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Interfictional Pockets

A Narratological Investigation of Temporal Hypotheses and Hypertrophied-Hypothesis in Postmodern Literature

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DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND INTERCULTURAL STUDIES
AALBORG UNIVERSITY

Jesper Christensen

Interfictional Pockets

**A Narratological Investigation of Temporal Hypotheses and
Hypertrophied-Hypothesis in Postmodern Literature**

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Interfictional Pockets. A Narratological Investigation of Temporal Hypotheses and
Hypertrophied-Hypothesis in Postmodern Literature

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My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you *see*. That—and no more, and it is everything. If I succeed, you shall find there according to your deserts: encouragement, consolation, fear, charm—all you demand—and, perhaps, also that glimpse of truth for which you have forgotten to ask.

Joseph Conrad, preface to *The Nigger of the “Narcissus”*

“When *I* use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.”

“The question is,” said Alice, “whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.”

“The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master—*that’s* all.”

Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*

Contents

Introduction to Thesis	1
Part I: Postmodern Theory	
1.0 Narratology	4
1.1 Introduction: Narratological Concepts	4
1.2 Gérard Genette's Narratology	5
1.3 Seymour Chatman's Narratology	8
1.4 Preliminary Conclusion	9
2.0 Postmodern Poetics	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 McHale and the Postmodern	10
2.2.1 The Shift to the Postmodern	11
2.2.2 Hypertrophy, a Postmodern Textual Concept	13
2.2.3 Towards Hypertrophied Hypothesis	15
2.3 Simulated Reality: Baudrillard and the Simulacrum	16
2.3.1 Introduction: Baudrillard's Notion of Hyperreality	16
2.3.2 The Theory on Simulacra and Simulation	17
2.3.3 Baudrillard's Four Stages: A Textual Example	20
2.3.4 Preliminary Conclusion: Baudrillard's Hyperreality	25
2.4 Gender Trouble: A Different Viewpoint	27
2.5 Preliminary Conclusion	28
3.0 Possible Worlds: Spatial Approaches	29
3.1 Introduction	29
3.2 Ryan's Possible Worlds Theory	29
3.3 McHale's Subjunctivity	36
3.4 Jameson's Spatial Postmodernism	37
3.5 Prince's Disnarrated	37
3.6 Preliminary Conclusion: A World of Difference	38
4.0 Conclusion to Part I	41
Part II: Elaborations on Theory	
5.0 Temporal Hypothesis	43
5.1 Introduction	43
5.2 Defining the Hypothesis	43
5.3 Preliminary Conclusion: Towards Temporal Hypothesis	44
6.0 The Individual Hypotheses	47
6.1 Introduction	47
6.1.1 Methodology	48
6.2 Hypothetical Analepsis	50

6.3 Hypothetical Narrative NOW	54
6.4 Hypothetical Prolepsis	59
6.5 Markers of Temporal Hypothesis: The Subjunctive	64
6.6 Preliminary Conclusion: Observations on Findings	67
7.0 Inside the Temporal Hypothesis - An Introduction	69
7.1 Introduction	69
7.2 Intrinsic to Temporal Hypothesis	69
7.3 Tense	70
7.4 Range	71
7.5 Mode	71
7.6 Degree of Realisation	72
7.7 Preliminary Conclusion	73
8.0 The Hypertrophied-Hypothesis	75
8.1 Introduction	75
8.2 Introducing Hypertrophied-Hypothesis	75
8.3 Sliding Scale: Reality to Hypertrophied-Hypothesis	76
8.3.1 On ‘Texts Containing Temporal Hypotheses’	78
8.3.2 On ‘Hypertrophied-Hypotheses’	78
8.3.3 On ‘Simple Hypertrophied-Hypothesis’ (‘hh’)	79
8.3.4 On ‘Complicated Hypertrophied-Hypothesis’ (‘HH’)	80
8.3.5 On ‘Beyond the Reality/Hypothesis Principle’	81
8.4 Hypertrophied-Hypothesis and the Postmodern	84
8.5 Preliminary Conclusion	87
9.0 Conclusion to Part II	89
Part III: Analysis Section	
10.0 Introduction	90
10.1 A Presentation of Author and Text	91
10.2 Nicholson Baker’s <i>U & I</i>, A Quantitative Approach	93
10.3 Cautionary Remarks to the Analysis	95
11.0 Baker’s Ninth: A Temporal Hypothesis Approach	98
11.1 Examples of Hypothetical Analepsis	98
11.2 Examples of Hypothetical Prolepsis	100
11.3 Examples of Hypothetical Narrative NOW	105
11.4 Hypertrophied-Hypothesis Exemplified	106
11.5 Preliminary Conclusion	109
12.0 Conclusion to Thesis	111
List of Literature	115
Summary of Thesis	120

