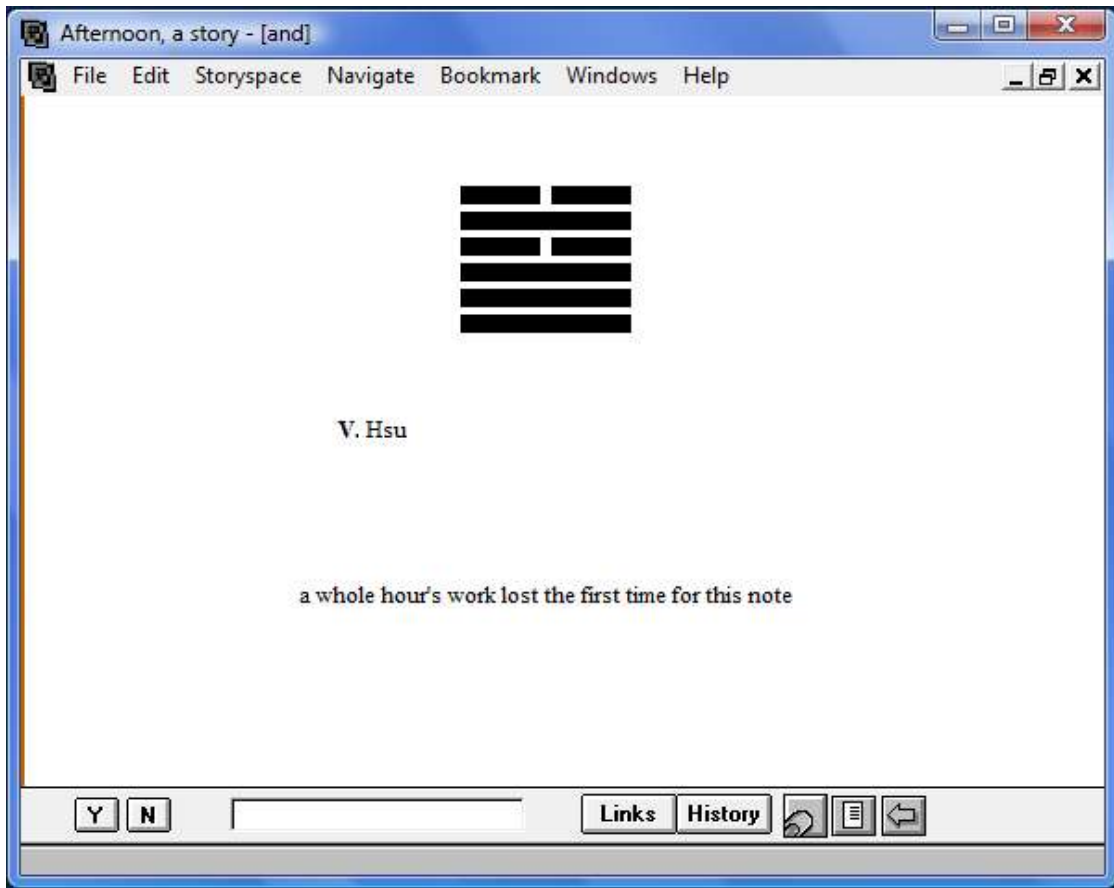
Plate 5.18. Screenshot of *afternoon, story*'s "[and]" where both a hexagram and a parodied name indicate an implicit allusion to *I Ching* thereby depicting an intertextual relationship

working on "a vast electronic sheet of paper" where they may "write almost undisturbed" by the fixity and determinate nature of the paper technology. In "[inner activity]," there are also references to Vannevar Bush, Memex, and Xanadu, visioniers of hypertextuality. One other point to note is the fact that *afternoon* does not go without exhibiting the possibility of intertextuality functioning as parody. In "[inner activity]" for instance,there is a parody of the first two lines of Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan' such that "In Xanadu did Kubla Khan/A stately pleasure-dome decree:" reads as "In Xanadu did Kubrick con a stately, plump Buck Mulligan?"

Thus far, we have examined some of the ways through which *afternoon* employs intertextuality. Significantly, intertextuality effects the perception of concrete relationship between *afternoon* and other experimental works. The text is thus instituted within the same experimental tradition that informs the creation of the predecessor experimental texts. More importantly, however, the employment of the postmodernist aesthetics of intertextuality in *afternoon* manifests as "both a desire to close the gap between the past and present of the reader and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context" (Hutcheon, 1988: 118). Ironically, intertextuality does not only describe the past in a new context, it is a means of contextualizing the essence of the new and the present within the dialectics of the old and the past.

5.2.4 Repetition

Repetition is one major strategy that builds the aesthetics of the jumble in *afternoon.* As indicated in Section 4.3.1, *afternoon* widely displays the pattern of the cycle and the motif of the re-cycle as the reader is made, in several situations, to revisit a previously-visited part of the hypertext and/or to continue along a previously-traversed path through one or more spaces before being allowed into new spaces. This situation partly contributes to the employment of repetition as both an aesthetic and a rhetorical strategy in the text.

Apart from the cycles and the re-cycle motif, there are more intensifying repetition strategies employed in the text. At some instances, the contents of a particular node are repeated either partly or wholly in another node. In some other instances, the titles of lexias are similar though they contain different materials. These two repetition strategies practically lead to disorientation, confusion, and befuddlement for readers. However, if readers apply the theory of re-reading to the text, they will be

able to synthesize the materials of the text such that the repeated texts, rather than disorient them, will establish the common front from which to appraise the text. It is on this ground that Bernstein, Joyce, and Levine (1992:163) argue that recurrence in hypertext is not a defect but that "repetition provides a powerful structural force, a motif which helps readers synthesize the experience of reading." For these theorists therefore, repetition produces rhythms which announce the patterns of meaning.

Although *afternoon* has 539 nodes, many of the nodes maintain very similar titles. For some of the similar titles, they are distinguished by numerals or some other symbols. Examples of such lexias include "[Giulia]" and "[Giulia?]," "[fragments!]" and "[fragments?];" "[me]" and "[me*];" "[Love]" and "[Love...];" "[yes1]" – "[yes7];" "[Werther1]" to "[Werther4];" "[Lolly2]" to "[Lolly4];" among others. For some other 207 nodes illustrated in Table 5.1 below, they bear the same titles with some lexias like of "[and]" and "[the]" occurring in as many as nine and fifteen places respectively.

The similarities in the names of these lexias reiterate the point made earlier that the principle of re-reading must be applied to *afternoon* in order for the reader to discover that the similarities in titles of nodes do not always imply the re-cycle of a previously traversed node. While many of the nodes have the same contents, the structural layout of some of the nodes will always indicate that the reader is traversing a new node different from the previously traversed one. Plates 5.19 and 5.20 below show the three instances of each of lexias "[fenceline]" and "[moaning]." While the first two lexias of [moaning] are the same in terms of lexical items and structural outlay, the first two lexias of [fenceline] are lexically the same but structurally different. The third sets of the two lexias are, however, markedly different from their first twos. If the reader is not patient enough to traverse all the three lexias but assumesthat the lexias are recycles, the reader is definitely bound to miss out very many important details and pieces of information necessary for the interpretation of the text.

Another situation where nodes bear the same titles but have characteristically different materials can be noticed in the following two instances of "[yes]":

Table 5.1. Instances of the nodes with similar titles in *afternoon*

S/N	Node title	Frequency	S/N	Node title	Frequency
1.	about	2	40.	not	2
2.	across	2	41.	oaks	2
3.	afternoon	2	42.	octopi	3
4.	again	2	43.	of	3
5.	air	3	44.	off	2
6.	along	2	45.	one	4
7.	and	9	46.	or	3
8.	another	3	47.	our	2
9.	as	2	48.	out	2
10.	beneath	2	49.	palms	2
11.	beset	2	50.	Poetry	3
12.	blacktop	3	51.	recall	2
13.	by	2	52.	relics	2
14.	car,	2	53.	rivers	2
15.	continents	2	54.	say.	2
16.	crystal	2	55.	says,	3
17.	darkness	2	56.	series	2
18.	do	3	57.	sets	2
19.	echoing	3	58.	settling	2
20.	emotion,	2	59.	she	7
21.	essence	2	60.	shrapnel	2
22.	exploding	2	61.	snow	2
23.	far	2	62.	sun	2
24.	fear,	2	63.	the	15
25.	fenceline	3	64.	these	2
26.	five	2	65.	this	3
27.	fragments	2	66.	thundering	3
28.	freezes	2	67.	to	4
29.	he	2	68.	walk	2
30.	hear	2	69.	want	2
31.	horizon,	2	70.	way	3
32.	I	4	71.	we	2
33.	Ice	4	72.	were	2
34.	in	3	73.	winter.	2
35.	into	2	74.	without	2
36.	is	3	75.	wood	2
37.	it?	2	76.	yes	2
38.	melt	2	77.	yesterday?	2
39.	moaning	3	78.	You	3

169

Here there is a catch place, a low wire fence along a ditch which snatches what the wind wafts. Among candy wrappers, newspaper pages, and oak leaves, there are children's schoolpapers, evidently blown free from the knapsacks and backpacks of the children from the County Day School, some who walk along this road on their way home.

Most of the papers are old and waterstained, dried by the sun into yellowing things. There is a fresh white paper with my son's name upon it, and red markings from a teacher. It is a report on Louis Quattorze, and his looping handwriting makes me weep.

It begins: "I am the Sun King," said King Louis the Fourteenth of France.

Plate 5.19. Screenshots of the three "[fenceline]" nodes in *afternoon, story* which have the same titles but different texts
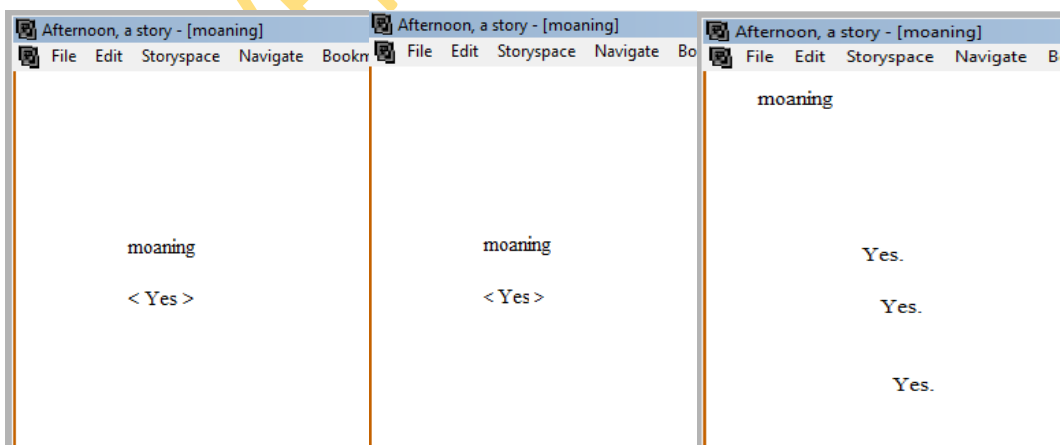
Plate 5.20. Screenshots of the three "[moaning]" lexias in *afternoon, story* having exactly the same titles but different contents

1.	"**[yes]**"

She had been a client of Wert's wife for some time. Nothing serious, nothing awful, merely general unhappiness and the need of a woman so strong to have friends.

It was all very messy, really. For they did become friends, Lolly and Nausicaa, a very early eighties kind of thing when you think of it, appropriately post-feminist and oddly ambiguous. Therapist and client – Lolly's not so scrupulous professional bounds already stretched by her herbal tea after each and every session, each and every client – easily became friend and friend when someone, they are neither sure who, suggested they stretch a five p.m. post-session tea to supper.

<Vegetable doubtlessly> Wert smirked, telling me, stressing each syllable in his approximation of the german (sic).

2.	"**[yes]**"

There is an end to everything, to any mystery.
<Why don't you call – she says – and then you will know...>
It is good advice. Even so, I still wish I could lie back on the white sofa and think.
I wish I were the Sun King.

A very likely effect of the various forms of repetition in *afternoon* is the disorientation of readers who may decide not to traverse nodes in the thinking that they have earlier visited them thereby concluding that revisiting them is unwise since there are some other nodes that are yet to be traversed. In another dimension, readers may become befuddled about the logic of repetition working in the text to the extent that they ascribe god-like powers to the text. Without very deep scrutiny, readers may be tempted to believe that the text has got a mind of its own which determines what to reveal to them within particular nodes during particular reading sessions. If readers however utilize the short key "F9" on the interface, the list of all the 539 nodes in the text will be made available to them. In this way, readers will come to understand that though the dynamics of hypertextuality and digitization are utilized in the text, the dynamics are employed for the skilful and calculated recombination of different nodes bearing similar titles. At this juncture of unravelling the mystery and magic of the text,whatever supernatural power has been attached to the text by readers loses its hold while they (the readers) come to salute the creativity of the master and the ingenuity of the game being played on them by both the author and the text.

Aside the repetition of node titles, another repetition strategy deployed in *afternoon* occurs where the contents of a node is partly repeated in another node. A typical example of this can be found in the lexias "[Werther]," "[asks]," and "[As if]." The contents of the three lexia are presented below for comparison:

1.   <How... he asks slowly, savouring the question, dragging it out devilishly, meeting the eyes of the whole afternoon cluster in the reception area, <would you feel if I slept with your ex-wife?>
It is foolish. He doesn't know her, has never met her. She detests young men.
<As if I were your father> I say.
He is delighted by the geometry, and Mrs. Porter smiles –
"**[Werther4]**"

2.   Heasks slowly, savouring the question, dragging it out devilishly, meeting the eyes.
<How... would you feel if I slept with your ex-wife?>
It is foolish. He doesn't know her, has never met her. She detests young men – "**[asks]**"

3.   It is foolish. He doesn't know her, has never met her. She detests young men.
<As if I were your father> I say – "**[As if]**"

Apart from the examples above, other instances of repetition of nodal contents can be found as existing between "[Werther]" and "[scars];" "[pillar]" and "[what Lolly said];" "[a bet]" and "[three];" "[in my mind]" and "[second guessing];" and "[no]" and "[blacktop]" amongst many other instances. These five sets of lexias are presented below:

1a.   "[Werther]"
Or Wert. <As in Vert-igo> he says.
It is characteristic. I don't know anything about Germans, except my grandfather, but Wert seems like what one would mean by Prussian. A thin, cherubic face, apfel (sic) cheeks which make it appear as if he is always smiling, if diabolically. Monkish hair, a pattern-bald tonsure beyond a high polished brow. Teeth: one doesn't always notice teeth in others, but you notice that Wert has teeth, as if it explains why Wert is a rodentish name.
He has heard there is a plastic surgeon in New Jersey who will fit one with duelling scars. He shows interest, but for now satisfies himself with simpler mutilations, the pierced left ear most often holds the smallest of Mepps spinners, sans treble hooks.

1b. **"[scars]"**

He has heard there is a plastic surgeon in New Jersey who will fit one with duelling scars. He shows interest, but for now satisfies himself with simpler mutilations, the pierced left ear most often holds the smallest of Mepps spinners, sans treble hooks.

2a. **"[pillars]"**

<I remember negroes. Perhaps it is wrong to say this in this fashion, but then I have dedicated my life to a certainty that recollection is somehow sacred, without sanction, blameless, and liberating...

2b. **"[what Lolly said]"**

Perhaps it is wrong to say this in this fashion, but then I have dedicated my life to a certainty that recollection is somehow sacred, without sanction, blameless, and liberating...

3a. **"[a bet]"**

<Would you like to make a bet on something?> I ask.
<Mine's longer by a full inch!> he laughs preposterously.
<No, seriously.> I say.
He nods. I am boring him. He would rather consider the probabilities of one of us sleeping with the other's wife.

3b. **"[three]"**

I am boring him. He would rather consider the probabilities of one of us sleeping with the other's wife.

4a. **"[in my mind]"**

In my mind the story, as it is formed, takes on margins. Each margin will yield to the impatient reader, or wary, reader. ....

These are not versions, but the story itself in long lines. Otherwise, however, the center is all – Thoreau or Brer Rabbit, each preferred the bramble. I've discovered more there too, and real interaction, if that is possible, is in pursuit of texture.
There we match minds.

4b. **"[second guessing]"**

These are not versions, but the story itself in long lines. Otherwise, however, the center is all – Thoreau or Brer Rabbit, each preferred the bramble. I've discovered more there too, and real interaction, if that is possible, is in pursuit of texture.

There we match minds.

5a. **"[no]"**

I understand how you feel. Nothing is more empty than heat. Seen so starkly the world holds wonder only in the expanses of clover where the bees work.

Elsewhere it is sheer shimmer, like the skin of hallucination which holds above roads in summer. We have been spoiled by air conditioned automobiles to think we can transcend the blankness. It is as if paper were never invented.

No wonder. Says it exactly, and I am taken by the medievalism of Hours....

5b.   "[blacktop]"

Elsewhere it is sheer shimmer, like the skin of hallucination which holds above roads in summer. We have been spoiled by air conditioned automobiles to think we can transcend the blankness. It is as if paper were never invented.

Inversion is another repetition strategy utilized in *afternoon*. Inversed repetitions are evident where the contents of a node are falsely repeated through the subtle inversion of certain phrases. In such circumstances, it takes very sensitive readers to notice the differences existing between a node and its inversed form. While "[yesterday]" and "[yesterday2]" manifest a sort of inversed and partial repetitions, "[begin]" and "[false beginning]" typically display inversed repetition. These lexias are illustrated below:

1a.   "[yesterday]"

I feel vaguely ill all day in this heat, my ankles burning and the collar of my madras cotton shirt heavy as a yoke as I sit here, unable to dream.

Four full days now it has crouched over us, the humidity like exhalation of tigers, scratch of tough leather across the piss damp concrete. And yet everything is at a remove. Each morning I wake, my ears filled from the draining sinuses, all the world in rut and the pollen everywhere, so thick we sweep it up into shovels like useless grain.

<I may be allergic to walnut pollen> Wert says, as we sit detached by the restaurant air conditioning, thinking what to say.

1b.   "[yesterday2]"

Four full days now everything is at a remove, all the world in rut and the pollen everywhere, so thick we sweep it up into shovels like useless grain.

<I may be allergic to walnut pollen> Wert says, as we sit detached by the restaurant air conditioning, thinking what to say.

I dream of white tigers and the hours of the day....

2a.   "[begin]"

I try to recall winter. <As if it were yesterday?> she says, but I do not signify one way or another. By five the sun sets and the afternoon melt freezes again across the blacktop into crystal octopi and palms of ice-- rivers and continents beset by fear, and we walk out to the car, the snow moaning beneath our boots and the oaks exploding in series along the fenceline on the horizon, the shrapnel settling like relics, the echoing thundering off far ice. This was theessenceofwood, these fragments say. And this darkness is air.

< Poetry > she says, without emotion, one way or another.Do you want to hear about it?

2b.   "[false beginning]"

I try to recall yesterday. <As if it were winter?> I say, but she does not signify one way or another.

By five the sun rises and the night freeze melts again across the blacktop into crystal rivers – octopi beset by fear, and we walk out to the car, the snow exploding beneath our boots and the oaks moaning in series, echoing off far ice. This was poetry, she says, without emotion, one way or another.

Do you hear it?

Another type of repetition noticeable in *afternoon* is phrasal in nature. Many of the phrasal repetitions comment on the stylistic effects of the text and thereby act as theme statements. Practically, phrasal repetitions enhance whatever rhetorical effects the other types of repetitions have effected on the text. One example of such phrasal repetitions is the sentence "There is no simple way to say this" which occurs in lexias "[Work in progress]," "[I see]," "[you have no choice]," and "[WUNDERWRITE R]." Taken as a theme statement, this sentence comments on the mechanics of recombination and indeterminacy working for the various narrative strands in the text. This statement can equally be considered alongside two others: "one way or another" which occurs twice in each of the lexias "[being]" and "[false beginning]" and "I want to say..." which occurs across many of the lexias. The combination of these statements indicate that the crux of the text is really on saying something but which cannot be said in any simple way but must be said in one way or another. These thematic statements all come together to reveal the indeterminacy working for the narrative of the text and to pronounce the impossibility of arriving at closure or at a single sense of closure.

Whereas repetition occurs in *afternoon* across nodes and along different reading paths, repetition in *of day* occurs within the same node. Because *of day* employs different media resources, it is the case that repetition serves for the reinforcement of one media by another media. In this regard, the aesthetic and

rhetorical values of repetition in *of day* are quite different from those of *afternoon.* As indicated earlier in the preceding chapter (section 4.3.2), the need to maintain multimodal coherence among the various media resources employed in *of day* results in elaboration and specification of the message of one media by another media which invariably functions as repetition. One example can be found in the node "[realize]." Immediately readers click on the link, they are led into a screen with the following text:

A few months ago, I came to realise
slowly, quietly, without any great drama
that I seemed to have lost the ability to **dream**

While the text appears on the screen, the word "dream" is cued as a link into the inner part of the node. Interacting with the link brings up the screen captured in Plate 5.21 below.At the appearance of the screen, a voice-over is heard repeating and elaborating on the text of the first screen thus:

A few months ago, I'm not sure exactly when, but I think it was during the autumn, I began to suffer from an illness, a problem. It was around this time that I came to realize slowly, quietly, without any great drama, that I seemed to have lost the ability to dream.
At first, I thought I was just sleeping moderately between the sleeps of cold nights and a warm blanket. But as the nights passed, I felt I was not so much asleep, but unconscious or worse. I would wake up drained like the life was seeping out of me slowly, each night. As weeks went by, alendous took hold of me that I couldn't shake. I visited the doctor, and after ruling out drugs and drink, she said that the problem was unusual, but not serious. She advised me to get up more, get some exercise in the hope that it would right itself.

As the screen in Plate 5.21 shows, the screen has an inset video of Sophie. At the background of the inset video, an animated script: "problem concerning dream" continually plays on. In addition to the animated script, there are faintly scribbled texts written on the blanket background. From the upper left side of the blanket, readers may strain their eyes to decipher the faintly scribbled texts: "drained... life is" while "dreamless sleep of cold winter night under warm blanket" could be gleaned from the lower left side. With the logic of repetition for elaboration working in the text, the fragmentary text in the upper left part can be understood when it is juxtaposed with that part of the narrative of the voice-over which says: "I would wake up drained like

the life was seeping out of me." In addition to the foregoing are the four "words-that-float" recoverable from the screen: "drained," "dreamless sleeps of cold night,"

Plate 5.21. Screenshot of the inner page of "[realize]" in *of day, of night*

"drink," and "a problem concerning dreams" which all repeat and emphasize the messages of the other texts.

It should be pointed out that the pictorial of the blanket which serves as the background of the screen is equally as significant as the messages of the other media. The word "blanket" occurs both in the spoken and the written texts thus indicating that readers should map a link between the verbal forms of the word and the connotative value of its pictorial representation. The blanket is not just a mere representation of the warm blanket under which Sophie slept when her problem started. Precisely, the message content and value of the narratives in the screen and the entire text are founded on and informed by the events residing in the beingness of the blanket. In this understanding, the blanket has the story and is the story. Whatever is told by any of the media resources is thus a repetition of the narrative of the blanket.

Repetition, as has been established in this subsection, is employed for various significant rhetorical roles in a text. In *of day*, repetition functions for multimodal coherence to the extent that the messages borne by the different media resources emphasize and elaborate on one another. In *afternoon,* repetition is engaged for the production of a structural motif that intensifies the aesthetics of the jumble which pervade the text. That apart, repetition is employed in *afternoon* as a rhetorical strategy to disorient and befuddle the reader along the twisty paths within which the text is inscribed. This, however, does not deny Walker's (1999:116) argument that "repetition can also help fight this disorientation, by establishing rock-solid resting places, familiar nodes that the reader can use as landmarks for navigation."

5.2.5   Multivalence and multivocality

One of the possibilities that repetition enables in a text is multivalence and/or multivocality. In Bernstein, Joyce, and Levine's (1992:163) view, multivalence occurs where the meaning attached to an episode changes "when revisited because the reader has gained new understanding or insight." As a matter of fact, one cannot afford to underplay the aesthetic value and importance of multivalent and/or multivocal passages in a hyperfiction text like *afternoon* not only because they echo the outcome of a postmodernist literary project but especially because they help us to see the extent

178

to which a single passage may play several discourse and semantic roles in a text. This, in fact, is one basic and original motivation for the emergence of the hypertext.

We may take the example of the nodes "[Die]" and "[die?]." Although the two nodes have slightly different titles, they contain exactly the same lexical materials illustrated below:

> I felt certain it was them, I recognized her car from that distance, not more than a hundred yards off along the road to the left where she would turn if she were taking him to the Country Day School.
> Two men stood near the rear of the grey buick and a woman in a white dress sprawled on the wide lawn before them, two other men crouching near her. Another smaller body beyond.
> In the distance, coming toward them and the road along which I passed, there were the insistent blue lights of a sheriff's cruiser and a glimpse of what I thought to be the synchronized red lights of the emergency wagon.
> It was like something from a film: Blowup or the RedDesert.

The question mark placed together with the title second node and the different paths along which it features imparts different perceptions on the text when encountered in "[Die]". When readers encounter "[Die]" along the default path, the passage features as a critical struggle on the mind of the narrator who is dead worried about the possibility of his ex-wife and son being the victims of the accident and wants to convince himself that what he has seen that morning is a fatal accident. The narrator's evaluation of the incident in terms of something that happens in a film further reinforces the certainty of both the accident and its fatality. This is because the devices of technology are usually employed in films to magnify events and make them real more than reality. In essence, the reader, like the narrator, is constrained to picture both Lisa and Andy as the dead victims of the accident.

The multivalence/multivocality associated with the occurrence of repetition is made manifest as soon as the reader makes a contact with "[die?]," say within the thread "[I want to say]" → "[die?]" → "[Cortazar]" where the reader comes to realize that the victims could be Lisa and Andy as it could be some other people. With the narrator's desire in "[I want to say]" to want to say that he may have seen his son die that morning through to the significance of the question mark in the title of "[die?]," the reader sees that the speaker is as unsure of who the victims are as he is unsure of the certainty of the victims' death. The uncertainty working on the mind of the narrator

in these two preceding nodes is clarified by the time the reader finally reaches "[Cortazar]" where the narrator remarks thus:

> ...I leaned up against the wall of my room and was happy because the boy had just managed to escape, I saw him running off, in focus again, springing with his hair flying in the wind, learning finally to fly across the island...

At this point, readers modify whatever conclusion they might have earlier made about the accident victims. Although readers are still unsure of the certainty of the boy being Andy, they have, however, come to understand that the speaker's uncertainty of the fatality of the accident is justified as they now see the boy escaping and running away with vivid vitality and zest. In this way, the event described in "[die?]" could have been anything other than an accident; probably a film shooting set as could be deduced from "It was like something from a film: Blowup or the Red Desert," the last sentence of "[die?]." This possibility is in fact intensified by the seemingly unimportant phrase: "Blow-up" which ends the node. Although the statement is distanced from the main body of the node, it nonetheless acts as a signature clarifying and stating that the source of the event of the accident is the film "Blow up." Either as a film or a filmic experience, the reader's knowledge about the narrative in "[die?]" is not the same with the meaning deducible from "[Die]."

Another typical example of multivalence and multivocality occurring in *afternoon* as a result of repetition relates to Wert's lunchtime question "How would you feel if I slept with your ex-wife" which occurs in both "[Werther4]" and "[ask]." The question appears across about four paths and conjures different meanings along the paths. In one situation, Wert's asking Peter the question is informed by the need to engage in banters as a form of camaraderie. In another situation, the question is intended to divert the troubled mind of Peter from the possibility of his ex-wife and son being the victims of the accident he (Peter) witnesses afar off on his way to the office earlier in the morning. At yet another time, seeing through the mind of Nausicaa, readers understand that Wert asks the question simply because of his jealousy over the affair between Peter and Nausicaa. However, readers' contact with the question after having accessed "[Lolly's monologue]," indicates that the question is neither a joke nor a result of jealousy. Rather, Wert seems to be verifying the extent to which Peter is ignorant of him having an affair with Lisa, Peter's ex-wife. The shock

of Peter's realizing that the question is everything other than a joke when he later sees Lisa with Wert is eventually causes Peter to lose control of his vehicle, thereby causing the accident in which Lisa probably loses her life.

Just like the question, the lunchtime is equally multivalent in nature. At one time, readers see the lunchtime as the relaxed atmosphere where Peter, Wert, Nausicaa, and Mrs. Porter are talking during break time. At some other time, it comes as the setting of the relaxed interview Wert is conduct for Peter before employing him. Yet again, it features as an attempt by Wert to impress the popular and accomplished writer and poet, Peter to pick up a marketing job with him in the belief that Peter's wealth of experience will go a long way in marketing "WUNDERWRITER".

Although repetition is most likely to inform multivalence, it is however, important to note that multivalence is not arrived at only through repetition in *afternoon.* The multiple fictive possibilities working as the system of the text open up its narrative along several paths and give room for the re-cycling of passages. In this vein, a statement credited to a particular character could be authored by a totally different character along another narrative path. Such is the case with the lexia "[salt washed]" which along the path "[I call] → [I call Lolly] → [I know] → [projection]→ [white duck] → [naked] → [storm tossed]→ [obligations] → [we read] → [salt washed]" features as a part of the conversation between Lolly and Peter during the therapy session she holds with him.

When Peter finally decides to call Lolly after his futile search for both Lisa and Andy, readers see him with Lolly in "[I know]":

> .... I tell her I need to see her.
> <Socially?> she asks, bemused.
> <Professionally – I say – I'm not doing very well at all>
> <I'm sorry – she says – I'm sure you know that I don't see men as primary patients. ...>
> <It's about Nausicaa> I lie.
> <You mean Lisa, don't you?>
> <I'm afraid they have been hurt – I say – I'm afraid they died.>

Later on, in "[obligations]," we see Lolly commenting on the uncooperative attitude of Peter which may not help for proper therapy thus: "<Is this how you think you should speak?> she asks me, <With a therapist?>." In his bid to get help for his anxiety, Peter desperately asks Lolly in "[we read]": "How do I speak authentically?" while Lolly

181

immediately replies that "<That's the whole problem, isn't it? Or else you would have called by now, a real man would have called by now>." Here, Lolly deliberately teases Peter in order to make him display his true personality, devoid of every form of pretention. Peter conceives Lolly's answer as a provocation. While reacting to the provocation in "[salt wash]," he immediately realizes that Lolly has achieved her goal as he has reacted uncontrollably but authentically:

<Fuck this! – I say – I don't need this...>
I stop this short. It is what she wishes me to do.
<Look – she says – I'm sorry. That was wrong. You have to understand I am not used to this, to dealing with men...>

Encountering "[salt washed]" along the path "[dialectic] → [ex-wife] → [gift of hearing]→ [salt washed]" gives a different discourse setting. Within this reading path, the text of "[salt washed]" occurs in the conversation between Lolly and Michael Joyce, the omniscient narrator in the text. In "[dialectic]," Lolly who has been established in the text as a feminist is irritated by the way Michael Joyce, the omniscient narrator cum writer of the text, presents women in the text:

<Ha! – she scoffs –
This whole electronic circus, this literary pin-ball machine, is nothing less than wish fulfilment and fantasies of domination... it's just the foolish obsession with writing as if you were a woman... No, the whole thing stinks, its all a fraud.... All of it typical, control-oriented male fantasy.

With Michael Joyce commenting on the personality of Lisa in "[ex-wife]," Lolly's irritation becomes intensified. It is the level of her irritation that informs the conversation between the two in "[gift of hearing]":

<.... For all your supposed variations, you've written nothing but the same old patterns: the wooden wife, the receptive whore, the all-accepting female mind

<Even Wert's a strawman... no, worse! ... a ventriloquist's dummy for your ugliest misogynistic notions.

<No. No, you have no right to such a term, not even in passing, not even as part of some supposed narrativistic point of view... I mean,

> what could you possibly know of women's friendship, of women's fears, of women's minds? ...>

Lolly's statement, especially the conclusion that Michael Joyce does not know anything about women's friendship, fears, and minds, is a sort of indictment of incompetence in Michael Joyce's view. Michael's need to react to Lolly's challenge culminates the text of "[salt washed]." It is at this point that Lolly's session with Peter converges with Michael Joyce and Lolly's discussion of the discourse of *afternoon*. In this sense, "[salt washed]" acquires the status of a multivalent passage with its meaning shifting along the reader's traversal paths.

The many instances of multivalence and multivocality in *afternoon*, no doubt, make the text a masterpiece. The logic of permutation and recombination which Joyce sets in motion in the text together with the essence of hypertextuality enables a super-structure for the narrative such that nodes are visited and re-visited along different paths to effect different shades of meaning. In this way, the text becomes a typical self-erasing and world-erasing postmodernist text. In another dimension, multivalence projects *afternoon* as a rhizome fulfilling the postmodernist textual agenda of Deleuze and Guattari:

> Through its growth in all directions, hypertext implements one of the favorite notions of postmodernism, the conceptual structure that Deleuze and Guattari call a "rhizome." In a rhizomatic organization, in opposition to the hierarchical tree structures of rhetorical argumentation, the imagination is not constrained by the need to prove a point or to progress toward a goal, and the writer never needs to sacrifice those bursts of inspiration that cannot be integrated into a linear argument (Ryan, 2001: 7-8).

Thus, while multivalence displays the creativity at the centre of hypertextuality in the text; it does not fail to echo and live out the multivocality inherent in postmodernist desire to project that modernist linear representation of knowledge and thought is rather artificial.

5.3 Self-reflexivity

Modernist fictions are preoccupied with the objective representation of truth and knowledge. This accentuation of modernist project is nothing other than deceit and the crisis of representation to postmodern theorists. In reaction, postmodernist fiction,

rather than make the issue of representation its focus, constructs a highly self-reflexive trajectory which subsequently "create[s] a kind of writing, a kind of discourse, a kind of reality … whose shape… [is] an interrogation, an endless interrogation of what it is doing while doing it, an endless denunciation of its own fraudulence, of what IT really is: an illusion, a fiction…" (Federman, 1981b: 300).

This postmodernist project, this activity that is conscious of its consciousness, naturally manifests in postmodernist fiction's "focus on its own context of enunciation" in order to "foreground the way we talk and write within certain social, historical, and institutional … frameworks" (Hutcheon, 1988: 184). In another sense, this implies that postmodernist fiction preoccupies "itself with itself, with literature, with the crisis of literature, the crisis of language, the crisis of expression, of communication, the crisis of knowledge…" (Federman, 1981b: 295).

Self-reflexivity features in various ways in the hyperfiction texts under study. This not only appears as a stylistic device in the texts, but also defines the text as products of a postmodernist agenda. In *of day,* for example, the narrator indicates that the stories told about each of the objects collected are nothing other than imagined histories. This institutionalizes the text outside the principles of realism which sponsors make-believe worlds in modernist fiction. The text thus defines from the outset that it is not the representation of the world of reality, truth, or beauty; rather, it is the representation of a consciousness that resides in the world of an Other, the fragmented self.

In *afternoon*, however, there are many instances where the text engages in self-reflexivity especially with regards to its fictionalization and the essence of its story. As the following passages from the text exemplify, self-reflexivity is employed as a way of investigating the nature of the fiction and its hypertextual nature, as well as the story of the story: the story behind the story:

> I'm not sure I have a story. And, if I do, I'm not sure that everything isn't my story, or that, whatever is my story, is anything more than the pieces of others' stories – **"[me*]"**

> There isn't any story here. It's as Tolstoy said, the genuine drama occurs on the upward or downward slopes, never at the apex – **"[texture]"**

184

It is like music, when you write like this, all the interconnected notes, the counterpoint – **"[speak memory]"**

It's understandable, I suppose, to think of this all as some sort of techno-literary game, a cryptogram, or garden of the forking etc., the minotaur at its end – **"[V Woolf]"**

I have in mind a non-sentient, transitory creature, nothing more than memory embodied, yet infinitely sadder than handwriting, photograph, or the preserved sound of another's voice – **"[relic]"**

These are not versions, but the story itself in long lines. Otherwise, however, the center is all …. I've discovered more there too, and the real interaction, if that is possible, is in pursuit of texture – **"[second guessing]"**

Ha! – she scoffs – you indict yourself with much more than this sad pun, which, characteristically, you insist upon having recognized even as you claim to deny it. This whole electronic circus, this literary pin-ball machine, is nothing less than wish fulfillment and fantasies of domination… it's not just foolish obsession with writing as if you were a woman (…), not just the episodes upon episodes of erotic confusion and quasi-earthmotherish psychobabble (even this!)…. No, the whole thing stinks, it's all a fraud: the illusion of choice wherein you control the options, the socalled yielding textures of words… all of it typical, control-oriented male fantasy…! – **"[dialectic]"**

We kept talking about anchoring devices. It was a foundation-sponsored conference on interactivity, in this case video disk soap operas. .... At any rate these film semioticians or structuralists or whatever kept talking about anchoring devices. It began to dawn on me that they meant things like the titles in silent films (or these screens). ... **"[anchoring devices]"**

These passages provide self-reflexive statements on the nature of *afternoon* as both a work of fiction and a hypertext. Equally, the passages define the theme on which the text builds and functions.

Apart from these instances of the narrative cycling on the circumstance and definition of its fictionalization, there are other situations where the self-reflexive references relate to readers. In "[The Oaks]", for example, there is the statement "If the reader will forgive the paraphrase of a master…" which directly addresses the reader. Other reader-conscious passages in the text indicate readers' likely experience with the reading processes in the text. In such instance, the second person "you" is employed in referring to the reader:

.... People seem less and less apt – less able – to remember.

That's not true, I swear. It is simply that there is more now to know, all these indices pointing somewhere, and the thing becomes a web. You feel the vibration as something snags itself and then crawls, tortuously, expectantly out to the margins – **"[speak memory]"**

It is, honestly, very good. Yet you see how what I say becomes infused by irony. The general atmosphere is helium, every voice is somewhat higher, clearer, oddly comic – **"[graces]"**

It is very difficult to use the word, rude, seriously, don't you think? The same is true for clever. The notion of cleverness is a class distinction, much like draperies – **"[you're welcome]"**

I'm sorry (I shouldn't keep saying I'm sorry I know – even Lolly told me that the one time I saw her – and I shouldn't say that either, not "even Lolly," she's really quite good at what she does, you'll see, the others depend on her…), but I am sorry that I'll have to end this now.

I do know what you feel. You make some choices, you begin to see a pattern emerging, you want to give yourself to believing despite the machine. You think you've found something. (It's a beautiful image, really…) (although I'm being too literal I suppose, it's all images, isn't it?) That's why I'm sorry I have to end it for you so soon – **"[calm]"**

In some other instances, readers encounter some characters in the work speaking to the author and the reader alike. The passages below are specific illustrations:

I insist I am happy. We are not yet divorced and even so I have my own name again. …. Why then do I have to define myself? Why then must I play in a half-tragic, half-comedy mystery? Why should I portray myself as part of a culture which excludes me, whether the Joffrey Ballet or answering machines and bimmies?
You know who my hero is? – **"[graces]"**

Even Wert's strawman… no, worse! … a ventriloquist's dummy for your ugliest misogynistic notions.
No. No, you have no right to such a term, not even in passing, not even as part of some supposed narrativistic point of view… I mean, what could you possibly know of women's friendship, of women's fears, of women's minds?
No, no, no… – **"[gift of hearing]"**

While Federman (1981a: 12) postulates the materials of experimental and postmodernist fiction,he indicates that a revolution is around the corner of the 21st Century whereby a literary text, "[w]hile pretending to be telling the story of his life,

or the story of any life, the fiction writer can at the same time tell the story of the story he is telling, the story of the language he is manipulating, the story of the methods he is using, the story of the pencil or the typewriter he is using to write his story…”. This self-consciousness as exemplified in *afternoon*, no doubt, implies that the new turn in the nature of fiction is here now with us. Not that alone, the self-reflexive nature of *afternoon* provides readers and critics with the thematics of the revolutionary text and thereby reveals the semantic foundation on which to lay every item to be encountered within the text.

5.4   Playfulness

Postmodernist rejection of literature as the vehicle for knowledge accomplishes a playful attitude in postmodernist literary works. Woods (1999:53) explains that “The increasing anxiety about the effects of rationalism and the subjection of citizens to the ideological dominance of the state led to a whole series of novels which sought to contest entrapment by celebrating unpatterned, resistant reactions to history, systems and codes.” In view of this rejection of the dominance of grand narratives, Woods (1999:57) argues that in postmodernist fiction, “Conventional notions of reality are challenged by such devices as exaggerated structural patterning, infinite textual regression, literary parodies, temporal and spatial dislocations and blurred boundaries.” Invariably, postmodernist works, many a time, display a play with language and its rules for its own sake rather than for moralistic or realistic purposes. Equally, postmodernist fiction can play with formal devices and fictional conventions or pursue illogicalities for no intelligible reasons. Other ways in which a playful attitude can feature in a text includes phonetic and orthographic manipulations, dismemberment of words, meandering sentences, and fragmentation of language, amongst others.

In configuring hyperfiction texts as game, Ryan (2001: 182) relies on the four categories of game identified by Caillois: *Agon, Alea, Mimicry,* and *Ilinx*. *Agon*, games based on competition, manifests in hyperfiction texts where readers approach the text as a computer game, construe the text as a maze with secret paths that must be discovered, or regard the text as a puzzle that must be solved. In such circumstances, the goal of readers “is to navigate the system with a purpose, thus escaping the tyranny of the labyrinth master, and the means to this goal is the reconstitution of the underlying map of the network” (Ryan, 2001: 182). A text like *afternoon* works in a number of ways as “agon.” This is because readers, many a time, find themselves

187

struggling to discover the very heart of the text. At some other times, readers are motivated by the desire discover and neatly piece together, the dismembered and fragmented parts of the text. For *of day*, its shape as "agon" is even more conspicuous because readers must be ready to form alliance with Sophie, the main character, in order to compete against the text for the manifestation and restoration of Sophie's dream experiences. Just as with every game of competition, readers of *of day* know if they have successfully competed when they are "rewarded" with the translation to the night map.

Alea refers to a game of chance and may manifest in hyperfiction texts when the reader continues to blind click in order to keep the fictive machine on. *Mimicry* defines games of imitation and make-believe and is evident in the immersive effects simulations have on readers/users. In the hyperfiction texts under study, mimicry does not really occur except in that situation in *of day* where readers use the interface to arrange labels into the dream cabinet. It is, however, *Ilinx* in Ryan's (2001: 186) view that typically "expresses the aesthetics, sensibility, and conception of language of the postmodern age" in hyperfiction texts because it is founded on free play and is characterised by all those features that conveniently come under what Bakhtin calls the "carnivalesque":

> chaotic structures, creative anarchy, parody, absurdity, heteroglossia, word invention, subversion of conventional meanings (*à la* Humpty Dumpty), figural displacements, puns, disruption of syntax, *melange des genre*, misquotation, masquerade, the transgression of ontological boundaries (pictures coming to life, characters interacting with their author), the treatment of identity as a plural, changeable image – in short, the destabilization of all structures, including those created by the text itself

A cautious look through a text like *afternoon* indicates that several features connote playful attitudes that establish the text as "ilinx." Structural and semantic fragmentation, dismemberment of text, self-reflexivity, disruption of syntax, and multivalence amongst many others are some of the features which define *afternoon* as "ilinx." The text's concealment of words-that-yield demands a playful attitude from any reader that aims at discovering the yielding words and is reminiscent of both "agon" and "alea." This is because the reader will have to pick and click on each word in the node for the revelation of yielding words. In such a circumstance, the reader

becomes a player whose main goal is not the pursuit of the meaning of the text but to conquer the text at all costs.

The manipulation of the language system of the text through the employment of repetitions, cycles, and re-cycle motifs also feature as the author's intention to chart a playful attitude in the text. The incorporation of questions, computing language, bricolages, and non-narrative materials cutting across diverse fields also portrays a playful attitude rather than a serious one. Other forms of playfulness can be noted in narrative digressions, sarcasm, authorial intrusions and commentorial discourses. The last sentence in "[Pysche]" "You go directly to jail and do not pass Go" is, for example, sarcastic of monopoly game, revealing the playfulness at the heart of the text.

Other forms of playfulness in *afternoon* manifest in the areas of phonetic and orthographic games. Examples of these are can be found in many of the links and their path names. The only link available from "[1]" is "[Art Worlds]" and it has "and drew" as its path name while "Andrew's" is the Guard Field. In this way, the author playfully makes a connection between the name "Andrew" and the world of arts. From "[ax player]" there are two available links: "[Desmond]" and "[Thisman]." The two link destinations have their titles as their path names while "Desmond Leary" and "Thisman Larry" occur as their Guard Fields, respectively. The fact that the text of nodes in the reading path have centred on Desmond Leary, the new husband of Lisa and Andrew, the little son of both Peter and Lisa, will demonstrate that the author is here playing a phonetic and orthographic game with the developing nature of childhood phonetics as "Thisman Larry" mimics a child's pronunciation of "Desmond Larry". Other examples include links in "[Manichean]" – "[bright anger]" (available link), "bright angel" (path name) – and "[twenty questions]" – "[inner activity]" (available link), "interactivity" (path name).

In *of day*, a playful attitude is revealed in the way readers are expected to roll the mouse over the cold surface of the map in order to discover available node links and floating words. The text further expands the repertoire of literature with alternation of game play with novelistic components through the employment of still and motion pictures, animations, music, visual arts, and graphics, amongst others. Another way in which *of day* assumes a playful attitude is evident in each of the pages of the handmade note located in "[peruse]." Plates 5.22 and 5.23 below are twoexamples from the note that show how the pages play on the Intelligent Quotient and the perceptual ability of readers, especially as it relates to deciphering the ambiguity

inherent in the drawings/pictures/writing on the pages.These pages in the handmade note depictpostmodernist agenda in that Heyward makes the contents of the pages to

Plate 5.22. One of the pages of the handmade note depicting playfulness
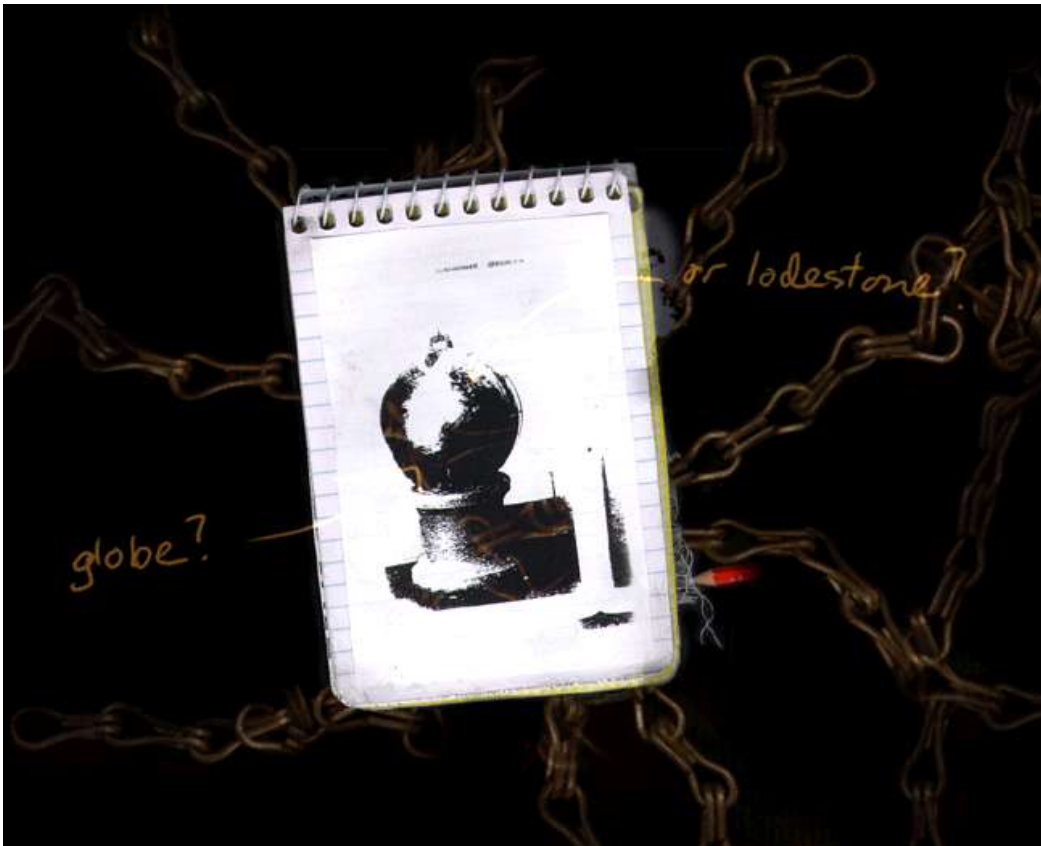
Plate 5.23. One of the pages of the handmade note exhibiting a type of playfulness that recalls Gestalt psychologists' figure/ground paradoxes

recall "the figure/ground paradoxes of the *Gestalt* psychologists: looked at one way, the picture seems to represent (say) a goblet, looked at another wayit represents two faces" (McHale, 1987: 12). Intensifying the playful attitude of the texts of the pages are the floating texts which represent the author's sarcastic comments and flow out of the author's deliberate attempt to play on the cognition of the reader. The calligraphicambiguity in Plate 5.22 suggests that by readers placing objects' labels into the dream cabinet, a play is also being evented and played. As various techniques depict playfulness in these hyperfiction texts, one cannot but come to terms with Ryan's (2001: 16) submission that "the aesthetics of interactivity presents the text as a game, language as a plaything, and the reader as the player."

5.5   De[con]struction of linear time

Postmodernist rejection of metanarratives is equally evident in the manner in which clock or linear time is handled in postmodernist literary works. Postmodernist attack on linear time is not totally unexpected since linear time is one major modern construct for measuring and perceiving history, progress, and reason. The attack is thus to challenge, twist, and thwart modern concept of time while introducing imaginary

191

and local concepts. It is in this line of reasoning that the reader of *afternoon* encounters Peter in "[no]" saying: "In this time and season the day has two long hours." The concept of time as held in the text is also reiterated in "[The Garden]" which is a quotation from Borges: "In contrast to Newton and Schopenhauer, your ancestor did not believe in a uniform, absolute time. He believed in an infinite series of times, in a growing, dizzying net of divergent, convergent, and parallel times." Hence, the text rejects the absolute and totalizing nature of modern construct of time.