Introduction to Thesis

To commence at the beginning of narrative theory:

The distinction is this: the one says what has happened, the other the kind of thing that would happen. [...] Poetry tends to express universals, and history particulars. The *universal* is the kind of speech or action which is consonant with a person of a given kind in accordance with probability or necessity; this is what poetry aims at, even though it applies individual names. [Emphasis his]

Aristotle: *Poetics*

In *Poetics*, on the topic of Universality, Aristotle describes the poet as one who deals with what *would* happen, not what *has* happened. In essence, hypothesis is ubiquitous in all sorts of texts, be it plays, poetry, literary works or the narrative of our daily lives. What could have happened, might be happening or could occur later are all suppositions of a hypothetical nature. Their presence is so prevalent that hypotheses often remain an integral, yet unnoticed, part of most texts.

In connection with the field of interfictional pockets in the postmodern text, little has changed. The rise of the novel has meant that poets have been eclipsed by authors, but texts are still mostly based on that which, potentially and hypothetically, *could* happen. However, as we will see demonstrated by three quotes on the following page, the fictional text is itself the site of hypothetical textual events – fictions within fictions – what I henceforward refer to as *Interfictional Pockets*.

Within the imaginary realm of the text we sometimes encounter yet other imagined realms. Such textual realms *inside* the textual universe are temporal hypotheses. These ‘interfictional pockets’ run parallel to the story proper and refer to hypothetical events in the past, present or future in relation to the told time of the narrative. This device creates abymes of alternative realities within a text and raises pertinent issues. These are highly relevant in correlation with the postmodern and the postmodern text which the interfictional pockets often permeate, at times even dominate. In order to better understand this theoretical area, a new terminology and methodology are needed.

In this thesis I shall limit myself to the area of hypothesis in postmodern literature. Texts of all genres throughout literary history do feature examples of temporal hypotheses. However, the self-conscious and overt awareness to the ‘funhouse of text’, which is at the core of post-

modernism, presents the most interesting area of investigation. To pursue this objective, a wide variety of different texts will be included in the research. This ‘corpus’ of texts is meant to function as background material from which to draw examples. The majority of texts belongs to the diffuse category of ‘postmodern literature’.

The aim of this thesis is to define this narratological device and to forward an applicable methodology by which to analyse it. Consider the following three quoted passages:

I just assumed it was all part of the gig here; that they’d probably rifled the glove compartment and found a notebook with my name on it.

Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*

That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain’s jawbone, that did the first murder! This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o’erreaches: one that would circumvent God, might it not?

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*

I have pretended in this book that I will be alive for the clambake in 2001. In chapter 46, I imagine myself still alive in 2010.

Kurt Vonnegut Jr., *Timequake*

Is the hypothetical content forwarded in these excerpts merely isolated theoretic textual entities, are they part of the realm of textual reality, or, are they both? And what effects does the use of hypothesis in postmodern texts potentially possess?

To address such questions it is necessary to define what temporal hypotheses are. However, in order to be able to embark upon this endeavour other theoretical aspects will have to be taken into consideration. For, since the label postmodern literature is so broad, it needs to be defined. Moreover, a theoretical framework is called upon in order for us to impose a more narrow scope in the thesis. Thus, the theoretical concepts of narratology and the postmodern will be introduced and defined to offer a more clear definition of hypothesis in the postmodern text.