In *of day*, incursions are equally made into linear time as time is divided into the two broad dichotomies of day and night. Although Sophie performs several tasks and visits a number of places during the day, there are no temporal markings to indicate whether the activities and the visits take place in a day or in several days. This same situation also applies to Sophie's night. With the restoration of Sophie's dream life which manifests in the eight lexias of the night map, nothing, however, informs to the reader that the dreams are experienced in just one night or over a period of night-times.

As the selected texts demonstrate, the deconstruction of clock time is concomitant deconstruction of history. Since the concept of plot is crucial for the chronological order of history, we find many postmodernist literary works attacking tradition from this perspective. From this, it is understandable that the nonlinear structure at work in the discourse of *afternoon* is not just a rupture of the traditional concept of plot but a consequential rejection of the linear order for the presentation of both time and history. Really, the purpose of undermining and demolishing the logical sequence of events and stable chronology in postmodernist fictionis to eliminate, distort, and deform linearity as well as temporality and history (cf. Federman, 1981b: 310). Thus, the fact that readers can institute preferred reading orders on the text of *afternoon* means that the text can be ordered anyhow since there is no recognized or stable chronology. This is thus a demonstration of the fact that the metanarratives of temporal/chronological historical narrative order are subverted in the text.

The consequence of the rejection of stable chronology in fiction, as Federman (1981b: 310) explains, is that "… the characters are no longer centered in a network of precise relations with one another, in space and in time, or within a definite sequence of historical or social events. Consequently, the characters … are usually set in motion, set in a state of constant wandering ...liberated from what was determining them." This, in essence, explains the divergent and disorienting narrative voices in *afternoon*.

Since the text has blurred the boundaries between the past and the present in its rejection of linearity and chronology, it therefore becomes difficult to differentiate reality from dreams, troubled memories, flashbacks, and imagination. With no chronology, linearity, and temporal markings, the reader is set within unguided and unmarked paths which make the text a self-erasing narrative that "[floats] free of any temporal moorings and [introduces] inconsistencies into the narrative sequence" (McHale, 1987: 109) in the typical nature of postmodernist fictions. As a result, the characters in the text, their marriages and affairs, the accident and the therapy as well as the lunchtime and the office hours could all belong to the realms of dreams and imaginations.

The deconstruction of time and history are further noticeable in the constant merge of the voice of Michael Joyce, the omniscient narrator with the thoughts and voices of Peter, Lisa, Lolly, and Nausicaa as reinforced by the continual and unexpected changes in settings. For example, the conversation between Peter and Lolly at one time translates into a conversation between Michael Joyce and Lolly in another setting. In one setting, one sees Peter and Wert in the place where they have both lunched for three years whereas, the same lunchtime, in another setting, occurs in that instance where Wert is interviewing Peter for a job in his company. In this place, Peter is married to Lisa and, as a dutiful husband, he is eager to call his wife and inform her that he has got the job. This context, no doubt, stands in contradiction to that setting where one hears Peter telling his story and regretting his lack of commitment and care to Lisa while their marriage lasted. In spite of Peter's frenetic search for both Lisa and Andrew on the ground that they are the victims of the accident he witnesses earlier in the morning, readers encounter the duo several times across the text. The existence of these mutually-exclusive lines of narrative equally defines *afternoon* as a self-erasing narrative which violate linear sequentiality and history constructs.

All the narrative turns are possible in a chronology-dependent fiction where sequence is fundamental. The contradictory turns of the narrative paths challenge the modern construct of linear and clock time and underplay the importance of history in very significant ways. With the triumph over temporal and chronological significations, the reader is left at the mercy of the text for the retraction of the story. Of course, in a situation where chronology is rejected, settings are not clearly marked, and narrative strands are guided by choice, chance and coincidence, it becomes very

obvious that *afternoon*, as a typical postmodernist fiction, reiterates Hutcheon' (1988: 110) conclusion that"to re-write or to re-present the past in fiction and in history is, in both cases, to open it up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological".

In *of day*, there is the obvious blurring of the boundaries between the past and the present. In lexia "[before]", one hears Sophie saying "I have lived a typical sort of life before any of these happened." Here references are made to the far past and the immediate past. That being the case, it implies that Sophie's resolutions, wandering, and salvation tasks encountered in the lexias succeeding "[before]" all transpired in the "day" of the past. Thus, the text relocates the reader into the past to determine the past, howbeit in the present. This postmodernist perspective to the representation of time and history conjure a great deal of temporal complexity in the text because the reader in the present is relocated into the past to continuously change and re-write history, thereby breaking down the boundaries separating the past from the present.

As the reader participates in the collection, description, and arrangement of objects in order to help save Sophie's past in the present, it becomes obvious that delineating and differentiating between what happened in the past, what is currently happening, and what will happen in future is highly problematized in the text. In this regard, neither the day nor the night of the text can adequately be captured in terms of the usual and traditional notions of past or present experiences.

5.6   Unveiling the postmodern subject

One postmodernist theoretical issue that closely ties with the problematizing of time is that of the postmodern subject. In modern theory, subjectivity is that space occupied by the 'I' and understood as a unique, stable, rational, coherent, and unified identity and selfhood. Postmodernism, however, "pits *reasons* in the plural – fragmented and incommensurable – against the universality of modernism and the longstanding conception of the human self as a subject with a single unified reason" (Woods, 1999:9). Hutcheon (1988:11) explains that the perceiving subject in the postmodern "is no longerassumed to a coherent, meaning-generating entity." This is why one repeatedly finds the postmodern subject, the fragmented self, operating as the standard of rationality, authenticating reason and all knowledge, and fragmenting time into a series of perpetual presents.

The subversion of the unified self with integrated consciousness is observable in *of day*. The fragmented self not only sets out to perform certain tasks but insists on the reader's simultaneous and cooperative performance of the tasks. As a result, that unique space normally occupied by the rational and autonomous modern 'I' is invaded by the 'you' and/or 's/he' implied for the reader by the author of the text. Hence, no longer can the activities performed in the text be describedexclusively in terms of Sophie's 'I'. This situation generates the conclusion that the text achieves that postmodernist goal of suspending all boundaries existing among hierarchical binaries such as "Self" and "Other". As modern binary opposition and exclusion terms are subverted, the notion of a unified, unique, rational, autonomous and self-sufficient self is conquered. The 'I' of Sophie and the 'I' of the reader having merged for the performance of Sophie's salvation tasks, any reference to the activities Sophie performs must therefore be made with this recognition.

Hutcheon (1988:189) argues that in "historiographic metafictions," that is, postmodernist fiction, "all the various critically sanctioned modes of talking about subjectivity (character, narrator, writer, textual voice) fail to offer any stable anchor." It is therefore in this connection that one understands the continual shift and the instability of narrative voices in *afternoon* as the subversion of subjectivity. We may examine the following reading thread as an example: "[Manichean] → [Orwell] → [De Beauvoir] → [Medusa] → [Psyche] → [K] → [Recursion] → [Not exactly] → [What's datacom? I ask] → [Negative Values] → [Islands] → [Lovers] → [touching myself] → [monsters] → [self-destruction] → [The Good Soldier] → [dream pools] → [star wars]." In this reading path, the reader is continually disoriented because of the inability to clearly identify who is speaking at a particular point in time and because of the unexpected shift in conversation lines among the characters.

Only a previous experience in reading the text can help readers to understand that the "I" in "[Manichean]" refers to Peter who is ruminating over Nausicaa and her schedule of duty in the office. Following this line of thought, it becomes highly disturbing for the reader to find the lexia closing with the statement: "<Everything depends on independence.> he said" since the reader has been dealing directly with Peter rather than seeing him through the eye of a third person narrator. The statement directly follows Peter's mental querying of Wert:

.... There was no way I could have known that she too was with
Validation. Wert kept our names from each other. He masked the names
from all hard copy, and everything electronic was pseudonymous.
<Everything depends on independence.> he said.

Readers may be constrained to believe that Peter is only directly reporting a statement
made by Wert at the time when he (Peter) is coming on the job as a way of assuring
him (Peter) of his independence and privacy on the job. However, because readers will
later unexpectedly come across Micheal Joyce along the thread, they may equally
interpret the statement as Micheal Joyce's third person narration of either what Wert
says or what Peter concludes as Wert's reason for keeping their names from each
other.

As readers move on into "[Orwell]," the disorientation generated by the
preceding lexia becomes more complex because they cannot really clearly identify
whether the lexia is Nausicaa's thought about Peter or Micheal Joyce's continued
narration on Peter: "He was an advertising man's dream. He spoke such things without
pretence or calculation, and in many ways was the true naïf." Definitely, this statement
cannot be credited to Peter who is the subject of the third person. Complications
arising from the subversion of subjectivity continue throughout this narrative thread.
Since readers continue to hear Peter talking in the first person, they cannot really
pinpoint who is narrating Nausicaa's speech; whether it is Peter who happens to be
directly addressing the reader or whether it is the other narrator who informs the reader
about the competence and sincerity of Peter as an advertising agent.

Between "[Psyche]" and "[What's datacom? I ask.]", readers soon realize that
the sudden change in the conversers from Peter and Nausicaa into Peter and Wert is a
launch into the past by means of conversational flashback. Immediately readers move
on to "[Negative Values]," they come to realize that the suspended disorientation again
resumes:

Poor Peter, he believed too much really to ever understand. It was
as if he were always in someone else's story and yet so certain it was
about him that he anguished for all the characters.
Surely you know men like that.
I remember when I told him Wert was Jewish.
<He told me he was a Lutheran> Peter said.
<He tells everyone something> I said. <You especially need to
know what's real>
With men like that you need to begin by explaining mystery.

Since Peter could not be reporting his statement as seen in this passage, then readers become aware that there is a further change in the conversational setting. In this vein, it would be totally wrong for readers to interpret the "I" in this new lexia in recourse to the "I" in the preceding lexias. The question of who the new first person speaker is and who the speaker is addressing must then be unravelled. The fact that the first paragraph mentions that Peter is always in anguish for all the characters indicates that the speaker is most probably Michael Joyce, the author of the narrative. As the conversation continues in the other lexias, readers know precisely that the other converser is a woman because of her confessed involvement with both Wert and Peter. With the lady indicating in "[Lovers]" that Wert is a younger lover and Peter a lover of her age, readers can use the information gathered from previously reading sessions to judge that the lady speaker is Nausicaa. Recognizing Nausicaa as the other converser only minimizes the confusion in subjectivity. This is because Michael Joyce's speech and that of Nausicaa are not clearly demarcated. The reader can only interpret a sequence of statements as belonging exclusively to Nausicaa when she is talking about her affairs with Peter and Wert.

Because it is a fragmented self, the postmodern subject is usually not defined by coherence, stability, and progressional connections, amongst other determinants. For this cause, Pegrum (1996: para.16) submits that "with no narrative or progressional connection, … postmodern perception is analogous to that of a schizophrenic who lives in an intense continual present severed from the past and the future, with no projects and no sense of identity." Pegrum (1996: para.16) explains further that the postmodern subject's "fragmented mode of perception disallows the formation of an overall picture, and avoids historical considerations or the development of teleologies, focused as it is entirely on here and now." By this, one understands that Peter manifests in *afternoon*, as a typical schizoid hero. His inability to properly segment and delineate his narratives in order to mark real and ongoing present experiences from dreams, memories, and imaginations shows that he is operating at the level of the historical grammatics of the schizophrenic. This explains the contradictory turns along many of the reading paths and why in spite of his conviction in "[Die]" that his son and ex-wife are the victims of the accident he witnesses on his way to the office earlier in the morning and is thus plunged into a frenetic search of them in order to confirm or disprove his fear, he is later on in "[white afternoon]" found guilty by the investigator

197

of causing the accident that killed the duo. This sort of twisty and contradictory turns can only be properly accounted for by the schizophrenic's perception and measurement of time and history.

Similarly, Sophie, in *of day*, exists within the tradition of the schizophrenic as there is the absence of details to indicate who she really is. Because she is a schizoid hero, progress in the presentation of the text does not imply progress in her characterization since the schizoid hero has no sense of identity. This further accounts for why there are no particular indications of specific places except common places such as street, café, river, and market. As such, everything is happening either somewhere or nowhere.

Of a very great importance to the beingness of the schizoid hero is the issue of wandering both physically or mentally. As a matter of fact, the reader of *afternoon* gets to know Peter and the other characters in the text through Peter's physical and mental wanderings rather than through proper exposition and characterization. It is practically through the wanderings that the reader is able to connect and piece the events of the text together for sequential relationships and semantic placement, however provisional. The wanderings of Sophie through the day in *of day*, will translate in her wanderings in the night. Since the schizoid hero has no grand project, one understands that the wanderings are representative of a postmodernist hero's pursuit. As the schizoid hero cannot really perceive the differences in time, one understands why the narratives of the two selected texts could all at the same time belong to the realms of real happenings, dreams, hallucinations, disturbed memories, and distorted minds. Invariably, the activities of both Sophie and Peter in the selected texts exist as either dreamy wanderings or wandering dreams.

Federman (1981b: 310) submits that one way through which postmodern texts challenge and undermine modern meta-theories of reality, truth and rationalism is "by a deliberate destruction of the wellmade character …, which means the end of the hero as such, or at least a movement towards a non-heroic condition." In the same vein, Pegrum (1996: para.26) will argue that "the unitary history of the victors is gradually being eroded by a plurality of emancipatory histories in which the margins are revindicated." These submissions tally with the presentation and representation of Peter in *afternoon*. The reader meets Peter in the local and de-centred margin where his major concern is to ascertain the outcome of an accident. Since the postmodernist subject does not belong to the centre where the modern hero-victor goes about,

conquering and vanquishing the Other, Peter, with no nation to conquer, simply goes about the local project of finding out whether the accident indeed occurs and, if it does, whether the victims are his son and ex-wife and whether they are dead or not.

In several ways, *of day* also presents the reader with a movement towards a non-heroic condition and the margin. The fact that the narrative is mainly about Sophie, a woman, prepares the reader for an emancipatory translation into the space of the margin and into the story of the Other. Sophie's anxiety with her inability to dream, her resolution to wander about in order to gather unusual objects, and her decision to conjure histories up for the objects are of no moral or rational effects to the modern constructs of the hero and heroic deeds. This, indeed, construes the text as a postmodernist text.

5.7   On closure

From the Aristotelian terms that a narrative is made up of the aggregates of 'beginning', 'middle', and 'ending', there is an indication that narratives are naturally about movements. Narratives are born out of and sustained by this anticipation, this movement towards the next event and on to the conclusion. This is why Brooks (cited in Douglas, 1994:161) submits that "the telling" in any narrative "is always *in terms* of the impending end." At that point where the reader recognizes that movement has reached its ultimate and anticipated expectations have either been affirmed or disproved, a narrative is said to have achieved closure. In this regard, Smith (1987:34) notes that "absence of further continuation [is] the most probable event" when closure has been achieved. Smith (1987: 34) puts it that closure is "the sense of stable conclusiveness, finality, or 'clinch'" which can be perceived either spatially or temporally.

As it has earlier been indicated, the employment of digital technological facilities for the creation of hyperfiction texts pushes narratives beyond the confines and conventions of print technology thereby driving many traditional narrative concepts to the limits and demanding, instead, the re[de]finition of such concepts. In many ways, *afternoon* and *of day* render problematic the traditional definition of closure as a sense of stable finality. The two texts ratherdemonstrate that the traditional attitude to the concept of closure considers only print narratives and they (the texts) therefore call for the expansion of the concept in order for the term to accommodate the narrative reality of hyperfiction texts.

199

In a traditional print text, readers are usually supplied with both ending and closure. For this singular reason, readers anticipate towards the physical end of the text on the ground that such a physical end ensures that reading can no longer proceed; hence no further turn is expected or anticipated in the narrative. The physical ending thus suggests a suspension of all expectations and an arrival at the conclusion of all events. Even in an experimental print narrative, the reader knows that the physical end of the text brings an end to further expectations in narrative turns. All that is required of readers is to adjust their inferences about the events of the narrative to tally with the physical end. However, in an experimental hyperfiction text like *afternoon* where malleability and multiplicity define the structure of the narrative discourse, readers face the challenge of re-construing and reconsidering the interpretation of that integral relationship that once existed between a physical end and the sense of closure most especially because the intangible text has no recognisable fixed centre, margin, or end.

Since *afternoon* will not, in the characteristic nature of traditional works, provide a singular determinate meaning and ending, it (the text) becomes a "work in motion" with "a field of possibilities...a configuration of possible events, a complete dynamism of structure...and a corresponding evolution of intellectual authority to personal decision, choice, and social context" (Umberto Eco, cited in Douglas, 1994:183). In this connection, the text leaves sequence, arrangement, and the decision to provide an end and a closure basically to the reader.

With readers ascribed the responsibility of constructing a story in a hypertext fiction like *afternoon*, Walker (1999:112), citing Wolfang Iser, submits that what is left of reader is "to oscillate to a greater or lesser degree between the building and the breaking of illusions. In a process of trial and error...organize and reorganize the various data offered... by the text. These are the given factors, the fixed point on which we base our 'interpretation,' trying to fit them together." In describing the experience of closure in *afternoon*, Umberto Eco's description of what he terms "open works" appears highly appropriate:

> Multi-value logics are now gaining currency, and these are quite capable of incorporating *indeterminacy* as a valid stepping-stone in the cognitive process. In this general intellectual atmosphere, the poetics of the open work is peculiarly relevant: it posits the work of art stripped of necessary and foreseeable conclusions, works which the performer's freedom functions as part of the discontinuity....Every performance *explains* the composition but does not *exhaust* it. Every performance makes the work

an actuality, but is itself only complementary to all possible other performances of the work. In short, we can say that every performance offers us a complete and satisfying version of the work, but at the same time makes it incomplete for us, because it cannot simultaneously give all the other artistic solutions which the work may admit (Umberto Eco, cited in Douglas, 1994:183)

Critical juxtaposition of this submission with the indeterminate malleable multiplicity obtainable in *afternoon* explains why Harpold (1994:192-3) concludes that in the text, "it is possible only to arrive at a *contingent* conclusion. Any ending will be marked by the punctuality of interruption. (Thus the purest paradigm of a hypertext ending: you can just stop reading, decide that you've had enough, get up from the computer, and walk away.) But you cannot come to a definitive ending...."

Thus, closure in *afternoon* does not rest on the author's preconceived or singular sense of ending. Since the text provides several points of traversal, it implies that the reader's passage through the text is unlikely to be the same during every reading session. In this regard, it means that the closure arrived at during a particular reading session will most likely differ from those that will be arrived at during subsequent readings. In this regard, Douglas (1992: 6) avers that within the indeterminate structure of *afternoon*, "[d]eciding when the narrative has finished becomes a function of readers deciding when they have had enough... or of readers understanding the story as a structure that can "embrace contradictory outcomes"....." In essence, the first step towards perceiving closure in *afternoon* lies in readers' recognition of the fact that *afternoon* is a structure of structures and a structure for structures; hence they cannot come to a definitive end of the text. Whatever sense of closure is derived at during a particular reading session of *afternoon* is therefore only one of the contingent conclusions that could be derived at in *afternoon*, as a structure for structures.

As a matter of fact, *afternoon* continues to reiterate that many other closures and meaning possibilities exist in the text apart from the one which the reader may arrive at during a particular reading session. One of such indications is found in the lexia titled "[Work in progress]" where the reader is reliably informed of the indefinite and multiple fictive possibilities in *afternoon*:

Closure is, as in any fiction, a suspect quality.... When the story no longer progresses, or when it cycles, or when you tire of the paths, the

201

experience of reading it ends. Even so, there are likely to be more opportunities than you think there are at first. A word which doesn't yield the first time you read a section may take you elsewhere if you choose it when you encounter the section again; and sometimes what sees a loop, like memory, heads off again in another direction.

In the same vein, we may take the case where a reader, after coming to "[I call]" in the default path goes on to pursue the link "[then I woke]" as another example here. Though readers may come to interpret the narrative in the reading session thus far as a dream, they are however made to understand that there is more to the narrative than it ending exclusively at that instance:

> I keep wanting it to be one of those stories in which one wakes up – not as a cockroach, not from a trance of twenty years, but rather in the way you wake to your mother when you are a child, still hesitant about the propriety of having such a dream, yet vastly relieved that it is over. …. **There is no mystery, really about the truth. You merely need to backtrack, or take other paths. Usually the silent characters yield what the investigator needs to know. It isn't over yet, by any means, this story. ...**(emphasis mine)

Consequently, as readers arrive at this lexia they know that whatever conclusion and sense of closure are arrived at are by no means the definite ends of the narrative of *afternoon*. When readers recognise that, even if they would not pursue the reading of the text further, they know they cannot categorically refer to the sense of closure they arrive at in a reading session as being definite or absolute. Though readers have the absolute discretion of deciding when they have arrived at a satisfying end in a reading session, closure is still further problematized in the text in that that closure arrived at does not define the end of the text in an absolute term. At best, it is in Harpold's (1994:193) terms "an ending marked by the punctuality of interruption."

The strategy employed for problematizing the concept of closure in *of day* is quite different from that of *afternoon* since *of day* is basically axial in structure. Right from the outset, the reader of *of day* is psychologically prepared to locate and identify closure in the discourse of the "night" map. In this way, the reader's ultimate goal is to move through the text on to the "night" map which finalizes and concludes the activities of the "day." The various tasks and activities in the "day" have all built up the expectations of the reader for a definite and single conclusion. On the contrary, however, the reader reaches the "night" map to discover that the narrative ends in eight

(8) lexias as Plate 5.24 below illustrates. In McHale's (1987: 109) view, such a multiple-ending situation constitutes "a special case of self-erasing sequences" which characterise many postmodernist works.

Whether the discourses of the eight lexias are to be taken as alternatives or simultaneous conclusions of the story being followed from the "day" are some of the questions and tasks that readers will have to tackle. This multiplicity not only disapproves of readers' anticipated coherent, stable, and unique conclusion of the story but also institutes a different order for the interpretation of closure in spatial, temporal, and psychological terms. The syntactic structures and semantic implications of the titles of the eight night lexias: "[in the river I could see]"; "[on the balcony, a man and a woman]"; "[something was written]"; "[slowly, the brush traced]"; "[from the earth I pulled]"; "[an urn filled with]"; "[backward and forward]"; and "[she spoke in a voice]" intimate that the incompleteness of the title names is an attempt to deliberately deny and reject the sense of closure.

The lack of the sense of closure depicted by the incompleteness of the syntax and semantics of the node titles is further enhanced by the narratives of the eight night lexias which equally defy closure. The storyline of each of the eight lexias, rather than satisfy the reader's anticipation for finality on the story building from the "day" map only stirred up new anticipatory moods in the reader as new characters, places and

Plate 5.24. Screenshot of the night map showing eight nodes and thus emphasizing the text's deliberate rejection of the sense of closure

issues are introduced without the reader being offered details or information about their identities/natures. The fact that the narrative of the "night" comes up as dumb shows without complementing voice-overs helps in concealing suggestive clues to the narratives. In this way, the lexias are deeply enshrined in suspense and they call up the reader's desire to know and see more without offering such assistance anyway. Rather than appear as the closure of thatstory progressing from the "day," the eight lexias in the night mode appear more as beginnings of new narratives.

We may take the plot of the lexia "[on the balcony, a man and a woman]" captured in Plate 5.25 below as an example. The reader is confronted by both a setting and characters that are virtually different from those previously encountered in the "day." Where common nouns like 'market' and 'cafe' are used in the "day" to give clues to the geographical location of the central character, no clue whatsoever is used in the narrative to indicate Sophie's geographical location. This pantomimic narrative, ending as abruptly as it starts, readers are unable to glean enough facts to satisfy their senses of the need to know more and understand better. Questions on where Sophie is, why she is there, how she gets there, who the man and the woman who turnin her direction are, what the two of them are discussing, and what happens after Sophie tries to force her way through the gate into the house are all left unanswered. The need to secure answers to all these questions are intensified by the visibility of the virtual and simulated advice/warning: "Do not brood over the past" playing on at the background of the scene of the man and the woman who turn in Sophie's direction.

The reader's exploration of each of the eight night lexias brings many unmet desires to the fore. New narrative lines seem to be introduced with the reader unable to fully grasp the stories in terms of the aggregates of beginning, middle, and ending which ordinarily make up the plot of any narrative. This experimentation notwithstanding, the text inscribes a sense of closure in the fact that the salvation-producing tasks and activities that Sophie performs during the day are able to bring the restoration of her dream life. However, if closure is taken rigidly in Smith's sense of no further continuation, the reader may find it very difficult in bringing "satisfaction to desire, relief to suspense, and clarity to confusion" (Abbott, 2008:64).