Narratology is the theoretical field from which this thesis emanates, and with which it claims kinship. The overall aspects of this theoretical field will be defined by looking to the work of Gérard Genette and Seymour Chatman. Postmodernism, both its literary poetics as well as its sociological aspects, will then be dealt with. Here I rely on Brian McHale, Jean Baudrillard and Judith Butler for the necessary theories and terminology. Leading us towards the theory of interfictional pockets, I will first look at different other closely related theories. The pri-

mary text here is Marie-Lure Ryan's theory on Possible Worlds. Moreover, the theories of McHale, Fredric Jameson and Gerald Prince do also offer important views on the matter. The prevailing approach in these theories centres on the spatial plane.

In contrast to the aforementioned theoretical approach, the original theory forwarded in this thesis is based on the temporal plane. Thus, the theory of temporal hypothesis is the core elements of the main part of the thesis. The aim is to define temporal hypothesis in such a way that an ad hoc methodology will present itself. This is done by offering a wide array of textual examples in connection with defining the intrinsic elements of the individual temporal hypotheses. Finally, I will deal with the extreme examples of temporal hypothesis, the hypertrophied-hypothesis, to define the use of interfictional pockets at its most extreme level. This penultimate part of the thesis hinges all the proceeding sections, and is a decisive prerequisite for the final analysis.

The culmination of the thesis is an ad hoc analysis of Baker's novel, *U & I*. Thus, part III of the thesis will include the collective main points established throughout the thesis. Here, all the threads will be gathered when the terminology and methodology are applied ad hoc – to demonstrate the novel theory and methodology *in praxis*. The aim of the thesis is to define a theoretical foundation by which to grasp the postmodern condition and the pertinent concepts of its poetics. In turn, this will enable the dealings with, and understanding of, the many textual examples forwarded throughout the thesis. The intended result of this practical and hands on approach is to show the theory of temporal hypotheses and hypertrophied-hypothesis by ad hoc textual analysis. Hence, the overall aim is to introduce an original methodology and its novel key analytical tools – a new approach to the postmodern text.

Part I: Postmodern Theory

1.0 Narratology

1.1 Introduction: Narratological Concepts

This section will focus on selected works by two theorists: Gérard Genette and Seymour Chatman. Genette has defined the concepts that form the basis for the original terminology that will be defined in the ensuing sections. These terms are crucial for the basic comprehension and further theoretical development throughout this thesis. However, the structuralist approach that Genette practices is not without limitations. As a consequence, the need to introduce a second theorist presents itself. Chatman's elaboration on Genette's terminology is mostly a matter of ideological stance. However, the results are not merely subtle adjustments; rather, Chatman facilitates a most crucial link between structuralist narratology and a more subjective/readerly approach.¹ Moreover, this less rigid, text-only approach is also very appropriate when we turn to the more overall dealings with Baudrillard's analysis of postmodernism.

The area of reader response theory will not be included in the scope of the ensuing pages. However, this theoretical concept of theory does influence the analytical approach to literary texts throughout this thesis. Thus, the constructive criticism in this thesis does predominantly rely on subjective textual readings. More specifically, this entails Wolfgang Iser's overall belief that the subjective analysis is compatible with individual works of prose fiction.² Much credence is given to Iser's concept of how the author intends certain 'acts' to affect the reader through the medium of the written text and how the reader participates in this.

However, Iser goes on to observe how 'gaps' of indeterminable elements occur. Such gaps in the active act of communication between author and reader via the text are interpreted by the

¹ See the ensuing paragraph for a closer definition of the reader response theory.

² In his phenomenological approach to the reading process, Iser defines the communication between reader and text as a collective effort which creates the literary work:

From this polarity [Respectively, the artistic/the text and the aesthetic/the reader] it follows that the literary work cannot be completely identical with the text, or with the realisation of the text, but in fact must lie halfway between the two.

Iser, 1987: 274

reader in a creative participation with the given text. This is called ‘gapping’. Thus, there is an ‘actual reader’ present throughout the thesis: the analyst. Moreover, the approach to textual analysis in this thesis aligns itself with Stanley Fish’s sentiment that there is no universal reading of a given text.³

There should, however, be an apparent strategy to the analytical work: to offer insights into the concepts of temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis in postmodern texts. Hence, the concept of the reader/text analyst as an active and subjective part of the text-experience is prevalent in all analytical work to follow. There is only one individual reader available to the author of the text in hand: the author of the text in question.

As regards theory and methodology in this thesis, we may prudently concur with Bal’s view on her narratological theory:

It is not from a positivistic desire for absolute, empirical knowledge that this theory and its instrumental character should be considered to have been generated. It is, quite the opposite, conceived as it is because interpretation, although not absolutely arbitrary since it does, or should, interact with a text, is in practice un-limited and free.

Bal: x⁴

This point of view is considered to also apply to the original theory in this thesis, as well as how it is applied in practice.

1.2 Gérard Genette’s Narratology

The terminology used in this thesis owes much to the seminal work of French theorist Gérard Genette. Therefore it is deemed necessary to, briefly, account for his work in the field of narratology. The focus will be specifically on those concepts in Genette’s terminology that constitute the theoretical groundwork for this thesis. It is through this foundation that the further theoretical trajectory of this text will emanate. Thus, a brief introduction will follow. First on Genette’s structuralist project on narrative discourse and then on some specific terms and concepts, which are relevant for this thesis.

³ See List of Literature: Fish.

⁴ The quoted passage appears in Bal’s 1985 preface to her first edition of *Narratology – Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. In the preface to the second edition, she affirms her views by stating that she is now: “trying to emphasize more the role of narratology as a heuristic tool, not an objective grid providing certainty”. (Bal: xiii).

Genette's overall methodological approach is that of structuralism. Following in the footsteps of the formalist Tzvetan Todorov⁵, Genette centres on literary analysis. Hence, in the text of relevance to us, *Narrative Discourse – An Essay in Method*, from 1980⁶, Genette has chosen to centre his methodological essay on Marcel Proust's classic novel, *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Being a structuralist, Genette declares his methodological aim to be to establish a system of 'co-ordinates', a 'grid', which can serve as the yardstick by which to investigate any narrative. As he states: "[B]y seeking the specific I find the universal [...] there are no objects except particular ones and no science except of the general." (Genette, 1983: 23).

In Genette's thorough analysis of Proust's aforementioned novel, he forwards his structural 'grid'. On the macro-level, a narrative is comprised of three basic components: the *Story* (the signified/the narrative content), the *Narrative* (the signifier, that is, the statements that comprise the discourse in the text itself) and *Narrating* (producing the narrative action/the entire real or fictional situation in which the action/plot of the narrative takes place).⁷ Thus, it is evident that to Genette 'the text is all', that is, only this aspect of the narrative is available to the textual analyst. The crux of the matter is that Genette, in dealing exclusively with textual matters, concentrates on how, or in which way, a textual matter is presented.

Genette divides the aspect of narrative into three categories: *Tense*: the temporal relationships between narrative and story; *Mood*: the modalities of the narrative 'representation' in a given narrative; and *Voice*: the narrating – the relation with the subject of the enunciation. It is the first category of tense that we will focus on. Thus, within Tense there are three sub-categories: *Order*, *Duration* and *Frequency*. The second of these categories deals with the span of the whole of, as well as parts of, a narrative. The third category delineates how portions of a narrative are, or seem to be, unique or iterative events in a narrative.

Of relevance here, however, is the first category within Tense, namely Order. When analysing a narrative, one analyses the order in which the different parts of it appear. According to Genette, temporality in a text is non-existent. Rather, the fundamental quality of textual temporality is 'borrowed' metonymically from the actual reading of the text. Hence, temporal

⁵ Todorov's *Grammaire du Décaméron* from 1969 coined the term 'narratologie', that is, narratology. His formalist approach follows the tradition of Russian formalism and French structuralism. (See also List of Literature: *John Hopkins University Guide to Literary Theory*).

⁶ Gérard Genette's "Discours du récit") is a portion of Figures III, which was originally published in 1972 by Editions due Seuil. The subsequent translated version, *Narrative Discourse – An Essay in Method*, was first published eight years later.

⁷ See Genette, 1983: 27.

progression is an illusion derived from the literary convention of how we perceive the printed text on the page. In his evaluation of duration, Genette arrives at the conclusion that all time in a narrative is *pseudo-time*.