Sequence I   Sequence II

Sequence III   Sequence IV

Sequence V   Sequence VI
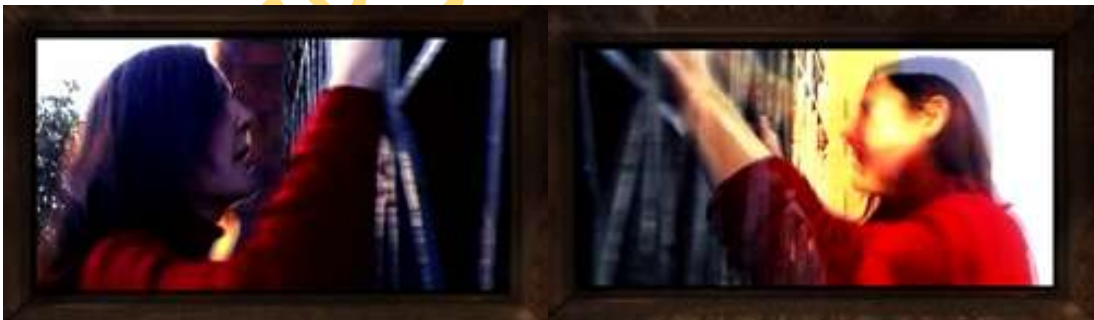
Sequence VII   Sequence VIII

Plate 5.25. Screenshots of eight motion sequences from the narrative of "[on the balcony, a man and a woman]"capturing entirely new characters and environment and ending abruptly without satisfying readers' sense of the need to know in order to deny the narrative of the sense of closure

5.8   Summary

The discussions in this chapter have focused on those features which reveal the postmodernist nature of the selected hyperfiction texts. The instances of fragmentation, collage, bricolage, intertextuality, repetition, and multivalence/multivocality denote the aesthetics of the jumble founded against the backdrop of postmodern plurality. Other postmodernist characteristics that the texts reflect are self-reflexivity, playfulness, deconstruction of linear time, subversion of subjectivity, and reconfiguration of the sense of closure. These features, in a number of ways, build on postmodernist aesthetics of spatial displacement of words, world under erasure, and catalogue structure which all deny text of syntax and reveal/celebrate the carnivalizing revolutions of postmodernist fictions. In all, the various postmodernist features establish that apart from the experimentation inherent in hypertextuality, the texts under study have deliberately employed strategies reminiscent of the experimental tradition in postmodernist agenda.

CHAPTER SIX
TEXTURAL DESIGN

6.1 Introduction

The analysis in this chapter naturally divides into two. The first aspect investigates those materials of the texts which are not linguistic per se but which have impact on the overall meaning of the texts. Such non-linguistic textural materials include graphology, still and motion pictures, and sounds. The other aspect of the analysis focuses on the grammatical design of the texts. By examining the deployment of mood and modality, the nature of clauses and their constituents, as well as syntactic rhetoric, we address how language means and/or is made to mean in the texts and the significant roles the different features of language play in the creativity and uniqueness of experimental narratives.

6.2 Grapho-visual materials

In the broadest sense, the grapho-visual materials of a text refer to those elements of the text that visually impact on the meaning and informational contents of the text. In this regard, meanings which derive from pictorial representations and the "writtenness" of the text both relate to the grapho-visual structure of the text.

6.2.1 Graphology

Graphology is defined as "the general resources of language's written system, including punctuation, spelling, typography, alphabet, and paragraph structure" (Simpson, 1997:25). Goodman (1996:44), explains that graphology is the field of "graphosemantics," that defines "[the] meaning which derives from the text's 'writtenness'. ... [which] look not at *what* is written, but at *how* it is written and the relationship between the two." In the hyperfiction texts under study, there are several semantic implications derivable from the distinctive uses of graphology.

The hyperfiction texts, in their naming: *afternoon, a story* and *of day, of night*, expressively reject the rule governing language as far as capitalisation is concerned.

Since the title of any work is the first point of contact with readers, this use of low case becomes an abstract of the unconventional and experimental tradition adopted for the work and thus invites readers to prepare to meet with the unusual within the discourse of the texts. The implication of this non-employment of capitalisation is further enhanced by the striking deployment of the comma within the titles of the two hyperfiction texts.

Opening to the first node of the narrative of *afternoon*, that is "[begin]", the first graphological item that engages the attention of a reader is the first letter in the node which is in boldface and a font size bigger than all other words in the node. Since "[begin]" is the first narrative node the reader encounters, the impression created by this sort of graphological device is that it intimates readers with the starting point of the narrative. However, readers' navigation through the several paths in the text will soon reveal other nodes which exhibit this same graphological device: initial letter in boldface and bigger font size. These nodes include "[a hidden wren]", "[white dress]", "[The Friar's eye]", "[Mississippi]", "[snakes and crows]", and "[staghorn and starthistle]". Where a reader experiences some of these nodes as the first in a reading session, there is the likelihood that such a reader will uphold the belief that the graphological strategy marks off the beginning of narrative threads especially because the narratives of such nodes are composed in a way to suggest that they are the starting points of a storylines. The following examples demonstrate this fact:

> **Q**uietly the pale moon cupped, the texture of a hidden thigh, the silken arrangement of limb, and the close cropped clover. Attitude de la dejeuner sur l'herbes d'une accident, sprawled like the tongues of iris, orchis, hooded ladies'-tresses, ivory light, crimson line like silken thread, the men dreaming of moisture, hear throbbing like a hidden wren – **"[white dress]"**

> **A**n everpresent stink of flowers, as if in a mortuary parlour, against a jungle wall of green-- dark shaded canyons so dense that the houses they surround rot and mildew; dampness everywhere, even the earth at night exhaling damp. … – **"[Mississippi]"**

> **P**erhaps he is right, perhaps I would prefer silence about me. I am, afterall, the one plain one here. Wren, perhaps, is right – **"[a hidden wren]"**

> **O**nce, before time, Crow and Snake were very thirsty but the Great One had not yet made the waters – **"[snakes and crows]"**

However, readers' deeper thrust into the multiply narrative of the text shows that the author and the text are both playing a trick on the reader with this graphological device. On one ground is the discovery that two of the links from "[white dress]" are "[a hidden wren]" and "[staghorn and stathistle]" which are two of the nodes which employ this graphological strategy. It is, however, practically impossible for the text of "[white dress]" to constitute the entirety of the narrative of a story just as other foregrounded narratives cannot function as the continuation of the narrative. A very similar situation also occurs in "[The Friar's eye]". Although this particular node has two links – "[work in progress]" and "[WUNDERWRITE R]" – the entire narrative of the node which is illustrated below does not have any correlation with the texts of the two nodes linked to it.

> **B**rother Transubstantiation leered. "All the saint's eye cannot save you unless you kiss my crucifix now!"
>
> Countess Ellyn's breasts heaved with fear.
>
> "Please, blessed one?" she begged.
>
> She could smell his scented breath even as she felt his perfumed fingers on her bodice – **"[The Friar's eye]"**

As this excerpt shows, it is totally impossible for "[The Friar's eye]" to constitute the entirety of a narrative; at best the passage describes a particular scene within a particular plot of story. Thus, the graphological device is a mere trick playing on the reader's ability to employ the writtenness of the text to fill in pragmatic gaps.

In another dimension, if one coincidentally encounters the narrative path where Peter narrates his story like other characters in the text, one is most likely to read the narrative of "[a hidden wren]" as a reaction from Lisa to Peter's assertion in "[ex-wife]" which says: "She'd prefer that little be said about her." Although the nodes subsequently following "[a hidden wren]" also continues to tell the story of Lisa, the fact that "[ex-wife]" most appropriately precedes "[a hidden wren]" puts to question the authenticity of "[a hidden wren]" as the beginning of a story in its own right. Equally, within the default reading path, the two nodes preceding "[staghorn and starthistle]" are "[4 what I see]" and "[5]". The reader's interaction with the texts of these two preceding nodes explains off the text of "[staghorn and starthistle]" as a logical successor of these two nodes rather than it being the beginning of a storyline.

…. I have halfway expected to find the remnants of a chalk outline of a body, the kind of thing one sees on television. I do however find the place where the bodies have lain. It is relatively easy to locate them on the manicured grass. The wheelmarks of a gurney lead up to each of them – **"[4 what I see]"**

Cigarette butts and matted footprints mark the place where groups of on-lookers stood. There is a single sequin in the grass near where I believe the woman's body lay. The discarded wrapping from a cotton surgical swab lies near the sequin.

The lawn is a wide expanse from the road back to where the faux manor stands, doubtlessly the home of a doctor or banker.

Eastward the lawn gives way to something of a field before the slope down to the creek and the woods – **"[5]"**

On the margins the lawn lapses into field, and the staghorn, the star thistle, the boletus rise and thrust in the far shadows, dark and singular things, stems veined and heads gilled, spiked, furled: most succulent in Spring or whatever season their youth is upon them, they grow hard and bitter and solitary with age; dry things, witnesses. … -- **"[staghorn and starthistle]"**

As the excerpts above show, the description of the geographical setting of the place where the accident supposedly takes place is the crux of thethree nodes. In this case, "[staghorn and starthistle]" is a logical linear follow-up of the descriptive narrative of its preceding two nodes rather than it being a narrative beginning.

"[snakes and crows]", "[just then]", and "[and so]" perfectly give the picture of a complete storyline. However, the playfulness of the author and the text with the graphological device of bold bigger font as the commencement of a story is evident in the text of "[and so]" which has every segment of its text employing this graphological device:

And so Crow and Snake enjoyed the waters according to crow's plan.

Since then the Great One has been angry. To these days, Snakes still craws the desert and tastes only salt until night.

To these days, Crow screams "Father, father!" in the air.

To these days, desert does not bloom.

The fact that the consequent conjunction "and so" begins this node indicates that the text of the node has precedence; hence it cannot function as the beginning of a story. In

addition, the employment of the graphological device in initiating almost every line of the text clearly implies that the author and the text are both playing on the reader rather than employing graphological devices in informing the reader of the beginning of a story. The implication is that *afternoon*, as a true postmodernist text, playfully institutes a tradition which it erases as the text builds up. The graphological device thus tasks readers and makes reading experience not only challenging but rigorous.

Apart from boldface and bigger font type, another graphological device vastly employed in *afternoon* is that of smaller font size. In that instituted tradition within the text, all nodes have almost exactly the same font type and font size. However, where readers encounter smaller fonts, they are being graphologically informed of quotations from other literary works. The employment of smaller font size is evident in "[intimate promises]", "[talking at the boundaries]", and "[Jung]". In addition to the pragmatic value of the employment of small fonts, each of these nodes acknowledges the sources of the quoted texts.

A very significant graphological manipulation in *afternoon* is evident in how numerals, punctuation marks, logograms, and other sign are employed in titles of nodes. In some instances, the signs are employed to differentiate between nodes which have similar names as in "[1]" and "[1/]"; "[2]" and "[2/]"; "[fragments]", "[fragments?]", and "[fragments!]"; "[Giulia]" and "[Giulia?]"; "[ice--]" and "[ice.]"; "[Love]" and "[Love…]"; "[me]" and "[me*]", "[yesterday]", "[yesterday2]", and "[yesterday?]". Other such node titles include "[yes]", "[yes1]", "[yes2]", "[yes3.]", "[yes4.]", "[yes5.]", "[yes6]", and "[yes7]" as well as "[Werther]", "[Werther1]", "[Werther2]", "[Werther3]", and "[Werther4]". Other examples are "[<]" and "[*]" which employ only signs.

In *of day*, the facilities of technology, especially animations, enable different forms of creative turns on graphological resources. With animations, *of day* is able to feature words that fade in and out of the reader's perspective on the screen, words that disappear behind the screen, words that lead to other parts of the text, as well as words that float and bounce on the screen. In the same vein, there is a clear employment of boldface as a graphological device. Where a word appears in boldface, it implies that such a word provides a link to either a new node or an expatiating sound effect. With the application of animation to these boldfaced words, readers discover that the contact of the cursor with such boldfaced words make the words to continuously bounce on

the screen. It is only a click that would make the words lead readers further into the text either by yielding new nodes or by providing expatiating sound effects.

Apart from the foregoing, colour is one other conspicuous graphological effect employed in *of day*. Lester (2011: 158) submits that whenever the issue of colour is discussed in relation to typography, two colours are actually implied – "the color of the type and the color of the background, sometimes called, regardless of the actual color, "white space"." Lester goes further to point out that "Research on type consistently shows that the most legible combination of colors for long blocks of copy is black type against a white background. For eye-catching headlines, designers occasionally use white type against a black background (called reverse type)…." For the accomplishment of its graphological uniqueness, it is in fact the reverse background type that is employed throughout the screen for electronic written texts in *of day*. As a matter of fact, *of day* goes a step further with the reverse type as the text rarely makes use of white type on black background. Rather, the text employs different bright colours like golden yellow, whitish pink, bluish white, amongst others against a black background. The eye-catching effect of the reverse background type is further enhanced through the animation of almost all the electronic written texts in the work.

Another way in which type colour is creatively employed in *of day* is evident in the way different colours are employed for the texts of the histories conjured for the different items that Sophie collects across her environment. By using different colours to write the stories of the objects, the reader is informed about the self-sufficiency and independence of the histories in relation to one another such that readers are expected to interpret each story as a whole which is complete in itself. At this point, one appreciates that graphology can be manipulated to mean more than what words may semantically convey. In essence, the distinctive employment of graphological devices in the selected texts demonstrates that the "writtenness" of the text can provide the background information needed for processing a text.

6.2.2 Still pictures/images

The occurrence of pictures/images in a text cannot be casually treated; because pictures/images are themselves sign systems. Thus, encountering pictures within the borders of a text signify that they have parts to play in the text's semantics and textuality. Barthes (1977b: 15) establishes this point when he says that "whatever the origin and the destination of the message, the photograph is not simply a product or a

channel but also an object endowed with a structural autonomy." In Lester's (2011:131) own view "…all images have something to tell you because every picture created, no matter how banal or ordinary it may be at first glance, has some meaning to communicate. The producer of the image took the time to frame and make the picture for a reason."

Of the two hyperfiction texts under study, it is *of day* that employs pictures within its textual borders. At that point where Sophie wanders about in her environment to collect objects that will stimulate and restore her dream experiences, the purpose and semantic implications of pictures can be immediately retrieved. The pictures of the objects help to reinforce verbal texts. One is not only being informed that Sophie collects a particular type of object but is equally being shown the object, which in this case contributes to the veracity of every claim. However, there are some other situations where the purposes which images serve cannot be immediately conceived by the reader/viewer. In a situation like this, it is only the reader/viewer's painstaking study and analysis of the pictures that can reveal the message intent of such images.

In those situations where the meaning of a picture/image is not immediately retrievable, the principles of visual analysis are to be applied for the discovery of meaning. According to Lester (2011:117), any visual analysis that would be thorough must involve some 13-step preliminary activities either severally or corporately:

> …making a detailed inventory list of all you see in a picture; noting the unique compositional elements within a frame; discussing how the visual cues of color, form, depth, and movement work singly and in combination to add interest and meaning; looking at the image in terms of the gestalt laws of similarity, proximity, continuation, and common fate; identifying any iconic, indexical, and symbolic signs; thinking of the four semiotic codes of metonymy, analogy, displaced, and condensed contribute to its understanding; isolating any cognitive elements that may be a part of the image; considering the work might have; and whether the image can be thought of as aesthetically pleasing.

Where images appear alongside verbal text, undertaking these 13-step preliminary activities will help us to discover the extent to which the visual elements of a text interact with its verbal elements to reinforce each other's message or to create potentially conflicting meanings (cf. Goodman, 1996:38).

The first significant image that calls for analysis in *of day* is the "day map" (Plate 6.1 below). Decoding the message intent of the image first involves taking its inventory, that is the first step of the 13 preliminary activities. As a matter of fact, Barthes (1977b: 28) has submitted that because "Nothing tells us that the photograph contains "neutral" parts, or at least it may be that complete insignificance in the photograph is quite exceptional", reading the "photographic language" thus requires the analyst to "isolate, inventoriate, and structure all the "historical" elements of the photograph, all the parts of the photographic surface which derive their very discontinuity from a certain knowledge on the reader's part, or, if one prefers, from the reader's cultural situation." The inventory of the image reveals written texts, images of a woman's face and hand,images of objects like van, door, matchsticks, and pencil amongst others. By the time the reader becomes familiar with the discourse of the text, this seemingly meaningless image becomes an entirely symbolic one. The similarities which the image maintains with the world map suggest that it is a world of its own. Or, better put, it is the world of the woman whose face appears at the background of the map and of the objects scattered about on surface. In essence, the map tells the reader what constitutes Sophie's world. The objects are thus significant to her existence and being since they provide the paths to the restoration of her lost dream life.

The dark and dull nature of the map image informs readers of the inner world of Sophie. Although her doctor asserts that the loss of her dream experience is "an unusual but not serious problem," her disposition shows that she is dead worried about her condition irrespective of what her doctor says. In this circumstance, the dullness of the image actually captures the disposition of Sophie to of her problem. Rather than being just an ordinary image that lacks meaning and significance therefore, the map is highly symbolic as it pictorially summarizes the nature and the matter of the whole story the reader/viewer will encounter across the nodes in the "day map." Thus, the image cannot be discarded or handled with careless simplicity.

Other significant images in *of day* serve as the background of some of the nodes. One of such images is Figure 6.2 below which serves as the pictorial background of "[before]". In taking the inventory of this image, the reader/viewer discovers that the image is created from the collage of the image of a car numberplate; the wall of a building; and written texts in both handwritten and printed formats.

215

Plate 6.1. The screenshot of the "day map" in *of day* as one of the images that their meanings cannot be immediately retrieved
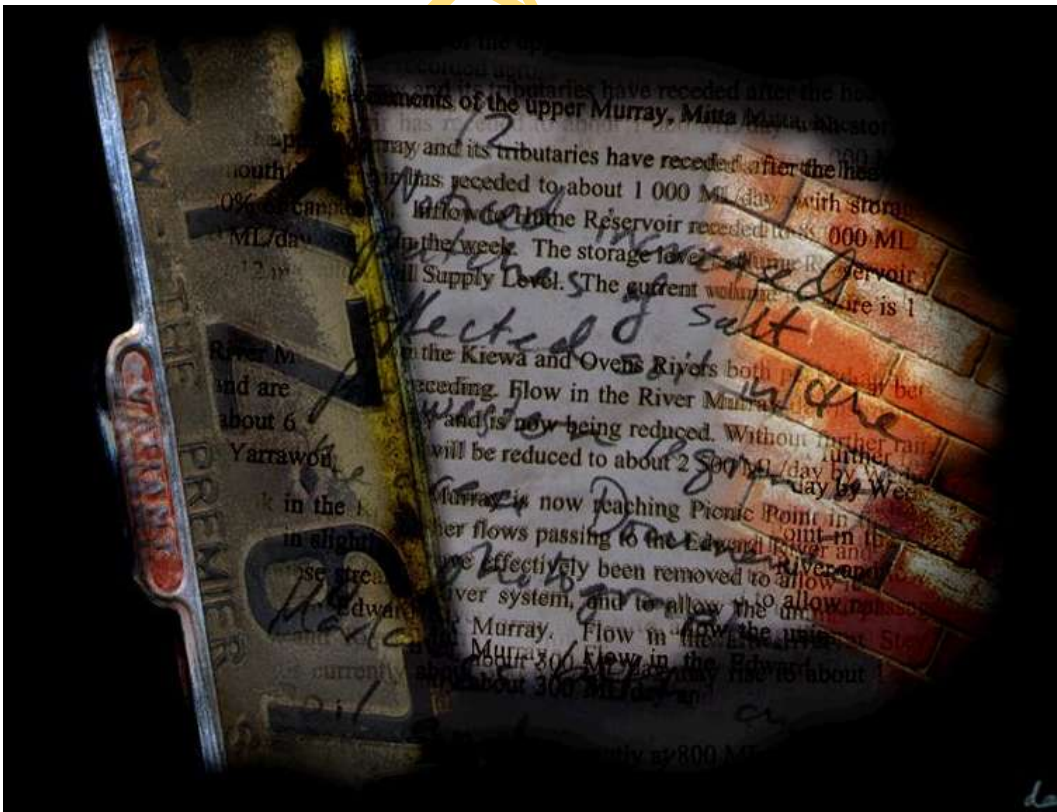
Plate 6.2. The screenshot of the image at the background of "[before]" as an example of a symbolic image which does not have semantic immediacy

Initself, this collage image may mean little or nothing until the reader is able to draw a connection between the image and the spoken text in the node:

> There is nothing unusual about me, all my life, before any of these happened. Nothing remarkable nor strange. My name is Sophie. I'm 34years old. I work as a photographer in a Government Department. That sounds more exciting and it really is. I'm the youngest of three children. I have a university degree. I've always just lived the typical sort of life with the normal sorrows and joys before this started.

Having heard the spoken text, the reader/viewer can begin to perceive the relationship existing between the collage image and the spoken text. Sophie asserts in the spoken text that she has a university degree, the written texts in the image reinforce the fact that she is literate. From the images of the car plate number and the wall of the building, the reader/viewer is given the inkling of what she describes as the "normal joys" of life. In essence, the fact that Sophie owns or has access to these "joys" of life expatiates what she connotes as "typical way of life." In another dimension, the image of the wall reinforces the fact that Sophie belongs to a family. With the wall coming out a little brighter than the other parts of the entire collage image, one perceives her sense of belonging in her home as well as the inner joys that the memory of her home radiates in her. Considered either in part or as a whole, the collage image primarily reinforces the message of the spoken text in the node.

Various other images exist in *of day* with their different symbolic implications reinforcing both the spoken and the electronic written texts within the work. The discussions in this section expatiate that pictures can and do really talk. More importantly, the manner in which pictures/images are employed in *of day* indicates how visual and verbal aspects of a text work together to accomplish texturality.

6.3   Meaning with sound

One very important factor in the texturality of *of day* is the application of different dimensions of sounds for texturality. Usually, sound can occurs in various forms as dialogue, music, sound effects, voice-over and is an integral part of video and film because it represents one of the all-important dimensions in the field of applied media aesthetics (cf. Zettl, 2011: 295). The various manifestations of sounds in *of day* cannot be neglected in the overall meaning of the text as they possess communication

purposes and intents which help in defining space, time, internal condition and orientation, amongst other things.

At the opening of *of day*, the reader/viewer's first sound contact is with a guitar instrumental music. This instrumental music not only opens the text but it also accompanies the discourses of all the nodes in the day map. Although the guitar instrumental belongs in the class of nondiegetic sounds, that is, sounds which emanate from outside the story space and do not evoke the image of the sound-producing source, its accompaniment of all the nodes in the day map suggests that the music is an orienting abstract indicating the nature and situation of the story in the day map. Because the guitar music is low in pitch and slow in both acceleration and deceleration, it turns out as a low-magnitude sound vector and gives away the anxiety-laden, depressed, and unenthusiastic mood of Sophie, the central character, which persists throughout the narrative. The informational intent of this instrumental music about the mood of Sophie is actually intensified by the slow pace of the voice-over narration and the slow nature of Sophie's movements in the videos.

Apart from the nondiegetic sound of the guitar, *of day* also maximally engages diegetic sounds. Diegetic sounds, according to Zettl (2011: 300), are "referential ...they convey a specific literal meaning and, in so doing, refer you to the sound-producing source.... [they] are all part of the story presented on the screen." Thus, the sound of moving vehicles accompanying the "[street]" node; the chirping of birds, croaking of frogs, and the sound of rustling flowing water attached to the "[river]" node; the noise of playful children attached to the word "kids;" and the sound of a match that is being stricken in order to lit attached to the word "lit" are all practical examples of the employment of diegetic sounds in *of day*. In a number of ways, these diegetic sounds work together with other semiotic resources employed in the text for the achievement of multimodal coherence.

While defining diegetic sounds, Zettl (2011: 300) notes that such sounds could be either "source-connected" or "source-disconnected." With source-connected sounds, the sound-producing source is visible while the sound is being produced. For source-disconnected sounds, however, the sound-producing source is located in off-screen. For a text like *of day*, distinguishing between source-connected and source-disconnected sounds is problematic. This is because Zettl's definition basically gives credence to motion pictures and not written text. In *of day*, however, one sees that diegetic sounds are attached to written texts. For example, in the written text on

"magazine," there are four foregrounded words – magazine, dances, steam, and clanged. The rustling sound of a book that is being perused and turned over is attached to the word "magazine," ball music is attached to the word "dances," a sizzling sound is attached to the word "steam," while the sound of a moving tram is attached to the word "clanged." Since these diegetic sounds are linked to written text in context, it becomes quite difficult to label the sounds as either source-connected or source-disconnected because the sound-producing sources are only typographically and not pictorially visible.

Sound and music attached to motion pictures serve a number of purposes. In Copland's (1967: 154) view, one major purpose that music must serve in films is "Creating a more convincing atmosphere of time and space." This purpose, in Zettl's (2011: 307) term refers to "outer orientation functions" which include "orientation in space, in time, to situation, and to external event conditions." In terms of orientation in space, the sounds accompanying "[street]" and "[river]" earlier noted above primarily help to specifically orient the reader/viewer of Sophie's location at that point in time. Another outer orientation function sounds perform in *of day* relates to time. From the beginning of the text, it has been made clear that the narrative features within the "day map" and the "night map." By the time the reader/viewer gets to the "night map," both colour and sound are employed for time orientation. The major time orienting sound in the night map is whisper/bedroom voice. Though most of the narratives of the nodes in the night map come out as dumb shows, it is the whispering of the titles of the nodes that gives readers the lasting impression that they are navigating the dreamland experiences of Sophie.