However, narrative time can still be investigated, even if it is a mere illusion. Thus, when dealing with the aspect of narrative order, Genette distinguishes between: a) the ordering of the events in the narrative discourse, and b) the order of succession of these in the story. *Anachrony* is the term which Genette has for any discrepancy between discourse and story.⁸ However, he finds that the rise of different types of experimental texts, which began to occur from the 1960s and onwards, gave rise to a confrontation with this relation. In such texts the author often goes to great lengths to sabotage the relationship between story and discourse.⁹

Regarding the thesis in hand, Genette's distinction between story and discourse is not considered a focal point. As such, an investigation between two different textual tiers - textual 'reality' or hypothetical textual reality - does not involve an investigation of the story/discourse relationship - at least not primarily. However, the terminology that Genette generates to define and describe these discrepancies still features highly relevant concepts, even if they are brought to use in a different context in this thesis. Thus, the conceptualisation of discrepancies between story and discourse is still a latent force. Moreover, it is a cornerstone in the investigation of the relationship between textual 'reality' and hypothetical textual reality. Throughout the ensuing pages the intention is to activate this hitherto uncharted area via defining and describing it.

Returning to Genette's actual terminology on anachrony, two concepts are of crucial relevancy: *Analepsis* and *Prolepsis*. The prefix of the term analepsis is derived from the Greek 'ana': through, back, over, again. The prefix of prolepsis is the exact antithesis of analepsis. The Greek root of the word 'pro' means: to be ahead of, or, be in front of. Interestingly, Genette observes that the final part of the word, 'lepsis', is a play on two different Greek

⁸ The term 'anachrony' is not meant to imply that there can be such a state as a 'zero degree', that is, a complete temporal synchronicity, between the story and the narrative. Rather, one defines the story/discourse relationship according to this imaginary middle ground. (See Genette, 1983: 35-6). For comparative analyses of these terms, see Christensen: 2001 b and Christensen: 2002.

⁹ Genette's body of reference is predominantly classic and modernist French texts with the occasional example from Western literature, for example Robbe-Grillet's texts as well as Borges'. However, the term 'experimental novel' is the closest he gets to intimating any literary 'movement' that could be perceived as beyond modernism. Interestingly enough, he does consider Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* to be a novel that subverts and perverts time. Hence, his prime literary example does seem to be at the very cusp, if not indeed beyond, structuralist description. We can assume that Genette is aware of postmodernism even if he is reluctant to include the terminology. (See Genette, 1983: 160).

words: ‘leipse’, which Greek root refers to the fact of taking, taking responsibility for and taking on; and ‘lipse’, where the root refers to the act of leaving out or passing by without any mention.¹⁰

The reason for this ambiguity has to do with two other concepts that Genette forwards to describe gaps in narratives: paralipsis (it is sorted out what is left *in* and/or *out* of the description of an event), and ellipsis (a completely elided event). These latter two concepts fall outside the focus of this thesis. Contrarily, the ambiguity within the word ‘leipsis’ is a constant reminder of the fact that both analepsis and prolepsis are concepts that refer to acts that, simultaneously, have the capacity to take on and/or leave out. Seen in relation to the overall regressive or progressive nature that these two concepts exert on the temporal level of a narrative, this opens up for a wide array of possibilities when we address the relationship between hypothesis and reality.

In summation, there is a clear distinction between analepsis (evokes that which came before) and prolepsis (evokes what will happen later). It is this immediate binary opposition that will be referred to in the remainder of this text. Having defined the ‘before’ and ‘after’, there is one important part of temporal narrative order that needs to be ratified. Logically, then, between ‘before’ and ‘after’ is the narrative construct of ‘now’. To do this we now turn to Seymour Chatman’s definition of the concept ‘*Narrative NOW*’.

1.3 Seymour Chatman’s Narratology

In 1978, Seymour Chatman published *Story and Discourse – Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. His approach is influenced by structuralism and Genette’s work in his *Narrative Discourse*. As the title indicates, Chatman introduces a second level to narrative analysis: the Story. Where Genette considers the text to be the only source of data available, Chatman ‘bifurcates’ Genette’s concept of narrative time as pseudo-time. Thus, Chatman discriminates between *discourse-time* (the time spent to ‘peruse’ the text) and *story-time* (the duration of the events in the plot). Such a division gives rise to many interesting questions into the relationships between these two levels of a text.¹¹ However, here it will suffice to concentrate on Chatman’s definition of the illusion of pseudo-time in a narrative that is co-contemporary. As

¹⁰ Ibid. 40, especially footnote 11.