Just as sounds perform space and time orientation in *of day*, sounds also perform situation orientation functions in the text. Such situation orientation sounds reveal the "Underlining psychological refinements – the unspoken thoughts of a character or the unseen implications of a situation" (Copland, 1967: 154). One typical example comes in from "[from the earth I pulled]," one of the night map nodes. Plate 6.3 below is the screenshots of four sequences from the node. In sequence I, Sophie finds a seemingly harmless object which she attempts to eat in sequence II. However, the hooting of an owl accompanying sequence II serves as a situation orientation sound which predicts that things may not augur well after all because the object may not be as harmless as Sophie thinks. Thus, this predictive situation orientation sound prepares

Sequence I

Sequence II

Sequence III

Sequence IV

Plate 6.3. Screenshots of four sequences from "[from the earth I pulled]" node which reiterate that sounds, like the hooting of an owl attached to sequence II, can be employed to perform situation orientation functions

the reader/viewer for the horror-stricken Sophie in sequence III and the later discovery in sequence IV that the previously empty can is already filled with worms!

Another node which employs this hooting of an owl is "[in the river I could see]". The terrifying effect of the hooting will in fact be intensified by echoes. Thus, as Sophie's chase after an unknown man within the forest is accompanied by the echoing hooting, tension and terror build while the reader/viewer begins to predict and expect an upcoming disastrous event. Although the narrative did not eventually end in adisastrous manner as expected, the predictive sound accompanying the narrative makes it difficult for the reader/viewer to so much trust that Sophie's discovery of the doll in the river is the absolute end of the narrative especially because the unknown man has vanished by the time Sophie gets to the riverside. The difficulty in accepting the non-horrific ending of this narrative partly derives from the situation orientation function performed by the hooting accompanying the narrative.

Another unusual application of sounds in *of day* is that of voice-over. Although the employment of voice-over is not untraditional in films, videos, and television, it transcends the boundaries of book technology. In essence, voice-over is another multimodal possibility that the digital technology introduces into the boundary of the text which effects the notion of the redefined text in digital culture. In reality, the employment of the voice-over within the boundary of the narrative text is reminiscent of the more natural mode of narrative: oral narrative. This is why it can be argued that voice-over within the boundary of a narrative text calls up the notion of secondary orality. With the voice-over employed alongside other semiotic resources like video, sound effects, and electronic written text in *of day*, the text convinces readers of the veracity of the text. Readers/viewers not only read the written narrative; they equally see and hear Sophie while being also efficiently connected to the reality of Sophie's environment and her mental state through sound effects.

The objective of the discussions in this section has been to demonstrate the pragmatic importance of sounds in *of day* as a multimodal text. As explained above, Heyward showcases herself as the skilful master who is able to blend electronic text with sounds and images. No doubt, this art of making sounds to mean has brought a great creative dimension and impact on the borders of the text. With her skilful grab and exploration of the resources of technology, Heyward has been able to incorporate he erstwhile left-to-be-imagined-and-filled-in items of both oral and written narratives into the borders of the text. Invariably, this creative dimension extends textual

boundary to such an extent that anything and everything that can be heard may now contribute to texturality.

6.4 Syntax and narrative dynamics of motion pictures

The invention of visual media like still and motion pictures, television, and the computer together with networking systems has loaded our society with various forms of visual messages. Because visual messages have become ubiquitous, they are hardly given considerable attention. Surprisingly, however, where a critical attention is devoted to any visual message say picture, such a venture usually proves highly profitable because those meanings hidden within and behind the pictures which may not be visible to the eye during casual considerations are always revealed. As Lester (2011: 11) puts it, "Without systematically analyzing an image, you may sense it and not notice the individual elements within the frame. You might not consider its content as it relates to a story. Without considering the image, you will not gain any understanding or personal insights." The clear indication is that images contain more messages than the casual eyes can discern and it is only the intellectual engagement with such images that would assist viewers in understanding its meaning and purpose. It is therefore our aim in this section to intellectually engage some of the motion pictures in *of day* in order to show how visual and verbal materials interact to reinforce each other's message and to create textural cohesion among the semiotic resources employed in the text.

6.4.1 Visual aesthetics in linear time de[con]struction

As already pointed out, it is only a critical approach to pictures that can help for the discovery of silent but salient elements which are of great importance to the message intent of such pictures. Previously in chapter 5, we establish that the segmentation of time into the general concepts of "day" and "night" in *of day* is a postmodernist agenda which de[con]structs the traditional notion about the linearity of time. In essence, the refusal to clearly segment time and identify specific temporal constructs for each of the sequences making up the narrative of *of day* portrays a deliberate attempt to deny the existence and significance of linear time constructs.

The critical consideration of the visual elements of *of day* would reiterate the fact that the text is deliberately denying the segmentation of time beyond the

222

broadconcepts of "day" and "night." For example, Plate 6.4 below is the screenshot of the

Sequence I

Sequence II

Sequence III

Sequence IV

Plate 6.4. Screenshot of the of the four-sequenced motion stringcontinually playing within "[before]" and capture Sophie in four different environments and attires and thus indicate the text's rejection of the linear construct of time by its configuration of time only in terms of the broad concepts of "day" and "night"

four video sequences that continuously play on within the node titled "[before]". A critical examination of these sequences as well as the painstaking inventory of the elements in them would reveal the fact that the text deliberately plays against the tradition of linear time. That each of the motion sequences captures Sophie in different attires and environments indicates that the four motion sequences do not belong to the same linear construct in spite of the montage that has placed them together in the same node.

In sequence I one sees Sophie in a deep blue dress while her fresh and well-kempt appearance together with her composure and the coolness of the weather suggeststhat it is probably her first attempt at stepping out of her house in the morning. As the signpost behind her suggests, she is walking through a commercial area but the virtually empty street indicates that it is the very early hours of the morning before working hours. In sequence II, Sophie appears in a lilac and purple coloured top. Her dishevelled hair and tired look which give the impression of someone who has exerted her energy together with the length of the forward-cast shadows which indicates evening time suggest that Sophie is not just leaving her house as the case is in sequence I. One conclusion the reader/viewer may arrive at is that Sophie is probably returning home after a hard day's work. The timing of sequence III is a little bit close to that of sequence I. However, the continuous movement of vehicles at the background of this particular sequence implies that the time is probably around the start of working hours. One other notable thing about Sophie in sequence III is that her appearance is not as fresh and homely as that of sequence I. In sequence IV, Sophie appears high in spirit than in any of the preceding three sequences. In this last sequence, the manner in which the sun casts her shadow beside her face indicates it is probably midday. Though her hair does not look as tidy as that of sequence I, there is a presupposition that her excited mood most likely results in springy walk which causes the breeze to softly blow against her hair, slightly ruffling it. Thus, the unevenness of her tresses in this sequence does not result from stress as the case appears to be in sequence II or from nonchalance as in sequence III.The fact that the environment looks more like a residential area may also imply that Sophie is returning home after an eventful day.

The montage of these four different motion replications of Sophie and her environment within the boundary of a single node that presents a unified rather than diversified narrative is not in any way accidental. The different timings, moods, and composure the motions pictures depict foregrounds pictorial parallelism deployed to project the denied contrasts in the montages. The contrasts in the motion sequences reveal different moods and times that the text refuses to recognise by its not segmenting time beyond the broad and general temporal concepts of "day" and "night". This, sure, is rather a deliberate attempt towards a specific end. Since the four motion sequences project different phases of Sophie's life, the montage of the four sequences denies this fact and thus reveals the postmodernist concept of time adopted in the text.

Plate 6.5 below is another instance of how visual elements help readers/viewers to understand the text's deliberate rejection of the linear concept of time through its refusal to segment time beyond the concepts of "day" and "night" and/or to employ temporal constructs that would properly locate time in history. In screen I, Sophie is in the market, in screen II she is at the café, at the river in screen III, and on the street in screen IV. Notably, Sophie appears in the same attires in screens III and IV and entirely different garments in screens I and II. Not that alone, the various shades of lightening in the four screens depict different times of the day. These differences in terms of Sophie's appearances, the time of the day, and the environments in the four scenes indicate that her activities in the four scenes do not take place at the same time.

Although Sophie wears the same dress at the river and the street scenes, the lightening effects in the two sequences indicate different timings just as much as the reader knows that Sophie's visit to the two places could not have been concurrent. In view of the visual differences in the four motion narratives and their allocation to the broad temporal concept of day, readers/viewers are communicated the text's refusal to properly identify time and its historical locale. In view of the nonlinear ordering of the nodal links to the narratives of the four locations as well as the conspicuous absence of temporal constructs like "after" and "before" in the narratives of these four settings which would have revealed the order, in time and history, of the location's actions and events readers/viewers have the freedom to traverse the texts in the order most pleasing them while the text thereby denies the narratives temporal linearity. With the visual aspects of the narrative signifying different linear times and the text refusing to identify linear segments, readers would thus come to understand that this not a simple

contradiction but a complex foregrounding of the rejection of linear time and the celebration of postmodernist deconstruction of temporality.

Screen I

Screen II

Screen III

Screen IV

Plate 6.5. Screenshots of the market, the café, the river, and the street scenes capturing Sophie's appearances differently in the four scenes thus depicting different temporal settings and buttressing the fact that the text's adoption of "day" and "night" as the only set of temporal constructs is a deliberate attempt to reject linear time constructs

So far, the discussion in this section has established that in a multimodal text like *of day*, the consideration of every element of the text is important in processing the overall message of the text. By giving careful attention to every element in a visual composition, a reader/viewer would be able to decode several messages that are not verbally conspicuous in the text. As the discussions quite reveal, the painstaking consideration of the visual elements in *of day* demonstrates that the text's identification of time in terms of only "day" and "night" is a deliberate attempt to deny the text of linear temporal formations and project postmodernist agenda for time. In this regard, the different temporal constructs indicated by the visual elements help in recognising the text's postmodernist agenda, of its deconstruction of linear time, and consequently, of its reconstruction of history and historical constructs.

6.4.2   Decoding the grammatics of wandering and estrangement

The first electronic written text the reader/viewer encounters in *of day* – "this is a story for wandering" – informs one that the central theme of the text is "wandering." Within the inner node of "[act]", wandering, as the central theme of the text, is verbally communicated in the first task that Sophie outlines for the restoration of her dream: "Wander to places that you haven't visited before." This salvation task is further reiterated through the words-that-float attached to the task: "wander through unfamiliar places and locations". Equally, in the initial node of "[collect]", one finds a similar theme statement saying: "wander through places to collect objects, old, forgotten, discarded things." Apart from these two nodes, there are no other instances of where the issue of wandering is verbally addressed in the text. A critical assessment of the text, however, indicates that the text mainly depicts its central theme through the aesthetics of motion pictures rather than through verbal materials.

Figure 6.6 below is actually the first screen to be encountered in the prefacing sequence of *of day*. Right from this screen, the reader/viewer recognises the centrality of wandering to the narrative of the text. Since movement is vital to the interpretation of motion pictures, one would discover that Sophie's movement in this opening screen is rightly captured as that of a wanderer through various cinematic aesthetics andstrategies. In the light of the material process of the transitivity system, Sophie, in

227

this sequence, is the sole participant while the process is represented by her action of walking. As a purely cinematic element, the screen comes up as a close-up in which

Plate 6.6. Screenshot of the first screen in the prefacing sequence of *of day* with the cinematic strategy of "close-up" employed to depict Sophie as a wanderer

Sophie looks directly into the camera and thus maintains an eye contact with the viewer. The implication of the direct eye-contact in the close-up is that Sophie does not seem to be motivated by a clearly spelt-out goal. Much also can be read from Sophie's cold and lost looks to imply that her movement at that point in time is aimless. In essence, she is visually presented to the viewers/readers as a wanderer par excellence.

Any thorough analytical approach to the concept of wandering will indicate that wandering is a kinaesthetic and ontological statement of estrangement. Ilcan (2004: 229) argues that "strangers stand against an unfamiliar background and are located on the boundary of familiar behaviour. Familiar behaviour is located in and belongs to a space (workplace, prison, school) where certain kinds of relations can be prescribed, expected, or limited." Ilcan (2004: 228) has initially pointed out that strangers manifest in several forms and include "numerous others whose aspirations figure as unfamiliar even though they live in a place that they call "home"". In the light of this, Sophie manifests as a stranger because wandering neither belongs to nor is located within any familiar space, but entirely appears in the order of strangeness and estrangement.

A closer look at Figure 6.6 as well as preceding Figure 6.4 reveals how the employment of close-up abstracts Sophie from her environment and translates her into a stranger, howbeit in her home zone. Her society is not only captured in the remote background, but she also persistently wanders away from that society. As she wanders away from her society, it (her society) becomes remoter and the viewer deduces that she might eventually lose touch with her origin. The vast and consistent employment of the technique of close-ups in *of day* reveals how the cinematic and the thematic elements of the textare defined by this interwoven relationship of wandering and estrangement.

While describing the estranging implication of close-up, O'Connor (2004: 210-11) submits that:

> People are typically perceived to have characters and to play social roles: objects are presumed to have real uses and to enter into real connections with people who, in turn, have real relations with one another and with their situations. The close-up makes all these functions disappear. It

dissolves the spatiotemporal coordinates (which identify, socialize, and communicate) in order to produce pure qualities.

With the close-up technique, therefore, Sophie is abstracted from her environment and this answers for why she is not for once caught creating or maintaining any social relationship or performing any social role. The indication from the close-up technique is that a stranger may be physically close in that s/he can be seen or heard, but s/he remains at the same time socially distant and remote (cf. Ilcan, 2004: 229). In this perspective, the reader/viewer is not expected to look up to Sophie for the discovery of the "whats" and "wheres" of her spatiotemporal location. The close-up relegates her society to the background and depicts the narrative as "her story" rather than as "his[s]tory" or "its story".

The visual distance placed between Sophie and her spatial location readily manifests in the distance existing between the reader/viewer and Sophie's environment. Though the reader/viewer may be able to identify common places like street, market, river, and café in the text especially because of the orientation functions of sounds and their close interaction with other semiotic resources like electronic written text and spoken (voice-over) text, the reader/viewer finds it absolutely difficult to identify the particular geographical locations of these common places. Ilcan (2004: 228) argues that "That strangers are both near and far tells us that they are not in "any place" but, rather, are in-between one place and another." In her further expatiation, Ilcan (2004: 229), citing Kristeva (1991), says the stranger "is someone "not belonging to any place, any time, any love. A lost origin, the impossibility to take root, a rummaging memory, the present in abeyance." In view of this argument, it is clear why *of day*, as the narrative of the wandering stranger, denies the reader/viewer of clear referents to spatiotemporal constructs either visually or verbally. In essence, the absence of particularizing spatiotemporal constructs in the text is not a defect but a purpose for consolidating the project of the wanderer as a stranger.

At the very height of wandering, the wanderer in her/his home zone becomes alienated and is thus translated into a traveller and a foreigner. Ilcan (2004: 236) explains that:

This process involving "a native who becomes like a foreigner" is telling of the paradoxes of some contemporary societies, of the decline of the centre and the language of unification. It is full of sites where differences

get played out and where a myriad of relations co-exist; that is, where the world is experienced as "simultaneously emancipatory and alienating, promising and in good part providing new freedoms and potentialities, new forms of self-actualization and development, along with new problems and difficulties". Such fragmented living seems to be an immutable feature of contemporary times.

In view of the foregoing, the manifestation of bricolage in both "[slowly, the brush traced]" and "[she spoke in a voice]" emphasizes this transformation of the wanderer into a foreigner who is estranged through language. Though wandering emancipates Sophie, defines her as being self-independent and self-sufficient, and enables her to exist without being defined by metanarratives, it equally indicates that the unfamiliar nature of local narratives alienates the subject, makes her/him unfamiliar, and projects the fragmentary nature of experience in the postmodern culture.

Because wandering is established as the central theme in *of day*, it controls visual aesthetics and exists as the dominant force that pushes the narrative of *of day* forward. Although the word "wandering" hardly features in the verbal elements of the text, the text appropriately harnesses the possibilities of visual media in projecting and centralising wandering as its main theme. Rather than being a defect, this maximal dependence of the central theme on the visual elements of the text, emphasizes the changes and revolutions surrounding textuality in the contemporary digital culture. Invariably, the deep interrelationship existing between verbal language and visual/aural language in the digital culture suggests that the world may not be able to return to a pre-computer age where verbal language stood as the major and most viable means of encoding experiences about the world.

6.4.3 Perceiving dream narrative through visual aesthetics

The obligation in this subsection is to examine the ways through which visual aesthetics are engaged to construe dream narratives in *of day*. In terms of text segmentation, the narrative of *of day* divides into two – day narrative and night narrative. Except that the nodes in the night narrative have their titles in both electronic written and whispered forms, the narratives in the night map all feature as pantomimes. Both the colour of the night map and the whispering of the titles of the nodes in the night map have eerie effects that mentally ascribe the narrative to the temporal setting of the night. However, neither the colour nor the whispers can exclusively convince the reader/viewer that the narratives are experientially dream constructs. Being

231

pantomimes, it therefore implies that the ability to perceive the night narratives as dreams absolutely lies in the visual aesthetics employed for their motion pictures.

One major visual effect that Heyward employs in depicting some of the night nodes as dream narratives is the desaturation of colour. Naturally, desaturation occurs when the relative purity and strength of chromatic colours are gradually re-defined with the hue of any of achromatic colours of white, black, or grey. The desaturation theory, according to Zettl (2011: 77) "asserts that one way of reducing the blunt and brazen impact of high-energy colors in a quiet, introspective scene is to lessen their saturation, give a monochrome tint, or omit color altogether." Expatiating further on the implications of desaturation in visual communication, Zettl (2011: 77) submits that:

> Color on recognizable images (people and objects) emphasizes their appearance; thus our attention is directed toward the outer, rather than the inner, reality of an event. But when we render the scene more low-definition through desaturation of color… the event becomes more transparent. It also makes the audience apply psychological closure, that is, fill in the missing elements of the low-definition images. In this way viewers will inevitably get more involved in the event than if they were looking at high-definition color images.

The foregoing indicates the importance of desaturation in a node like "[in the river I could see]" which has its motion sequences extensively represented in Figure 6.7 below. In sequences I - VI, the employment of desaturation for the presentation of both the man in flight and the lady in his pursuit indicates that the woman is ignorant of the identity of the man which she desperately wants to unravel. Also, desaturation helps in conveying the traumatic and psychological state of the woman. The desaturation effect helps in conveying not only the anxiety and the traumatic experience of the screen woman but also the likely perturbation of the dreamer of the dream. By the time viewers get to sequence VI, tension has heightened and the emotions of both the screen woman and viewers have built up because of the desperation of unravelling the identity of the strange fleeing man. In order to beat down the level of the trauma and at the same time maintain suspense, sequence VII comes with the effects of saturation.

Proceeding into sequence VIII downwards, the desaturation of colour, complemented with the background knowledge on dream structures, especially on nightmares, enables viewers in predicting that the unknown man's disappearance from

the sight of both the woman and the camera portends great calamity and disaster. Thus, the empty riverside seat in sequence VIII, the close-shot of the log-infested river in

Sequence I

Sequence II

Sequence III

Sequence IV

Sequence V

Sequence VI

Sequence VII

Sequence VIII

Sequence IX

Sequence X

Sequence XI

Sequence XII

Sequence XIII

Sequence XIV

Sequence XV

Sequence XIV

Plate 6.7. Sixteenscreenshots from the "[in the river I could see]" node wherethe desaturation of colour and other visual aesthetics are employed to denote dream narrative

sequence IX, and the lone strange toy in the river in sequence X again heighten tension andprovoke difficult questions and riddles from not only the vulnerable dream-woman but also from the dreamer and the viewer. Is the woman lured into danger by the strange man? Could the man lurking somewhere to harm the woman? Or, did the man transform into the doll in the river? Has this woman made a wise by choice by moving closer to the river? What would become of the woman if she picks up the doll? What exactly is the nature of the unexpected?

From sequence IX downwards, the dream sequence is presented in saturated colours. This recourse to saturation effectively connects the psychological trauma of the woman to the reality of her physical vulnerability. The viewer thus moves away from the inner reality of the woman to the apparent and imminent danger in her outer reality. Because the viewer now expects the unthinkable, saturation is employed for the vivid presentation of reality.

Apart from desaturation, another visual aesthetic employed in Figure 6.7 is wide-angle lens distortion. Zettl (2011: 186) explains that through what Sergei Eisenstein calls "conflict of volumes and spatial conflict," wide-angle lens distortion "carry not only aesthetic but also psychological messages." Zettl (2011: 187) further explains that "in concert with other contextual media aesthetic clues", wide-angle distortion can "communicate intense emotional stress in a person." The cause of the emotional trauma of the woman depicted through the application of Extreme Close-up (XCU) in sequence XI is explained off in the employment of wide-angle distortion for the presentation of the doll in both sequences XII and XIV. Practically, the exaggerated size of the doll in the two sequences captures the dream-woman's point of view and indicates how panic-stricken she is. In essence, both the application of XCU and wide-angle lens distortion intensify the narrative as serious nightmare.

Among several other instances in *of day*, sequence VII features another visual aesthetic edge that enhances dream narrative in the text. In this sequence, unusual screen composition and resolution is employed in creating imbalance in screen space through off-centre placement of the dream-woman. By capturing the dream-woman near the right screen edge, logic frame magnetism is employed to create an aesthetic discrepancy that draws attention to the dream-woman and thus emphasizes her apparent vulnerability and helpless condition in the strange environment. Figure 6.8 below is another motion sequence taken from the node "[on the balcony, a man and a woman]". The aesthetic techniques of XCU and imbalance screen space are engaged in

Plate 6.8. A motion sequence in "[on the balcony, a man and a woman]" where the aesthetics of Extreme Close-up and imbalance screen composition are employed to depict the anxiety and the feelings of insecurity in the woman

capturing the feelings of insecurity the woman is experiencing at the sight of the man and the woman who turn in her direction on the corridor. Adding to the effects of both XCU andimbalance screen space is the employment of a bottom-up camera angle that strategically locates the screen woman below the gazes of the man and the woman on the corridor. In effect, the screen woman is made inferior to the duo on the corridor, a precarious situation which makes her susceptible to their caprices and manipulations. The bottom-up camera angle therefore projects her feelings of insecurity and her sense of vulnerability.

One other interesting visual technique considerably deployed in the night nodes to depict their narratives as dream is superimposition as Figures 6.9 and 6.10 illustrate. With the technique of superimposition, images/objects are made transparent and do overlap to form complex perception of the intersecting images. Zettl (2011: 197) explains that "The collapsed separate viewpoints or events into a single two-dimensional picture plane change the viewer's normal perceptual expectations and give not only a more complex view of things but particularly deeper insight into the event's underlying complexity."

Because the usual understanding is that the various day-to-day activities of an individual would most likely dictate the nature of the individual's dream, the employment of superimposition would capture the intersection of such activities and the complex relationship among them. From the very fact that Sophie sets out to collect several objects across her environment in order to restore her dream experiences, the reader/viewer ably understands the night narrative as dream because the technique of superimposition helps to capture how the various objects Sophie collects during her wanderings interpolate for the restoration and formation of her dreams.

Subjective point of view (S-POV) is another significant visual aesthetic employed for the dream narratives in *of day*. S-POV refers to that situation in which the camera is manipulated in such a way that the viewer is made to assume the screen person's point of view. The employment of subjective camera is to persuade the viewer to participate in the screen event and action rather than being a mere spectator. According to Zettl (2011: 217), the three most effective motivational factors for the employment of S-POV are: "a strong delineation between protagonist and antagonist so that the viewer can easily choose sides (rooting for your favorite team) or else switch back and forth between the two; a highly precarious situation including

Plate 6.9. A "supering" sequence in "[on the balcony, a man and a woman]" illustrating how seemingly unrelated events maintain strong relationship and capture the complex nature of dream narratives

Plate 6.10. Another instance of superimposition in "[backward and forward]" illustrating the surreal complexity of dream narrative

physical danger, discomfort, or psychological stress; and a situation in which the viewer's curiosity is greatly aroused." Zettl (2011: 217) notes further that these three factors "are all preconditions for you [viewer] to participate in an event empathically (feeling part of the event) and occasionally even kinaesthetically (reacting physically to the screen event…)." Figures 6.11 and 6.12 are instances of the employment S-POV "[in the river I could see]". The two sequences both appeal to the curiosity of the viewer while at the same time calling on the viewer to empathically experience the precarious situation of the screen woman.

Without doubt, Heyward effectively employs various aesthetic strategies to encode dream structures in the text. With the employment of different media aesthetics, the viewer is not only projected into the emotional state of the dreamer and the dream characters, but s/he is also empowered to vividly predict the possible outcome of the dream narratives. Even in the instances where the dream narratives are not presented as ending disastrously as the case is in a node like "[in the river I could see]", media aesthetics employed in presenting the dreams make it difficult for viewers not to tie tragic closures to such narratives. In essence, applied media aesthetic strategies play significant roles for the message intent of a multimodal text like *of day.*

6.5   The deployment of mood and modality

Within the Hallidayan model of the Systemic Functional Linguistics, the notion of clause as exchange is very crucial because it reveals the metafunction language performs in any interactive event. An examination of the clause as exchange would usually reveal the particular communicative and rhetorical role speakers/writers adopt for themselves as well as the degree of finiteness of such a message. This is whyHalliday and Matthiessen (2004: 110) submit that "by interpreting the structure of statements and questions we can gain a general understanding of the clause in its exchange function." The notions of mood and modality are basic to the analysis of the clause as exchange.

The mood system which structurally comprises the Mood element and the Residue usually reflects the particular communicative role the communicant is adopting through the selected mood type of the sentence. Generally, the mood system can be either indicative or imperative. The declarative is selected where the communicative intent is to assert/state whereas the interrogative is selected when the

Plate 6.11. An instance of the employment of subjective point of view (S-POV) in "[in the river I could see]"

Plate 6.12. Another S-POV instance in "[in the river I could see]" employed to depict the precarious situation of the dream woman

communicative purpose is questioning. The interrogative category can also selectbetween Yes/No interrogative for polar questions and WH-interrogative for content questions. However, where the communicant intends to order/command, the mood is realised in the imperative mood type. Whichever is the communicative role the communicant adopts, the fact remains that the mood conveys both the temporality and the intensity of meanings.

Modality, the other crucial notion in clause as exchange, is the means by which the communicant's judgement and opinion on the status of the propositions are expressed. Therefore, modality bothers on issues of modalization (probability and usuality); modulation (obligation and inclination); orientation (subjective/objective and explicit/implicit); value; and polarity. Usually, modal verbs such as *may*, *will*, and *should*; modal adjuncts such as *probably*, *possibly*, and *certainly*; and lexical items such as *suggest*, *appear*, and *indicate* which decrease the force of the proposition are employed by speakers/writers in modifying proposition to express their judgements, commitments, and the degree of certainty.

Because of its propositional nature, a narrative would more often be composed in the declarative. This is because the writer of a narrative typically sets out to inform the reader. In the hyperfiction texts under study, the examination of the clause as exchange reveals how the writers of the texts have employed the resources of language to enhance stylistic experimentations in the narratives. As a matter of fact, the writers particularly exploit modality to make way for the experimentations in the texts.

In a self-erasing text like *of day* which displaces the world of an autobiographical text with its invitation of readers to interact with and participate in the unfolding of the text, it is the creative employment of both mood and modality that actually makes the accomplishment of such postmodernist aesthetic possible. The first electronic text that readers encounterafter the prefacing sequence is: "this is a story for wandering":

This	is	a story for wandering
Subject	Finite	
Mood element		**Residue**

This clause selects the declarative mood type and relates the story to the present here-and-now. In terms of modality, the finiteness of the verbal element of the clause helps

243

in conveying the speaker's objectivity and explicit orientation about the proposition. In this regard, the proposition expresses certainty rather than probability.

Immediately after the first electronic text, the reader hears the next text as a voice-over: "I have a sense of where this comes from, though I'm not sure where it all ends. My story starts somewhere in the middle." From this voice-over text, the text gradually moves away from the region of certainty and objectivity into the region of uncertainty and subjectivity thus gradually making room for readers' participation in the evolution of the text.

I	Have	a sense of where this comes from
Subject	Finite	
Mood element		Residue
Given		New

Typically, the mood element demonstrates the clause as a declarative. However, in terms of modality, the reader perceives the fact that the speaker is rather subjective in her orientation in telling the story. Within the information structure of the clause as message, the personal pronoun "I" is the "Given" element in the clause while "have a sense of where this comes from" is the "New" element which contains the content of the information the speaker is passing across to the hearer. Practically, there is a great level of difference between say "I know where this comes from" and "I have a sense of where this comes". There tends to be a greater amount of hedging in the proposition with the employment of "a sense." This nominal item actually decreases the degree of certainty and commitment of the speaker to the proposition she is making and conveys to readers the uncertainty featuring in the modality of the information content of the clause. This reveals a total shift from the level of certainty recoverable from the first electronic written clause in the text. The second part of the voice-over text further intensifies this lack of certainty in the proposition conveyed by the initial part:

Though	I	'm not	sure where it all ends
Conjunctive adjunct	Subject	Finite	
	Mood + neg. polarity		Residue

The employment of this other part of the text with the conjunctive adjunct "though" puts the lack of certain conviction on a higher scale. Further to that is the negative

244

polarity of the mood system realised with the negative particle "not". Thus, with this negative polarity modality finally transcends the zone of uncertain possibility into the realm of certain uncertainty. In this wise, readers are gradually being launched into the process of forming the story along their preferred trajectories.

The last part of the voice-over text: "my story starts somewhere in the middle" equally adds to the level of certain uncertainty that the modality of the text is building:

my story	starts	somewhere in the middle
Subject	Finite	
Mood		**Residue**
Given	**New**	

Considering the mood element which comes up as a declarative, one may be tempted to believe that the speaker has again ventured into the realm of certain modality. However, the employment of "somewhere" within the New element of the information structure indicates that the speaker continues to be hedgy as she would still not want to attach any sense of responsibility to the veracity of the information neither would she present the story with a certainty of conviction. Rather than being a defect, the presentation of story at the verge of the lack of certainty of conviction in modality in this text is a creative strategy employed in leading the reader to participate in the evolution of the text and in placing the world of the narrative under erasure in the true carnivalesque nature of postmodernist aesthetics. The motivating factor for this experimentation resides in the fact that where the autobiographic story is told with a degree of conviction and certainty, it would be difficult to compel the participation of the reader – the story having been told with a sense of finality and exclusivity.

One very important factor within the mood system is the notion of temporality as reflected in Tense. The creative deployment of the clause as exchange in *of day* would equally be revealed in the manner in which the text meanders in its employment of Tense in order to give room for the participation of the reader in the evolution of the text. Sophie having declared that the narrative is her story, the reader finds her in "[begin]" in the characteristic nature of autobiographic narratives using the Present Tense in introducing herself:

> There is nothing unusual about me, all my life, before any of these happened: nothing remarkable or strange. My name is Sophie. I'm 34years old. I work as a photographer in a Government Department. That

sounds more exciting and it really is. I'm the youngest of three children. I have a university degree. I've just always lived a typical sort of life with the normal sorrows and joys before this started.

By the time the reader moves into "[realise]" however, the pace of the story changes as the speaker makes a detour into the past to relate part of her story:

A few months ago, I'm not sure exactly when but I think it was during the autumn. I began to suffer from an illness, a problem. It was around this time that I came to realise, slowly, quietly, without any great drama that I seemed to have lost the ability to dream. At first I thought I was just sleeping moderately between the cold nights and the warm blankets. But as the night passed, I felt I was not so much asleep but unconscious or worse. I would wake drained like the life was seeping out of me slowly each night. As weeks went by, alendous took hold of me that I couldn't shake. I visited the doctor and after ruling out drug and drink she said that the problem was unusual but not serious. She advised me to get up more, get some exercise in the hope that it would right itself.

Later on in "[halfway]", the speaker makes another diversion in Tense:

This year I'm thirty-five. I've reached the halfway point, more or less. What come before us seems to overshadow what to come. I have embarked on a schedule of therapies – tonics, exercises, music, I have filled my bedroom with fragrance, flower, I've been increasing my novel reading books before sleeping – but still I do not dream. (halfway)

Starting with Simple Present Tense – "this year I'm thirty-five" – the speaker moves into Present Perfect Tense to state her experiences as well as the steps she embarks upon to restore her previous health condition. From that, the speaker then moves on into Present Perfect Continuous – "I've been increasing my novel reading books before sleeping" – to indicate that her condition and her remedies are still ongoing. From this point, the speaker then moves back into Simple Tense to indicate her unchanged status, to demand the sympathy of the reader, and then to subtly invite and co-opt the reader to partake in her future and the salvaging of her current situation. Thus, with the creative employment of Tenses within the mood system, the writer gradually appeals to the sense of responsibility of readers for their participation in textual evolution.

Closely related to the last assertion in "[realise]" – "still I do not dream" – is the voice-over text in "[act]": "By now it's clear I need a different approach… I have

246

worked out a series of small tasks." Without doubt, the last declarative statement in "[realise]" provides enough ground for the assertions the speaker now makes in "[act]" in Present Tense. With the speaker's revelation that she has worked out a series of small tasks, readers who move into the node titled "[collect]" find the speaker marking her proposed activities for the future through the employment of the modal verb "will" and the adjunct "In time":

> I will collect objects from a number of places. Old, forgotten, discarded things. The objects will be of no particular use or value, except that they are pure. In time each one of us yields a story.

It is actually at the node "[collect]" that the speaker eventually accomplishes the objectives of the effects being built up through the employment of different Tenses across the text. By marking the proposed activities in the node '[collect]" for the future, the propositions in "[collect]" corroborate the text of the first voice-over which asserts that: "I have a sense of where this comes from, though I'm not sure where it all ends." This thus accomplishes the need for readers to participate in the text. So also, this situation explains why Sophie's activities of collecting particular objects across the four scenes in her environment are controlled by readers' decisions. Since Sophie does not know where the story ends, it is the decision made at the discretion of the reader that becomes vital and final for the unfolding of the remaining parts of the text.

Although readers are not at any time instructed or commanded to participate in the evolution of the text, the finality and certainty of Sophie's conviction that she does not know where the story ends thus becomes a subtle request to the reader to explore the textscape in order to find out how the story ends. The height of this silent and subtle imperative that is creatively connoted within the mood system in *of day* is manifest in "[arrange]", the node that precedes the reader's launch into the night map, where the text "There is an order in which to treat them I think, or maybe they are just a jumble" occurs. The fact that the various objects that Sophie and the reader picked across Sophie's environment are displayed in the node in mumbo-jumbo significantly indicates that the text is a subtle imperative requiring an active move and participation from the reader. This illocutionary force of the text as an imperative is evident in the fact that the text, from this point, refuses to yield further until readers consciously arrange the labels of the objects within the dreaming space of the cabinet. In essence, if readers take the message in the node as mere subjective information from the speaker,

the text would come to an abrupt end where neither Sophie nor the reader (who stands in a better knowing position than Sophie) would eventually be able to decipher where the story actually ends.

For a text like *afternoon* which is a highly indeterminate and multiply story, the systems of mood and modality are actually creatively employed for the text's indeterminacy and multiplicity. This is too say that the creative deployment of the systems of mood and modality is largely responsible for the experimentations arrived at within the architecture of the narrative. For example, the first statement in "[begin]", the first node of the text, reads: "I try to recall winter".

I	try	to recall winter
Subject	Finite	
Mood		**Residue**
Given		**New**

Although the mood element of this clause indicates that the speaker is asserting using the declarative, the employment of the lexical items "try to recall" conveys the hedging in the proposition. On this ground, the clause depicts a sense of lack of conviction and commitment to the assertion in terms of modality. The implication is therefore that whatever the speaker recalls as the experience or nature of winter is not to be valued in terms of certainty of conviction. Invariably, the speaker is only making an attempt to recall and the outcome of the attempt could only be probabilistic rather than certain. This indication of making attempt at recalling the past would thus guide and justify the several self-erasing narrative trajectories of the text.

Another creative deployment of the mood system is evident in the polar question that ends "[begin]" – "Do you want to hear about it?"

Do	you	want to hear about it?
Finite	Subject	
Mood		**Residue**

The polar question could call forth three reactions from the hearer; that is the hearer could answer yes or no or could be indifferent. Whatever is the reaction of readers to the question there are three different trajectories that readers could pursue within the narrative according to their preferences. In essence, it is the system of the mood that is

exploited to provide the point of departure for the experimental malleability of the narrative.

One of the most significant deployments of the mood in the experimentations in *afternoon* is evident in "[I want to say]" which states: "I want to say I may have seen my son die this morning".

I	want	to say I may have seen my son die this morning
Subject	Finite	
Mood		**Residue**

I	may	have seen my son die this morning
Subject	Finite	
	modal verb **Modality = possibility**	
Mood		**Residue**

Within the single statement in the node, there are two propositions as the analysis of the statement show. It is however, the modality of the second proposition that most significantly forms the basis on which the indeterminacy revolving round the accident incidence and many other narrative strands in the text builds. The lack of certainty in conviction coupled with the act of recollecting a past event models the modality of the clause and defines the various shapes the narrative is capable of taking. Thus, with the narrative projecting out of probability, one understands why the accident occurred, seemed to have occurred, or did not occur; why the accident involved Lisa and Andrew, seemed to have involved Lisa and Andrew, did not involve Lisa and Andrew; why the accident victims died or were unconscious; and why Peter, Wert, or someone else could have caused the accident if it at all ever occurred.

The creativity with the deployment of modality is in fact put to more obvious use in "[1/]" where the twisty revelation of Peter as the cause of the accident starts building from:

> We **can** grant the truth as Peter conceives it. **Let us agree**, with him, that he was concerned about Andrew and distracted because the school said they could not locate Lisa. **Let us stipulate that**, in his anxiety, he **might** have lost concentration….

> **Let's agreethat** it is shocking, unexpected, to see this particular woman with him. …

> **Let's agreethat** he must feel abandoned – even, literally, out of control

The employment of the modal verbs "can" and "might" and the lexical items "Let us agree that" and "Let us stipulate that" which both act as modal adjuncts depicts how narrative tension builds on probability rather than certainty or conviction. Since the entire text is probabilistic and lacks conviction, then the reader cannot rely on the veracity of the text. This probabilistic nature of conviction in the narrative therefore successfully grows out of the indeterminacy and malleability from which the modality of the narrative initially projects from. With this game of probability in "[1/]", the reader's move into "[2/]" and then to "[white afternoon]" essentially build on this game and thus denies the revelation in "[white afternoon]" of the climatic tension and effect it would have yielded had the previous text in "[1/]" not built on probability.

> Granting all this, we are nonetheless left with history, which is nothing more or less than what synchronicity really is. … **"[2/]"**

> The investigator finds him to be at fault.
> He is shocked to see the body so beautifully there upon the wide green lawn.
> The boy is nearby **"[white afternoon]"**

The foregoing gives credence to the fact that the hyperfiction texts creatively deploy the systems of mood and modality in accomplishing their experimental ends. As a matter of fact, the manners in which the systems of the mood and modality are deployed in the two hyperfiction texts facilitate the accomplishment of several experimental turns. For *of day*, the creative employment of the systems of mood and modality is responsible for how the narrative gradually changes from Sophie's to the reader's in order for the reader to become a vital factor in the eventual evolution of the text. In *afternoon*, the creative deployment of the mood and the modality systems makes it possible for the text to enter into the systems of indeterminacy and malleability which enable the text to effectively produce different and even contradictory narrative turns. In essence, the resources of language play very significant roles within the experimental traditions guiding the hyperfiction texts.

6.6 Clause types and constituents in semantic processing

The consideration of clauses and their constituents is very vital to the stylistic interpretation and the semantic processing of texts because it helps to detect how the author has made language to mean and to what specific end. For example, the objective of the author of a text where simplexes dominate is significantly different from that of the author whose text vastly exhibits complexes.

More often than not, simple clauses are made to project the rapidity of the events within a narrative sequence; the naivety of a particular character; or the free-flow of language in the oral context where language evolves from psychological trajectories rather than from the sort of premeditated complexities associated with the written form of language. In situations where complex sentences dominate narrative sequences, there is a "tighter integration in meaning" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004:365). Though complex sentences help to achieve economy and integration of meaning, they slow down the rate at which the reader assimilates and processes language because they present the reader with complex structure of ideas as well as complex reading experience (cf. Leech and Short, 1981:219). Barzun (1975) (cited in Leech and Short, 1981:219) states that "The complex form gives and withholds information, subordinates some ideas to others more important, coordinates those of equal weight, and ties into a neat package as many suggestions, modifiers, and asides as the mind can attend to in one stretch." The indication therefore is that complexes call for all the attention of the reader while they, at the same time, demand rigorous semantic processing. In view of this, the time needed in processing and evaluating a text filled with complexes is much greater than that required for the text filled with simplexes.

A casual consideration of *afternoon* may presume that the difficulty in processing the text is entirely based on the hypertextual aesthetics of nodes and links which on many occasions deny the linked texts of causation and relatedness. However, the complexity in the language of the text depicts it as a "writerly" text such that its several postmodernist experimental aesthetics like cycles, repetition, fragmentation, collage, bricolage, and the rejection of spatio-temporal constructs have linguistic effects that direct the attention of the reader to the textuality of the text, as well as the processes of making meaning. As the explanations in this section illustrate, one basic factor that explains why *of day* is semantically more accessible than *afternoon* relates to the extent of complexity within the syntax of *afternoon*. Word complexes, group

251

complexes, heavy pre- and post-modifications, clause nexuses and clause nesting pervade *afternoon* and these all explain why reading experience is more difficult, challenging, and adventurous in the text.

Excerpt 1 below is taken from *of day* from the text on "match box" in "[describe]":

He spent a lot of time in the shed at night.|| Just tinkering, mainly.|| He kept it fairly messy|| because it was the one place [[he could do [as he liked]]].|| His wife hardly ever stepped her foot inside.

This excerpt is a narrative paragraph containing four sentences:

  S **P**   **A**   **A**   **A**
1. He| spent| a lot of time| in the shed| at night

  A   **P**   **A**
2. Just| tinkering,| mainly

         α   **β**
  S **P** **C**   **A**   **S** **P**   **C**
3. He| kept| it| fairly messy|| because it| was| the one place [[he could do [as he liked]]]

  S   **A**   **P**   **C**   **A**
4. His wife| hardly ever| stepped| her foot| inside

The structural analysis of the four clauses making up the paragraph indicates that clauses 1, 2, and 4 are simple in that they contain just one P element each. However, clause 3 is complex as there is a hypotactic relationship between an alpha clause and a beta clause. A degree of complexity is added to this clause as the C element of the beta clause is qualified by a rankshifted clause which in turn has a rankshifted adverbial group serving as adjunct. Unlike the other clauses, however, clause 2 exhibits an unusual structure as its subject element is elided. The clause poses little difficulty for semantic processing as the elided S is co-referential with the S element of the preceding clause. Basically, these clauses create little or no difficulty to readers because they all maintain simplicity in their structural elements.

In comparison to the Excerpt 1, Excerpt 2 below is taken from the node titled "[staghorn and starthistle]"in *afternoon*:

On the margins the lawn lapses into field,|| and the staghorn, the star thistle, the boletus rise|| and thrust in the far shadows,|| dark and singular things,|| stems [[veined]]|| and heads [[gilled, spiked, furled]]:|| most succulent in Spring|| or whatever season their youth is upon them,|| they grow hard and bitter and solitary with age;|| dry things,|| witnesses.|||

Unlike the passage from *of day*, this excerpt is just one sentence but evidently contains eleven clauses which maintain paratactic relationship through either linkages or punctuation marks such as comma, colon, and semicolon. The structural analysis of the sentence is as presented below:

<div>

      A   **S**   **P**   **A**
1. On the margins| the lawn| lapses| into field

    &   **S**   **P**
2. and| the staghorn, the star thistle, the boletus| rise

    &   **P**   **A**
3. and| thrust| in the far shadows

            C
4. dark and singular things

          C
5. stems [[veined]]

    &   **C**
6. and| heads [[gilled, spiked, furled]]

        C   **A**
7. most succulent| in Spring

    &   **A**
8. or| [[whatever season their youth is upon them]]

   S   **P**   **C**   **A**
9. they| grow| hard and bitter and solitary| with age

  C
10. dry things

  C
11. witnesses

</div>

A number of factors are responsible for the difficulty readers will experience while processing this particular sentence. Meaning-processing is not made difficult by the number of clauses in the sentence as with the complexity arising from the elision of

either or both the S and the P elements of many of the clauses. The elided S elements of clauses 3 - 8 are recoverable from the complex S element of clause 2 with which they maintain co-referential relationships. For clauses 10 and 11 that are predicatorless, their co-referential elided subjects supply their appropriate predicators. In this regard the full version of these elliptical clauses would read as:

3b.   and *they* thrust in the far shadows
4b.   *they are*dark and singular things
5b.   *they are* stems [[*that are* veined]]
6b.   and *they are* heads [[*that are* gilled, spiked, furled]]
7b.   *they are* most succulent in Spring
8b.   or *they are most succulent* [[*in* whatever season their youth is upon them]]

Apart from the elision of the S and the P elements of clauses 5 and 6, there are also instances of elision in the rankshifted relative clauses that function as Q's to the H elements of the C elements in the two clauses. This sort of elision which contracts the two clauses into "stems veined" and "heads gilled, spikes, furled" increases the degree of complexity in the sentence. Clause 8 equally goes a step further in intensifying complexity as the S, the P, the C elements are elided leaving only the A element which is a rankshifted clause.

Clauses 10 and 11 also contribute to the complexity in the sentence. In the two clauses, only the C elements are realised, the S and the P elements are elided. Nevertheless, both of the elided elements of the two clauses are recoverable from the S elements of the preceding clause 9. Other contributory factors to the complexity in the sentence arise from how the structural elements of some of the clause are constituted of group nexuses. For example, the tree diagram below shows that the S element of clause 3 is built up of the nexus of three nominal groups (NG) in a paratactic relationship:
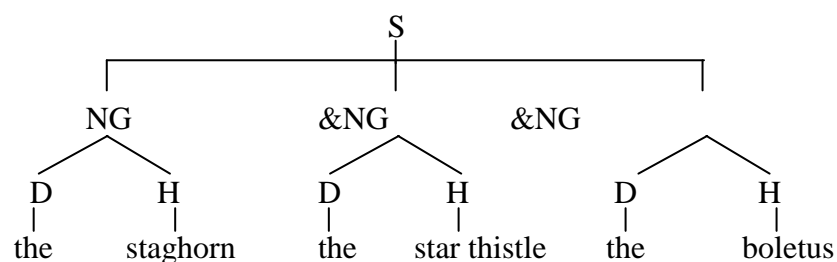
From the tree diagram, we arrive at S (NG ^ &NG ^ &NG) as the notational translation of the S element of the clause. In the same vein, the C elements of clauses 4 and 9 also exhibit complexity arising from the nexuses just as the C element of the rankshifted relative clause in clause 6 does. The tree diagrams of each of the three C elements are represented thus:

S P   **C**
*they| are|***dark and singular things**:
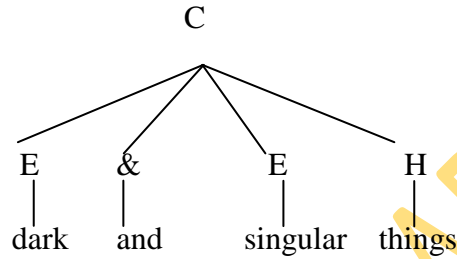
S   P   **C**
they| are| **heads [[***that are* **gilled, spiked, furled]]**:
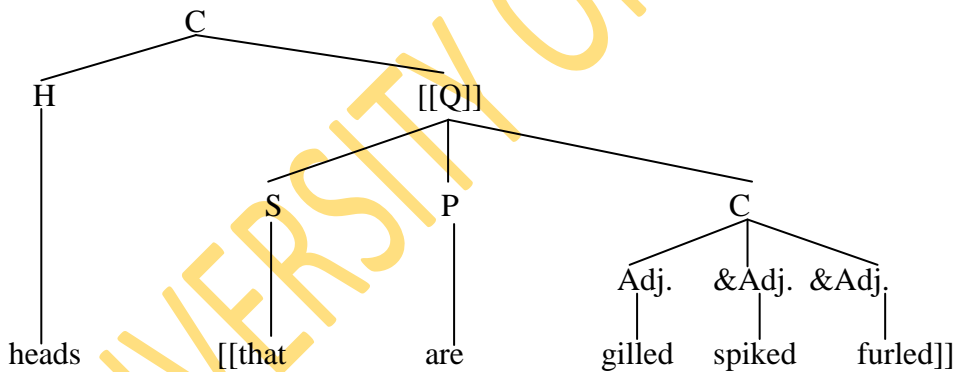
S   P   C   **A**
they| grow| **hard and bitter and solitary**| with age:
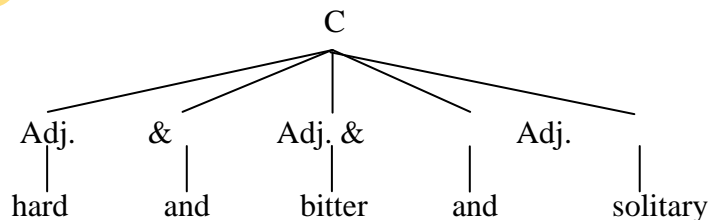
As the discussions above show, meaning-processing in excerpt 2 proves highly challenging because of the various levels of complexity in the sentence. This

255

complexity arises from such factors as the paratactic relationship existing among as many as eleven clauses; the elision of the S, the P, and the C elements of some of the clauses; the qualification of some nominal items by rankshifted clauses; and the paratactic relationship existing among groups which function as structural elements within the clause. Clauses 10 and 11, as well as the rankshifted clauses 5 and 6 exemplify the way in which the elision of structural elements of the clause can result in the gradual reduction of the clause to the extent that a single word could then occur as a clause. The gradual reduction of the clause together with the other forms of complexity in the sentence in excerpt 2 actually projects the aesthetics of the foregrounding of the linguistic medium which is reminiscent of the linguistic aesthetics that postmodernist fiction inherited from modernist literary traditions.