¹¹ For example, we see (in accordance with his bifurcation of texts into story and discourse) how Chatman distinguishes between story-NOW and discourse-NOW.

he expresses it: “Narratives establish a sense of a present moment, the *Narrative NOW*, so to speak”. [Emphasis mine] (Chatman: 63). By this definition, Chatman does not radically alter Genette’s theoretical delimitations; however, his difference in nomenclature simplifies our comprehension of the concept.

There is, however, also the matter of Chatman’s inclusion of the level of story to consider. By taking his departure in logic, and not in the text as such, his overall approach clearly differs from that of Genette’s text-only approach. The major difference is that Chatman includes the reader rather than, as Genette does, only concentrates on the technical aspects in the text. Thus, the temporal aspect of the Narrative NOW is a construct established by the reader. It is this temporal ‘zero-point’ by which the reader navigates the temporal plane of the text. It is via the Narrative NOW that the reader can determine any occurrence of analepsis or prolepsis.

Chatman’s approach lets the reader set up a subjective narrative NOW. Rather than Genette’s attempt to establish a structural and, implicitly, objective temporal zero-point, Chatman allows the reader to make a choice. However, the choice is not arbitrary. Rather, it is a matter of logic. Thus, the reader is still obliged to carry out a cross-reference: a Narrative NOW is established by a contemplation of the story *and* the discourse. By implication there may be more than one sense of time present in a text; however, it is actually the reader who determines the Narrative NOW; it is not possible to deduce it by a structuralist approach alone. It is, then, in the tension between the textual discourse and the reader that the story is created.

1.4 Preliminary Conclusion

The overall difference between Genette and Chatman is that the latter allows for more diverse readings. A structuralist approach which sets out to deduce answers from the text alone operates within a narrow scope. However, if we make allowance for its scope to include readerly subjectivity, then, the structuralist approach of close textual scrutiny benefits greatly. Moreover, if one is intent on analysing postmodern texts, Chatman’s approach is more adaptable, and thus more appropriate with these.

2.0 Postmodern Poetics

2.1 Introduction

To be able to focus on postmodern issues we first need to address the term ‘postmodern’. However, this is not the forum for an etymological investigation. The case in point is, rather, to introduce and delimit the ramifications that arise when we examine the concept of literary reality within a postmodern scope. Throughout this thesis, we will encounter the notion of, respectively, reality and alternative reality as co-existing textual parallels. To better appreciate this, the aim of this section is to expound on the notion of postmodern reality.

The main part of this section focuses on and discusses Baudrillard’s theory. However, McHale is presented first to help define key postmodern concepts, which are crucial in relation to both Baudrillard as well as the original theory introduced in this thesis. Finally, Judith Butler’s approach via social constructivism to issues of gender, the subject and identity will be used as a contrast to Baudrillard’s more general views on contemporary society. The aim is not to go into greater detail, but to counterbalance the cul-de-sac of perpetual simulation which Baudrillard sees contemporary society to be trapped in. Thus, Butler’s focus on gender in contemporary society is re-conceptualised into the more general scope that Baudrillard employs in his theory. The intention is to offer a different, more positive view on contemporary society as opposed to Baudrillard’s somewhat defeatist attitude of contemporary society. The theoretical contents in this section are elaborated via textual examples. This is done to elucidate the theories as well as to show the relevance these have to matters of a textual/literary nature.

2.2 McHale and the Postmodern

It is of crucial significance that McHale’s text, *Postmodernist Fiction*, is proclaimed to belong under the category of descriptive poetics. Thus, what McHale intends is to: “construct the repertory of motifs and devices, and the system of relations and differences, shared by a particular class of texts”. (McHale, 1999: xi). This coincides with an important aim of this thesis, which is to define and, to some extent, lay bare a fictional device in postmodern literature. Moreover, a great debt is owed to McHale. For, his demarcations of the area concerning the creation of topological worlds has contributed to the core concerns of the text in hand to a de-

gree that is of inestimable importance. More precisely, it is McHale's short, but succinct, dealings with hypertrophy that helped spawn the concept of the hypertrophied-hypothesis.¹²

However, McHale also provides a good formulation of what 'the postmodern' is. Thus, we will begin by taking a closer look at this before returning to the hypertrophy. This will familiarise us with concepts and terms such as ontology, zone, trope and 'flicker' as McHale himself deploys these. By extension, McHale's definitions and terminology are acknowledged and used throughout this thesis.