Where postmodernist aesthetics reflect in language such as the case is in excerpt 2, the language of the text tends to call the attention of readers to the presence of the text by deliberately moving towards meaninglessness, building up the text with the synthesis of minimal mimetic units, and employing words that are disengaged from both syntax and semantics. As McHale (1987: 154) puts it, "Characteristic of postmodernist writing is what might be called the device of deliberate nonfluency, the construction of sentences so awkward (to the point of ungrammaticality) that it is the sentence-structure itself that fixes the attention, distracting us from whatever content that structure might carry." McHale's submission directs our attention to the linguistic purpose Joyce attempts to achieve in the text.

Apart from a dense text like excerpt 2, there are other instances of complex sentences in *afternoon*. Excerpt 3, taken from "[I see such wonders]", is one of such complex texts. The complexity in the sentence results from the Q of the NG that functions as the apposed complement (=C) in the clause:

S   **P**   **C**   **= C**
There| is| one certain house,| a white ranch [without any evident architecture,] [[where an old man in cloth slippers, grey Dickey's, and a baseball cap tends his lawn, <day after day,> [[chewing the cigar]] [[and bending over,]] [[digging at the occasional stray dandelion,]] [[clipping the margins.]]

This sentence has the simple structure SPCC. However, the sentence is not so much as simple as its structural outlay may suggest. The sentence possesses a measure of complexity in the =C element because of its two Q elements: a rankshifted pG and a

rankshifted clause. The structural analysis of the =C element is as shown in the tree diagrams below:

```
                        =C
        ┌──────┬───────┬──────────┬──────────────────────┐
        D      E       H        [Q]                     [[Q]]
        │      │       │      ┌────┴────┐           (See tree diagram below)
        │      │       │      p         NG
        │      │       │      │     ┌────┼────┐
        │      │       │      │     O    E    H
        a    white   ranch  without  any evident architecture
```

```
                              [[Q]]
        ┌──────────┬──────────┬──────────────────────────────┐
        A          S          P                               C
        │     ┌──┬──┬──┐      │              ┌────┬─────┬──────┬──────┬──────┐
        │     D  E  H  [Q]    │              D    H  <A> [[Q]] &[[Q]] &[[Q]]&[[Q]]
     where an old man  in cloth  tends his lawn day after chewing bending digging clipping
                       slippers…                     day  the cigar over  at the… the margins
```
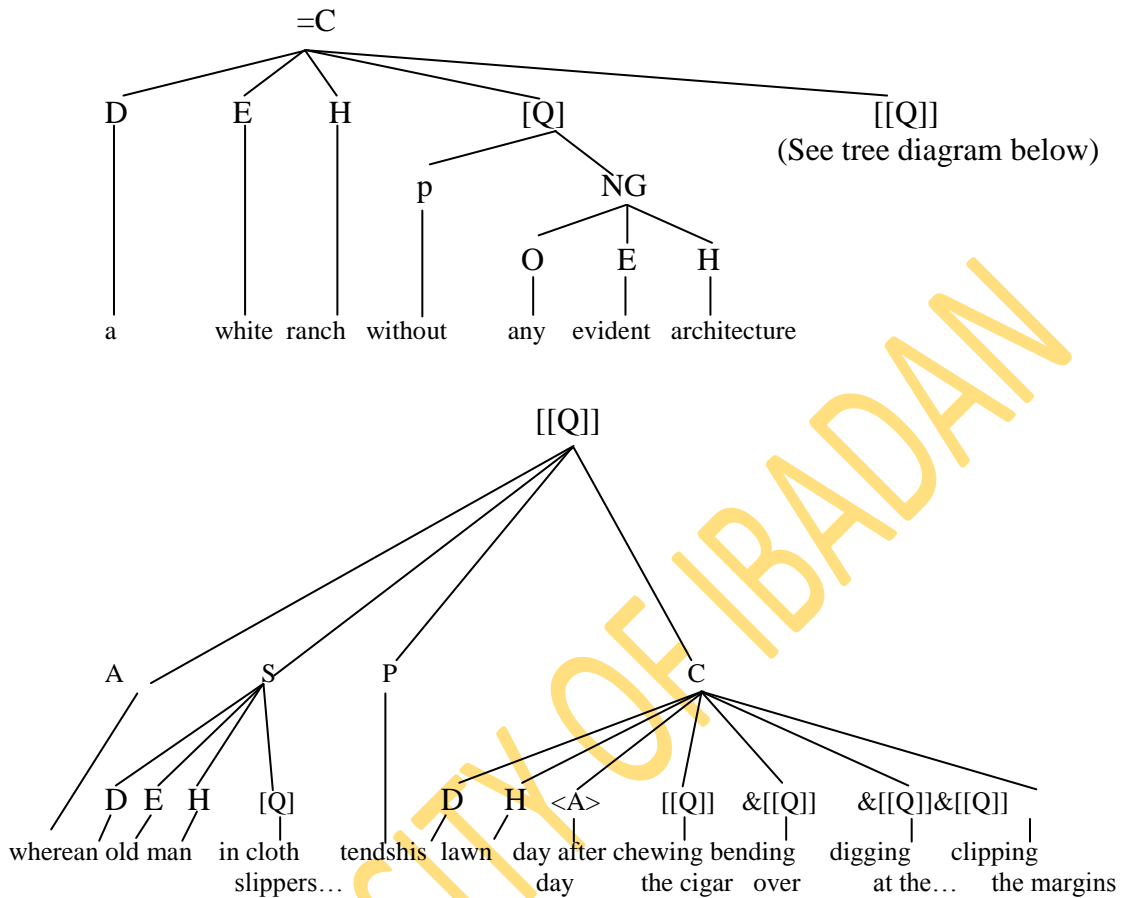
As the structural analysis of the =C element shows, complexity is achieved through the qualification of the H ("ranch") of the NG by a rankshifted group and a rankshifted clause. While the rankshifted group is not that complex, heavy qualification makes the rankshifted clause is highly complex. The H of the element NG serving as the S of the rankshifted clause is qualified by a rankshifted pG which has its NG built from the nexus of three NG's in a paratactic relationship:

```
    p        NG           &NG              &NG
    in|  cloth slippers,|  grey Dickey's,|  and  a  baseball  cap
    E        H      E        H             E   E   H
```

A further level of complexity is achieved in the rankshifted clause because of H ("lawn") of the C element is qualified by four non-finite clauses in a paratactic relationship:

$$\begin{array}{l}\overset{\text{P}}{}\quad\overset{\text{C}}{}\\ 1.\quad [[\text{chewing}|\text{ the cigar}]]\end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l}\overset{\text{\&P}}{}\quad\overset{\text{A}}{}\\ 2.\quad [[\text{and bending}|\text{ over,}]]\end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l}\overset{\text{P}}{}\qquad\qquad\overset{\text{A}}{}\\ 3.\quad [[\text{digging}|\text{ at the occasional stray dandelion,}]]\end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l}\overset{\text{P}}{}\quad\overset{\text{C}}{}\\ 4.\quad [[\text{clipping}|\text{ the margins.}]]\end{array}$$

Although it may not be as complex as those found in *afternoon*, similar cases of where rankshifted groups and clauses function as Q's to the H's of NG's are also noticeable in *of day*. One of such cases is evident in the following hypotactic clause in excerpt 1:

$$\overset{\alpha}{}\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\overset{\beta}{}$$
He kept it fairly messy‖ because it was the one place [[he could do [[as he liked]]]]

As shown above, the notational representation of the hypotactic clause is α ^ β. However, in the beta clause a case of complexity arises from the way a rankshifted clause is employed to function as the Q of the C element of rankshifted:
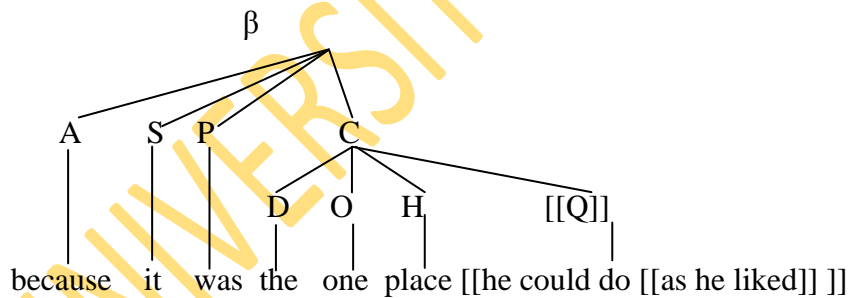
A further analysis of the [[Q]] indicates that a rankshifted clause ("as he liked") functions as an adverbial post-modifying the VG ("he could do"). In this case, the C element is an NP which has the following notation:

$$\text{NP} \rightarrow \text{NG (D ^ O ^ H ^ [[Q]] (NG ^ VG ^ [[AdvG]] (adv ^ NG ^ VG))}$$

The syntactic complexity in the hypotactic clause notwithstanding, the clause is not really difficult to process because of the fact that the rankshifted clauses are mainly

258

composed of simple clauses unlike the previous example (Excerpt 3) drawn from *afternoon*. This thus explains why the text of *of day* is much easier to semantically process than *afternoon* which profusely deploys complex syntactic structures.

Excerpt 4, taken from the node "[Peter, Peter]," is another example from *afternoon* which attests to the profuse deployment of complex structures in the text is:

> I remember the mayonnaise bottles, the instant coffee jars, the smells of egg or roasted beans which wouldn't scrub out, and their tops slit, punctured again and again with a bottle opener, and their plain grey bodies and the mysterious green glow, pulsing in a rhythm which even then you couldn't quite decipher, rising up from the grass and meeting, loin to loin, in the darkness

Like the previous excerpts taken from *afternoon*, Excerpt 4 is made up of one single sentence. The complexity in the clause poses difficulty not only in terms of semantic processing but also in terms of analysis. One way to analyse this clause is to view it as a simple clause with the structure SPC. In this way, it will be taken that the C element is composed of group nexus many of which are qualified by rankshifted clauses. In this regard, the C element is built as a nexus of seven NG's in a paratactic relationship – the mayonnaise bottles, the instant coffee jars, the smells of egg, or roasted beans, their tops, their plain bodies, and the mysterious green glow. In such a case, the NG's are qualified by rankshifted clauses:

(i)   the mayonnaise bottles, the instant coffee jars, the smells of egg or roasted beans [[which wouldn't scrub out]]

(ii)   their tops [[slit, punctured <again and again> with a bottle opener]]

(iii)   the mysterious green glow, [[pulsing in a rhythm [[which even then you couldn't quite decipher,]]]] [[rising up from the grass]] and [[meeting, <loin to loin,> in the darkness]]

The other way to analyse Excerpt 4 is to view it as a dense sentence that is built from a series of four clauses in a paratactic relationship. In this circumstance, three of the four paratactic clauses all have their S and P elements elided but in co-referential relationships with those of the initial clause:

      S   **P**   **C**

1. I| remember| the mayonnaise bottles, the instant coffee jars, the smells of egg or

                    C continued

   roasted beans [[which wouldn't scrub out,]]

      &   **S**   **P**   **C**

2. and [Ø: I]| [Ø: remember]| their tops [[slit, punctured <again and again> with a

   C continued

   bottle opener]]

      &   **S**   **P**   **C**

3. and [Ø: I]| [Ø: remember]| their plain grey bodies

      &   **S**   **P**   **C**

4. and [Ø: I]| [Ø: remember]| the mysterious green glow, [[pulsing in a rhythm
[[which even then you couldn't quite decipher,]]]] [[rising up from the grass]]
and [[meeting, <loin to loin,> in the darkness]]

Contributing further to the complexity in the sentence is the fact that clauses 1, 2, and 4 are qualified by rankshifted clauses. However, clause 4 demands readers' attention more than the other clauses as it displays a higher degree of complexity with the way the H element ("glow") of the C element is qualified by three rankshifted clauses with the first of the rankshifted clauses also having the H element ("rhythm") of the NG in the pG ("in a rhythm") in turn qualified by a rankshifted clause. The most complex of the Q elements is the one found in example (iii). The H element ("glow") of the NG has a rankshifted non-finite clause ("pulsing in a rhythm…") as its first Q. This particular [[Q]] equally has the H ("rhythm") of an NG in a pG further qualified by a rankshifted clause ("which even then you couldn't quite decipher"). In addition to the first Q, there are two other rankshifted non-finite clauses ("rising up from the grass" and "meeting, <loin to loin,> in the darkness") serving as Q elements.

As the analysis of excerpt 4 shows, the sentence making the excerpt is a complex one indeed. Where the C element is believed to be composed of seven NG's there arises a semantic awkwardness in the way the NG "the smells of egg or roasted beans" appear together with the sequences of "the mayonnaise bottles and the instant coffee jars" which provide the pronominal reference in the NG "their tops slit, punctured again and again with a bottle opener and their plain grey bodies". In normal circumstances, readers' world knowledge indicate that neither the smells of egg nor the smells of roasted beans could have tops that could be slit with a bottle opener nor do

they have grey bodies. In this way, Joyce adopts a postmodernist aesthetic that complicates the syntax of the text and thus demands rigorous processing from readers.

Another way through which complexity is achieved in the syntax and semantics of *afternoon* is evident in excerpt 5 which is taken from "[Jean Tinguely]"

<div align="center">1   2</div>

On some occasions the weather forces me to walk indoors,‖ and in these

<div align="center">3</div>

times I head for the mall‖ and join the crowd of stroke victims, recovering heart patients, and the emphysematous who walk there in all weather, breathing splendidly filtered air, wheeling their little carts of oxygen, wearing their pacemakers neatly stitched behind a flap of flesh, and like me, wearing their foam earphones.

The first factor responsible for complexity in this sentence comes from the paratactic nexus of three clauses of equal independent statuses. That apart, clause 3 demonstrates complexity through subject ellipsis, NG nexus and both rankshifted group and clause serving as [[Q]]. Interestingly, the rankshifted clause is in turn qualified by four non-finite clauses. This is analysed further below:

S   P   C

[Ø: I]‖ join| the crowd [of stroke victims, recovering heart patients, and the emphysematous] [[who walk there in all weather, [[breathing splendidly filtered air,]] [[wheeling their little carts of oxygen,]] [[wearing their pacemakers neatly stitched behind a flap of flesh,]] [[and like me, wearing their foam earphones]]]]

As shown above, the C element of clause 3 has an NG, the H of which is qualified by a pG which has a nexus of three NG's. Furthermore, the H in the NG of the C is qualified by a rankshifted clause which has the H of its C element qualified by four non-finite clauses. The notational representation of the C element of the clause clearly displays the complexity in the clause:

C → NG (D ^ H ^ [Q] (p ^ NG ^ NG ^ NG) ^ [[Q]] (S ^ P ^ C ^ A ^ [[Q]] ^ [[Q]] ^ [[Q]] ^ [[Q]])).

As a matter of fact, the vast employment of heavily modified and qualified hypotactic and paratactic clauses in *afternoon* greatly contributes to the complexity in the text. Although, there are instances of both hypotaxis and parataxis occurring within some clauses in *of day*, the fact that such clauses are made of simple sentences makes it easier in retrieving the syntax and the semantics of the text during any one reading

session. One example from *of day* where there are instances of hypotactic and paratactic clauses is excerpt 6 below which is taken from the text on the doll within the "[describe]" node.

> She knew that Susie wasn't just a doll. She was her real little sister. Susie came everywhere. In the daytime she would dress Susie up and feed her, then push her around in the white pram. At night she would wrap her in blankets and put her to bed.
> One time she even took Susie in the bath, but never again. She had screamed when she saw the water streaming endlessly out of her legs and arms and neck

The longest paratactic clause in this except contains three simple clauses:

<p style="padding-left: 2em">
1   2   3
In the daytime she would dress Susie up‖ and feed her,‖ then push her around in the white pram.‖
</p>

For the hypotactic clause within the excerpt, we have:

<p style="padding-left: 2em">
α   β
She had screamed‖ when she saw the water streaming endlessly out of her legs and arms and neck‖
</p>

For a text like *afternoon*, however, a one-clause sentence is usually heavily modified and qualified as the previous examples have illustrated. Excerpt 7 below is taken from "[I would have asked]".

<p style="padding-left: 2em">
                   1α   1β
I would have asked her to transfer me to U hospital or Children's‖ but part of
                 2α⁻   2β   ⁻2α
me does not yet want to know‖ and now <<-- having talked to her -->> another
                             3α
part wants to be the first to know,‖ or rather <<-- to be accurate -->> wants to
      3β   γ1   γ2
know‖ before I alarm her,‖ lest I am wrong‖ and Lisa forever ridicules me‖
              δ
because I have been needlessly protective and condescending.
</p>

<p style="padding-left: 2em">
                  α
Instead I ask her secretary to transfer me to Desmond's office in music, a little
</p>

β

sad,‖ because I am too anxious now to enjoy the little jolt of satisfaction and liberality I usually feel each time I ask my wife's secretary to transfer me to my

γ

wife's lover's office‖ as if their whole university were an obscene and inbred tribe of fools I ride above upon a crystal stallion.

This node is made up of two paragraphs and each paragraph is made up of one complex sentence that is built from the interrelationship of hypotactic and paratactic clauses. For the first sentence, the first clause maintains a hypotactic relationship between an alpha clause and a beta clause. The second clause is equally built on a hypotactic relationship. This time, however, the flow of the alpha clause is broken by an inserted beta clause. For clause 3, the nature of dependency is taken to a higher realm. In the third clause, an alpha clause maintains a hypotactic relationship with a beta clause. In turn, two clauses in a paratactic relationship are made dependent on the beta clause of the third clause. The second clause of the clauses in paratactic relationship is in turn in a hypotactic relationship with another dependent clause. For the second sentence of the node, there is just one clause with two levels of hypotaxis.

Excerpt 8 is taken from "[strawberries]" in *afternoon* and it demonstrates a complex sentence built mainly through the nexus of paratactic clauses.

1

She used her name in this way‖ in order to express the act of appropriation;‖

2

the menu presumably included everything [[that would seem to her a desirable

3

meal;]]‖ the fact [[that two varieties of strawberry appeared in it]] was a

4

demonstration [against the sanitary regulations of the household,]‖ and was based upon the circumstance, <<which she had by no means overlooked,>> [[that the nurse had ascribed her indisposition to an over-plentiful consumption

5

of strawberries;]]‖ so in her dream she avenged herself of this opinion [[which met with her disapproval]]

Except for clauses 1 and 4, the other clauses in this sentence do not display evidences of hypotaxis. However, this sentence, like many of the sentences already drawn from *afternoon*, creates complexity by using a clause to expand an NG.

The analysis thus far has the objective of indicating that the authors of the hyperfiction texts under study employ the syntactic system of language in very

263

creative ways. Heyward, through the employment of mainly simplexes, ably pictures the nature of simplicity inherent in the syntax of a narrative projecting from spontaneous thinking. Thus, through the employment of simple forms of clauses and clausal structures, Heyward connects the reader with the mind of the wandering character whose major objective for every task is to ensure the restoration of her dream life. Throughout the text, Sophie's major aim is for her dream life to be restored so that she could dream again. With the employment of simplexes for the narratives of the items Sophie collects from different locations in her environment, the reader is made to see the narratives as mere asides which do not command complex mental processing from Sophie.

In *afternoon*, Joyce demonstrates the skills of a master craftsman who knows how to bend language to his creative whims and caprices. Joyce not only employs complex clauses that are built on parataxis and hypotaxis, he also, on many occasions, intensifies the effect of complexity through word nexus, group nexus, internal nesting at various levels of syntax, and the expansion of NG's by rankshifted clauses. In many situations, rankshifted clauses will in turn exhibit internal nesting of various kinds. Invariably, Joyce's employment of expansion within expansion, rankshifted clauses within rankshifted clause, hypotaxis clauses within paratactic nexuses, and independent clauses within dependent clauses portray the postmodernist aesthetics from which the text evolves. In a very notable way, the various syntactic complexities demonstratively reveal the modernists aesthetics of drawing attention to language which postmodernist writers inherit and takes: "The foregrounding of style is hardly new with postmodernism, of course. It is already characteristic of the earliest modernist writing" (McHale, 1987: 148-9). Such linguistic foregrounding emphasises what Jonathan Culler (cited in McHale, 1987: 148-9) has called "labor theory of value" that is the situation "whereby the aesthetic value of the verbal art is to be measured in terms of the amount of the work that has gone into the production of the linguistic surface." In essence, Joyce's complexities in *afternoon* foreground the presence of the text and, as well, define the text as an experimental writerly narrative evolving from the carnivalistic revolutions of postmodernist writings.

6.7 Rhetorical uses of syntactic structures

It has been observed that the instances of regular and similar syntactic patterns in a text, usually serve semantic and emotional intensification purposes. Such

regularities which may occur either intrasententially or intersententially create memorable information patterns that have strong illocutionary force for emotionality. Parallelism and antithesis are identified as the two syntactic patterns which perform rhetorical roles in *afternoon*.

Leech (1969) (cited in Wales, 1989: 335) defines syntactic parallelism as "foregrounded regularity." In her own explanation, Wales (1989: 335) describes syntactic parallelism as a rhetoric device that depends "on the repetition of the same structural pattern". In Fabb's (1997: 145) view, syntactic parallelism involves:

> structural identity between two sections of text in three simultaneous senses. First, each section of text contains the same classes of phrase and word. Second, corresponding phrases bear similar grammatical and thematic relations to the predicator. Third, the corresponding phrases and words are in the same order in both sections of text.

Equally, Fabb (1997: 144) explains that parallelisms have functional and stylistic effects in three broad terms: "First, they are "a means by which the text takes form". Second, they perform a poetic function by "drawing attention to the text itself." Third, they "might be the expression of cultural oppositions". The significance of the foregoing is that syntactic parallelism is a creative deployment of language resources for the production of rhetorical and semantic effects in the overall development of the text. Of the two selected hyperfiction texts, it is *afternoon* that significantly deploys syntactic parallelism as a rhetorical device.

Right from its first node ("[begin]"), *afternoon* deploys parallelism as evident in the underlined sections of the following text:

> By five the sun sets and the afternoon melt freezes again across the blacktop into crystal octopi and palms of ices—rivers and continents beset by fear, and we walk out to the car, <u>the snow moaning beneath our boots</u> and <u>the oaks exploding in series along the fenceline on the horizon</u>, <u>the shrapnel settling like relics</u>, <u>the echoing thundering off far ice</u>. This was the essence of wood, these fragments say…. (*afternoon:* "[begin]", para.2)

These foregrounded regular patterns occur intrasententially and maintain the following syntactic pattern:

             S   **P**   **A**

i.   the snow| moaning|[beneath our boots]

             S   **P**   **A**

ii.   the oaks| exploding| in seriesalong the fenceline on the horizon;

             S   **P**   **A**

iii.   the shrapnel| settling| like relics

             S   **P**   **C**

iv.   the echoing| thundering off| far ice.

Although the fourisolated parallel structures have slightly different structural patterns, the similarity in their patterns is evident in the fact that each of the patterns builds on an underpinning formula: a particular *nominal item* is *doing* something – the snow moaning; the oaks exploding; the shrapnel settling; and the echoing thundering off.

    Another node in which parallelism plays significant role in encoding semantics and emotionality is "[metamechanics]" where parallel structures occur intrasententially:

> There is a booth where you can have <u>your blood pressure measured by a robot chair</u>, <u>your pulse taken from a strapped finger</u>, <u>your lungs checked by lifting ping-pong balls on a transparent column of air.</u>

> As the morning progresses the air of Pine Sol is overtaken by the inviting, wafting odor of onions and pepper from the east wing food court, Homage to New York. There, even at this mid-morning hour, <u>already sausages are simmering</u>, <u>already macadamia chip cookies are baking</u>, <u>already sweet & sour pork is frying</u> for the lunchtime crowds.

In the first paragraph of the node, the three parallel structures maintain the structure NG ^ VG ^ PG and they occur at sentence final position:

             NG   **VG**   **pG**

4.   your blood pressure| measured| by a robot chair

             NG   **VG**   **pG**

5.   your pulse| taken| from a strapped finger

             NG   **VG**   **pG**

6.   your lungs| checked| by lifting ping-pong balls…

The parallel occurrence of the three structures helps in encoding the emotions of the speaker who is awestricken by the sophistication and capabilities of technology. In the second paragraph of the text of "[metamechanics]", three other parallel structures are noticeable:

1. **A** already| **S** sausages| **P** are simmering

2. **A** already| **S** macademia chip cookies| **P** are baking

3. **A** already| **S** sweet & sour pork| **P** is frying

In "[Jean Tinguely]", there is also an obvious employment of parallelism:

> On some occasions the weather forces me to walk indoors, and in these times I head for the mall and join the crowd of stroke victims, recovering heart patients, and the emphysematous who walk there in all weather, breathing splendidly filtered air, wheeling their little carts of oxygen, wearing their pacemakers neatly stitched behind a flap of flesh, and like me, wearing their foam earphones.

In this particular text, the four parallel structures are rankshifted V^{ing} non-finite clauses functioning in the Q position of another rankshifted clause.

1. **P** breathing| **C** splendidly filtered air

2. **P** wheeling| **C** their little carts of oxygen

3. **P** wearing| **C** their pacemakers| **A** neatly stitched behind a flap of flesh

4. **P** wearing| **C** their foam earphones

Except for clause 3 which has PCA structure, the three others have PC structure. This reveals that the parallel parts of the clauses are the PC structures.

The fact that parallelism can be employed to encode emotionality is displayed strategically in "[Nausicaa9]". In the second paragraph of the node there are instances of clausal parallelism which depict the emotional attachment of the speaker to certain past incidences in her life:

…. <u>He'd shoot up</u> and <u>I'd smoke weed</u>, and <u>then he'd touch me</u>.

Here, the parallel three clauses all have the modal verb "would" in the contracted form. It is the contraction that actually adds rhythm and conveys the emotions of the speaker to the hearer.

As pointed out in the earlier part of this subsection, the other means through which syntactic rhetoric is accomplished in a literary text is through the employment of antithesis. As Wales (1989: 29) explains, "Antithesis effectively contrasts ideas by contrasting lexical items in a formal structure of parallelism." In this understanding, Wales (1989: 335) argues that antithesis is "Parallelism with contrast or antonymy." Although, antithesis does not occur in *afternoon* as much as parallelism does, there are some instances of the device in the text. It is necessary to point out that though antithesis functions as antonymic parallelism, it has virtually the same rhetorical effects as parallelism. In "[I would have asked]", there is an evident employment of antithesis:

> I would have asked her to transfer me to U hospital or Children's but part of me does not yet want to know and now -- having talked to her – another part wants to be the first to know, or rather -- to be accurate -- wants to know before I alarm her, lest I am wrong and Lisa forever ridicules me because I have been needlessly protective and condescending.

Within this passage, the relationship of antithesis is built among three sets of contrasts. In the first set of contrasts we have:

i.   part of me does not yet want to know

ii.   another part wants to be the first to know

iii.   wants to know before I alarm her

The contrasts in these structures are intensified by the employment of antithetical conjuncts – but and rather. The second set of contrast exists "lest I am wrong and Lisa forever ridicules me." The contrast in this statement is actually accomplished through the employment of "lest" as an antithetical conjunct. The last set of contrast exists between "protective" and "condescending."

The statement "They watch birds die and thrive" in "[staghorn and starthistle]" also achieves antithesis because of the antonymous relationship existing between "die"

268

and "thrive." Equally, the expression "They held out paper cones of water, they urged him onward, they wept with him, they cheered him" in "[(home)]" demonstrates a clear employment of antithesis. Here the contrast is placed among three sets of ideas: urging him onward, yet weeping with him, and yet cheering him. A more effective and prominent occurrence of antithesis in *afternoon* is evident in "[Lethe]" as the following shows:

> God forgive me for it, but there is nothing on earth as directly good as your first time riding the crystal stallion. <u>Nothing takes you as far</u>, <u>nothing keeps you so near</u>, <u>nothing makes you laugh</u> or <u>cry</u>, like the first time shooting up

Syntactic parallelism cannot be viewed as a mere coincidence in literary works. The creative deployment of this rhetorical device in *afternoon* demonstrates the reiterative significance of parallelism in the hyperfiction text. Apart from the fact that Joyce deliberately employs parallelism to reveal the psychological state and emotions of his characters, he also uses the device for the overall interpretation of the semantics of the text at various levels. Being a postmodernist and writerly text, *afternoon* displays various shades of complexity through complex qualifiers, group nexuses and nestings, complex clauses, multiply malleability and indeterminacy, cycles, repetition, and fragmentation amongst others which may ordinarily discourage the reader from pursuing the text far. However, with Joyce's employment of the device of parallelism which creates rhythm, he appeals to the reader's innate propensity for music to encourage the reader to continue with the reading and not give up. With parallelism heightening and modulating readers' emotions and expectations, the text dispenses with the dullness and monotony which the various forms of complexity in the text would have created for its readers.

6.8 Figurative expressions in language

The consideration of the figurative uses of language is one very important aspect of meaning in language. Because figurative expressions indicate how language is beautified in order to vividly capture the mental state of the speaker/writer, an analyst can thus not ignore them in the interpretation of how language means or is made to mean. Of the two hyperfiction texts, it is *afternoon* that vastly displays the employment of figurative expressions.

269

One very conspicuous flowery use of language relates to the elevated/grand style that pervades the narrative. Grand style, according to Wales (1989: 212), "is marked by a complex, periodic clause structure, elaborate epic similes, rhetorical devices of amplification and emphasis, etc designed to move the emotions of the reader or listener." Going by this definition, one understands why the second paragraph of lexia "[begin]" has a poetic effect as a result of the grand style used in the language of the text:

> By five the sun sets and the afternoon melt freezes again across the blacktop into crystal octopi and palms of ices—rivers and continents beset by fear, and we walk out to the car, the snow moaning beneath our boots and the oaks exploding in series along the fenceline on the horizon, the shrapnel settling like relics, the echoing thundering off far ice. This was the essence of wood, these fragments say…. (*afternoon:* "[begin]", para.2)

Equally, in "[staghorn and starthistle]", amplification is employed in rendering the text in a grand style.

> On the margins the lawn lapses into field, and the staghorn, the star thistle, the boletus rise and thrust in the far shadows, dark and singular things, stems veined and heads gilled, spiked, furled: most succulent in Spring or whatever season their youth is upon them, they grow hard and bitter and solitary with age; dry things, witnesses. …

Simile is another figurative expression that occurs in *afternoon*. The employment of simile is established in "[4 what I see]" thus:

> They seem to have taken care to sweep the street, and yet I am able to find a scattering of glass, here and there, glinting like raindrops in the late afternoon light in the space between the skidmarks.

Another instance of simile is found in "[yesterday]" as the underlined segment in the excerpt below illustrates:

> Four full days now it has crouched over us, the humidity like the exhalation of tigers, scratch of tough leather across the piss damp concrete

270

Actually, two sets of simile occur in this excerpt. The first likens the crouching of humidity to the exhalation of tigers while the second likens it to the scratch of tough leather across the piss damp concrete. With the expression "the piss damp concrete", the language of the excerpt becomes even denser as the expression is a clear manifestation of metaphor. "[Desmond]" is another node which characteristically exhibits the employment of simile and metaphor:

> Dark as a dog's ass with a nose like a dick and a pimply neck ….
> A regular guy, **a riot** when he lectures….
> Speaks like a hornpipe Irishman….

While the underlined portion of the excerpt clearly depict simile, the part in boldface displays the employment of metaphor.

Oxymoron is another figurative use of language that is evident in *afternoon*. Oxymoron, in Wales (1989: 332) terms, is "a figure of rhetoric which juxtaposes apparently contradictory expressions for witty or striking effects." An instance of oxymoron in "[(home)]" is the expression "they applauded his pain". In "[for the ordinary]", the instituted relationships between anguish and glitter and between emptiness and sing in the expression "Even their anguish has glitter of sort; even their confessions of emptiness sing" can be identified as oxymoron. Apart from that, the human quality of singing attributed to "confession" depicts personification.

One simple but crucial fact about the employment of figurative expressions in *afternoon* is that their occurrences in the text create semantic density in the text. As explained in the previous sections, *afternoon* employs various language resources for its complexity. Though figurative expressions beautify the language of *afternoon* in various ways, their engagement will further add to the degree of complexity in the text.

6.9 Summary

Thus far, our obligation in this chapter has been the consideration of those elements that are crucial for meaning-processing and meaning-making in the selected hyperfiction texts. Basically, we examined graphology, sounds, still images/pictures, and the dynamics of visual aesthetics as the non-linguistic aspects of texturality. Although these textural elements are non-linguistic, their applications have purposeful ends for the overall messages of the texts. More importantly, the analytical task reveals that in a multimodal text like *of day*, understanding all semiotic codes and resources as

well as their manipulations is highly significant in processing the overall meaning of the text. Jettisoning these non-linguistic codes will hinder the reader from gaining insight into the essential factors that are necessary for determining and unravelling the semantic shape of the text.

Apart from the non-linguistic textural elements, this chapter also explores the linguistic texture of the hyperfiction texts by examining the deployment of mood and modality, the nature of clauses and their constituents, rhetorical effects of syntactic structures, and figurative expressions. Observations from this exploration portray that various linguistic resources are exploited for experimentations in the texts. Whereas the mood system is, for example, manipulated in *afternoon* in order to build the text as a multiply and indeterminate narrative, the same system is employed in *of day* in such a way that the narrative which is practically autobiographical at its outset gradually turns from the acts of the central character to the reader's as it eventually compels the participation of the reader in the unfolding of the text and thereby redefines the notion of "self-story". In both cases, the linguistic resources of language are exploited for the erasure of the projected worlds of the postmodernist texts.

The ways through which linguistic items are manipulated explain the density and the complexity in the language, readability, and comprehension of *afternoon*. The vast deployment of word nexus, group nexus, internal nesting, and the expansion of NG's by rankshifted clauses within the clause structure indicates why the text is more complex and more difficult to process than *of day* which sparsely manifests these linguistic features. The various syntactic complexities displayed in *afternoon* portray the postmodernist aesthetics guiding its production as a writerly text that explores carnivalistic revolutions and traditions. The complexities continually direct the attention of readers to structure rather than to content in a manner that is reminiscent of modernist writing traditions. In almost every sense, *afternoon* seems to be establishing the submission of Gilbert Sorrentino (cited in McHale, 1987: 148) that "The reader will see that what I am driving at is that these words that he is reading – are words."

The examination of the linguistic texture of the hyperfiction texts points to the fact that textual experimentations are largely accomplished through the manipulation of language. In essence, this chapter reveals the palpable nature of language not only in textual experimentation but also in the new forms of textuality emerging from the digital culture.

CHAPTER SEVEN
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1   Introduction

Because the plastic quality and the multimodal nature of the textual space in the digital culture marks a paradigm shift from the scribal culture which the Gutenberg technology projects and commands, this stylistic investigation set out to examine how the potentials and possibilities of the digital technologies have broken down, reconfigured, and re[de]fined traditional text and textuality and how the rubrics of hypertextuality and hypermediality have expanded the ideas of composition and texts beyond being the mere representation of knowledge with topographic and visible ordering of speech in a mental space to being the representation of knowledge via visual, aural, and textual codes. We hold that this objective of the study is an inquiry into the nature of hyperfictional language. Hyperfictional language, as the language of screen textuality is a demonstration and reflection of how the facilities, potentials and possibilities of the digital technologies reconfigure and redefine text and textuality and, as well as, expand the basic ideas about literary composition/writing and reading.

The obligations of the study required us to select two hyperfiction texts – Michael Joyce's *afternoon, a story* and Megan Heyward's *of day, of night* – in order to examine how digital contexts determine and reflect in the structure, style, and meaning of digital texts. Systemic Functional Linguistics, adopted as framework and duly complemented by insights from Postmodernist Literary Theory and Applied Media Aesthetics, has proved useful in conducting a content analysis of the selected hyperfiction texts from a semantico-functional perspective. The semantico-functional approach connotes the description (identifying recurrent items), the explanation (adducing reasons for the use of the item), and the interpretation (deducing implications of the use of the items) of the verbal and the visual aspects of the hyperfiction texts. The findings made from the analysis of the texts are presented below.

7.2   Summary of findings

The selected hyperfiction texts have demonstrated that screen language is highly divergent from page-/print-based language. The hyperfiction texts manifest characteristics which define them as typical hypertexts. The distinctiveness of the selected hyperfiction texts establishes the emergence of new textual realities in the digital culture and also reiterates and justifies the claim of our theoretical orientation that context always determines the meaning and style of a text.

In its characteristic nature, the print text is tangible and fixed. For the selected hyperfiction texts however, the digital space entirely moulds them into virtual and simulated objects. Where the fixity and the materiality of the print text make its readers to construct meanings from an invariant base of semiotic codes and along a path predefined by both the technology and the author of the text, readers of digital texts determine the processes for the unfolding of the text by choosing and clicking from among obvious alternatives, their preferred links that would bring other parts of the texts to the screen. This new reading tradition thus redefines the traditional concept of the text as it (the text) now stands as the consecutive display of visible signs and personalised interpretations readers construct from a malleable and plastic semiotic textual base. With the text now personalised, readers are conferred with some level of authorial privilege since they and not the author are largely responsible for the consecutive text encountered and constructed during any reading session.

The fact that a reader's choice of a particular link implies the rejection of some other links and that the choices made during one reading session could be totally different from those that would be made during another reading session either by the same or an entirely new reader reveals that the concept of the text is redefined in digital media space. The existence of several traversal alternatives thus institutes multiple pathways within hyperfiction texts therefore making them (the hyperfiction texts) to be entirely indeterminate and fluid. Because of the possibility of pursuing the text via multiple pathways, narrative threads often collide and provide divergent and contradictory narrative turns. With this, traversal alternatives in the hyperfiction texts are highly significant to the accomplishment of the self-erasure and projected-world-erasure conditions that are notable in postmodernist texts. The self-erasure and world-erasure capabilities of traversal links explain why in *afternoon*, for example, Peter who at a time in a frenetic search for his ex-wife and son whom he believes are the victims of the that accident he witnesses on his way to the office early in the morning could

274

yet, at another time, be found guilty of causing the accident that claimed the lives of the duo.

As a matter of fact, hypertext features recall postmodernist approaches in a number of ways. With the selected hyperfiction texts losing determinacy and fixity to the multiplicity of traversal possibilities, the notion of context becomes totally unstable just as that of closure is deconstructed. This is because the two concepts are now dependent on the indeterminacy of the choices made by the reader during a particular reading session. The implication, therefore, is that the hyperfiction texts are examples of the self-cancelling, self-erasing, and world-erasing postmodernist texts. In essence, the multiplicity of traversal paths and their convergent, divergent, and contradictory turns in the hyperfiction texts manifest the aesthetics of postmodernist writings which project the multiplicity and plurality of interpretations in the belief that "Meaning is context-bound, but context is boundless" (Culler, cited in McHale, 1987: 148).

The new reading tradition instituted when processing hyperfiction texts is reflexive of postmodernist agenda as far as meaning-making processes in a narrative text are concerned. With the instability of context, the texts are in a constant state of "becoming" and meaning becomes entirely unstable, multiple, fluid, decentred, and indeterminate since context has become boundless. Be that as it may, the notions of the unstable context, the text as an "endless finishing discourse", and meaning as an indeterminate and multiple concept which the selected hyperfiction texts constantly project are all concepts reflecting the hallmarks of postmodernist thoughts and pursuits. With every reader empowered to construct their own text, the situation where an "Author-God" absolutely defines an absolute text is virtually overtaken. With the prominence of the reader's text, the indeterminate nature of the digital texts systematically yields and celebrates "local narratives" while at the same time overtaking the "grand narrative" that institutes the author as a god in the text. To a large extent therefore, the hyperfiction texts push forward Barthes' idea of the "Death of the author" which is a major postmodernist textual view/pursuit.

That apart, the fact that the reader's interaction with the hyperfiction texts is required for the unfolding hyperfiction texts imply that the hyperfiction texts are pure postmodernist texts especially in the understanding that "Postmodern narrative deepens the reader's involvement with the text by proposing new reading strategies, or by drawing attention to the construction of meaning"(Ryan, 2001: 17). Thus, the need for a reader to make conscious attempts and efforts at processing the texts is a perfect

alignment to obvious postmodernist epistemology. The birth of the reader's text is not only experimental but equally highly self-reflexive because it directs the attention of the reader to the textuality of the text as well as the processing of meaning in the text.

Actually, theorists have been systematically developing poetics on the postmodernist aesthetics of digital texts not only because digital technologies maintain a very strong relationship with the current postmodern cultural age but also because digital texts exhibit and fulfil many of the postmodernist agenda for text, writing, and reading. Many of the findings of the study in fact corroborate this fact and establish that while the selected hyperfiction texts imbibe the nature of their digital context to manifest unique features demarcating them from print texts, their hypertextual characteristics fulfil postmodernist agenda for the text not only in terms of content, structure, and style, but also in terms of their writing and reading.

One hypertextual aesthetic that clearly fulfils postmodernist agenda in the hyperfiction texts is fragmentation. Right from the basic nature of hypertext which splits all texts into nodes and links through to other forms of experimentations in style, we discover that the concept of fragmentation is very difficult to divorce from the nature of the digital texts. In *afternoon*, for example, fragmentation occurs in the arrangement of text within the textual space, in the abundant employment of intertextuality which inscribes the text as a combination of the fragments of quotations, different voices, and different ideas, and in the various experimentations with language. Just as fragmentation reiterates postmodernist rejection of the absolute and the total, it also enacts the idea of playfulness.

In one playful sense, fragmentation in the hyperfiction texts celebrates the text as a "game." The hypertextual architecture which splits the texts into nodes and links portrays a deliberate attempt to tear apart in order to piece together and this is a clear demonstration of the game of destruction and recombination. Another text game very close to this occurs in *afternoon* as the game of destruction and dispersal. Accomplishing this game task requires that some 114 words in a particular lexia ("[begin]") be dispersed across some 203 lexias in the text. As each of the 114 words occurs mostly individually across the 203 lexias, *afternoon* emphasises the idea of fragmentation and depicts its text as the settling shrapnel and relics of an explosive destruction. No doubt, only a highly demanding game of destruction and reconstruction can be applied for piecing the fragments together in order to breathe meaning on the combination of the texts of the 203 lexias.

The idea of "words-that-yield" in *afternoon* is reminiscent of a hide-and-seek game and the game of chance where the player may never be able to discern the outcome of either the-road-taken or the-road-not-taken. In *of day*, we notice that its most prominent fragmentation play is "piecemeal" or "bite-in-bits." As a matter of fact, the occurrence of the piecemeal-play perfectly pictures a game-world in that the readers'/viewers' determination not to be frustrated with the story bits they are fed usually earns them (the readers) new traversal possibilities and moves. In essence, the playfulness inherent in the experimental nature of fragmentation in the hyperfiction texts translates readers into players and the text into a game.

The other play implication of fragmentation in the texts is "language-as-a-plaything." The text game of destruction and dispersal occurring in *afternoon* as noted above is a typical example of how fragmentation implements language as a plaything. Apart from fragmentation, other features which implement the concept of language-as-a-plaything in the texts are multivalence/multivocality, repetition, and inverted repetition amongst others. In another dimension, features like collage and bricolage which play different languages against one another, are plain demonstrations of how to play with language. Far beyond all these features, a text like *afternoon* pursues its language game further by its manipulation of linguistic resources within the clause. In this way, the various manifestations of the deployment of word nexus, group nexus, internal nesting, and the expansion of NG's by rankshifted clauses not only points to the ways through which "writerliness" is accomplished in the text but also reiterates that a game is being played with the resources of language. In all of its manifestations, the idea of language-as-a-plaything reveals the palpable nature of language in postmodernist textual experimentations and in the new forms of textuality emerging from the digital culture at large.

As the notion of language-as-a-plaything clearly demonstrates, the fact that hypertextual aesthetics and architecture of the selected hyperfiction texts fulfil postmodernist agenda does not deny the manifestation of deliberate attempts at postmodernist experimentation by the authors of the hyperfiction texts. In essence, the deliberate postmodernist literary aesthetics and conventions employed by the authors of the hyperfiction texts indicate that the postmodernist definition of the selected hyperfiction texts is double-faceted. The deliberate employment of postmodernist aesthetics is, for example, evident in those instances of the deconstruction of linear time and the rejection of the idea of closure.

The denial of the sense of closure, for example, is inherent in the hypertextual aesthetic of multiple pathways since the reader would always have to personally arrive at a contingent sense of closure and "finishedness" during any reading session. It is discovered, however, that the issue of closure, many a times, transcends this hypertextual aesthetics. In *of day,* for example, the manner in which closure is handled transcends hypertextual aesthetics to reflect postmodernist aesthetics. From the outset of the narrative, readers have been prepared to find and locate closure in the night narrative on the ground that all the activities the main character embarks upon during the day time would translate to the restoration of her dream life in the night narrative. With such mental preparation, readers' expectation for closure is however disappointed on their eventual translation into the night narrative as the night map contains eight different nodes.

To intensify the rejection of closure, the narrative discourses of the eight nodes exhibit neither relatedness nor causality. Equally, the eight lexias do not satisfy readers' search for closure either for the entire text or for the individual stories projected in each of the lexias. Readers are therefore required to fill in the narrative gaps in order to arrive at the sense of closure either for the individual stories of each of the eight lexias or for the narrative of the entire text.This lack of a definite end for the text is a strategy for the erasure of the projected world of the text. As a matter of fact, the titles of the eight night lexias – "[in the river I could see]"; "[on the balcony, a man and a woman]"; "[something was written]"; "[slowly, the brush traced]"; "[from the earth I pulled]"; "[an urn filled with]"; "[backward and forward]"; and "[she spoke in a voice]" – depict incompleteness and fragmentation and adequately prepare readers for the lack of closure to be experienced in the discourses of the eight night narratives.

The multimodal nature of a text like *of day* is one other feature which brings a clear difference between the hyperfiction text and the usual print text. The text's multimodal nature therefore confirms that context will always influence the style and structure of any work of art. Because of the nature and vastness of the digital textual space, it can accommodate any semiotic and communication resource. By the employment of audio, video, and electronic written text within the textual borders of *of day*, one understands the heteroglossic tendencies in the carnivalistic revolutions of postmodernist texts. Such multimodal experimentations also reveal how the digital technologies are merging several key technologies like sound recording, movies, television, and print with the computer. Equally, the multimodal nature of *of*

278

*day*illustrates how the idea of writing/composition is being widened, in the digital culture, from being the assemblage of topography and the proper ordering of words in mental space to mean the interweaving and the incorporation of everything that could be heard or seen into the materials and meanings of the text.

This factor not only redefines the text but also redefines the nature of what is being read, how it is to be read, and who would read it. Just as the active participation of readers in the unfolding of the text redefines readers, the multimodal nature of the text redefines them too. Because of the multimodal nature of the text of *of day*, the traditional understanding of the term "reader" becomes insufficient in defining that particular individual processing the text. This is because at one time the individuals processing *of day* are required to read the electronic text, while at some other times they are expected to watch, to hear, to act, or to play.

The discussions thus far point out the fact that those questions which this stylistic study set out to answer have been answered by the analysis. We have been able to discover that the various hypertextual aesthetics noticeable in the selected hyperfiction texts justify the claim of our theoretical framework that context influences the stylistic shape of the texts as well as the stylistic choices made in a text. Through the various hypertextual aesthetics, the hyperfiction texts demonstrate that there are clear-cut demarcations between digital texts and print texts. With the hypertextual aesthetics, both the notion and the nature of the traditional texts are redefined. While the authors of the hyperfiction texts adopt postmodernist conventions for the composition of their texts, the basic architecture of the hyperfiction texts demonstrate how digital texts are fulfilling many postmodernist projects and agenda. These postmodernist stances will equally reflect in the manner in which language is manipulated and utilised in the texts. Through the strategies employed for the accomplishment of postmodernist stances in the texts, the importance of language in the experimentations as well as its palpable nature in postmodernist creativity is revealed.

The stylistic investigations in this work have centred on the fluid nature of the text and the textuality emerging from the revolutions of the digital technologies. This study has been able to establish the reality of a new textual culture in the current digital age and the fact that such reality marks a paradigm departure from almost everything that the textual culture stands for in previous technologies, most especially the Gutenberg.

279

7.3   Concluding remarks

With so much going on in the present digital culture, it is becoming obvious thatour world may no longer be able to return to a pre-computer/digital age. The emergence of digital technologies together with their potentials and possibilities indicate the emergence of new cultural realities; realities that suggest the need for the academia to pursue significant investigations of the digital culture. The reality of the digital cultural formations communicate the need to reassess the importance and the versatility of digital culture especially in terms of how digital possibilities and facilities are redefining the shape, flow, and processes of communication, reconfiguring texts, and providing different and new means for the representation and the production of knowledge.

Already many institutions of learning in the developed nations are developing curriculums and programmes that would investigate textual and other cultural practices currently evolving from the digital technologies. Such programmes like Digital Humanities, New Media Studies, and 21st Century Studies usually focus on the digital modes of research, analysis, and representation brought about by the explosion of digital technologies and investigate new digital public and communication environments and spaces; digital communication formats such as blogs, wikis, MUDs, Second Life, websites, amongst others; digital texts and media likehypertext, electronic literature, games and other forms of arts created and circulated primarily through digital technologies; online practices; new media and visual aesthetics; screen communication and textuality; and social isolation/isolated connectedness amongst a host of others.

In view of the various research possibilities the digital technologies are making available on a daily basis, it becomes obvious that this study has only been able to investigate a small percentage of the research possibilities available in the digital culture. It will, however, be necessary to take further steps by investigating the various ways through which the manifestations and practices of the digital culture are changing communication processes. Thus, the various ways through which digital cultural practices are redefining text, textuality, and communication methods and processes are some of the virgin research areas that need to be investigated. Equally, it would be necessary to study issues relating to the application of the digital text formats and their pedagogical and pragmatic implications.

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