2.2.1 The Shift to the Postmodern

McHale defines the shift from modernist to postmodernist fiction as a shift in dominant. The definition of a dominant is taken from the Russian formalist Roman Jakobson, who in 1935 defined it as the focusing component of a work. In the evolution of poetics, it is the change of the dominant artistic devices that defines and influences the other devices used within one, and subsequently, several texts. Thus, a shift of dominant indicates a development through change in the history of literary texts.

One might object to the use of the dominant as promoting analytical inexactitude, since texts are rarely easily condensed into an absolute index of artistic devices used. However, if we address the definition of the dominant on a sliding scale upon which to place *literary tendencies*, it becomes more applicable.¹³ To detect and describe shifts in the dominant is a convenient, albeit somewhat *approximate*, classification of texts. Thus, to describe a change in dominant is not an exact science; rather, it is a good indicator by which to observe literary tendencies. Such findings: "[depend] upon the level, scope, and focus of the analysis". (McHale, 1999: 6). Furthermore, there is most likely more than one dominant present in a given text at a given historical time.¹⁴ Again, the angle of entry to a text, or body of texts, is a most decisive influence on the result. Returning to McHale, he defines the transition in literature from modernism to postmodernism as being the shift in the dominant from epistemology to ontology.

¹² See McHale: 1999: 133-47, especially pages 137-40 on hypertrophy.

¹³ For a further corroboration of this contingency, see section 3.5 on Prince's views on dealing with the hypothetical.

¹⁴ Here we might ponder the significance of both the historical and/or theoretical environment that a text is, respectively, *produced* and *received* in. In order to avoid committing the intentional fallacy, any speculation as to the intention of the author is beyond our analytical grasp. However this may be a moot case since the fact remains that we are right to assume that intention is indeed present; that intent/intention cannot be determined is not the same as to render its existence invalid. In the reception of a text the analyst will always favour one or more dominants over others. The degree to which the analyst is conscious of and/or attentive to personal and analytical preferences is another matter. In the case of this thesis, the determination of the dominant is strongly influenced by McHale's findings as further described immediately below in this section.

Modernist fiction puts epistemology in the foreground and explores questions that arise from this approach. For example: how do we interpret the world we live in, what can we find when we examine our world, what and how do we know that which we know and what are the limits of such knowledge?

Postmodernist fiction focuses more on ontological matters. Thus, the nature of the questioning is seen as more introspective to the process of questioning. Typical questions are: what world is this, what does this, or any, knowledge do to our mode of existence and so on. Expressed very simply, modernist investigations are more analogous to questions that a detective might ask. Considering postmodernism, a 'literary detective' is still present, albeit his ontological inclination aims the line of questioning at his own activities. Often, postmodern texts investigate matters of the text itself: what is a world, how are textual worlds constructed/violated, what is the ontology of the text at hand and so on.

In the case of both modernist and postmodernist texts, the dominant is the mode of questioning that holds hegemony, which is not the same as to say that any other strategy is non-existing. The fact remains that a postmodern text contains matters and strategies of epistemological nature, and that the opposite circumstances also manifest themselves. The dominant is the most present of strategies, thus it is not a matter of mutually exclusive textual devices or phenomena.¹⁵

When, then, did postmodernism become a dominant in literary text? Above, we have established the dominant as a sliding scale upon which to define literary texts. It is not surprising to see McHale begin to consider texts from as early as the beginning of the 1950s as postmodern.¹⁶ For example, he sees Samuel Beckett's writing in this decade as undergoing a transition in dominant from modernist to postmodernist.¹⁷ It will go beyond the scope of this thesis to attempt to establish the nadir and zenith of the postmodern dominant (if indeed such an under-

¹⁵ For instance, the plots in Thomas Pynchon's novels *The Crying of Lot 49* and *Gravity's Rainbow* and Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy* are, on some levels at least, similar to those in classic detective novels. In the genre of the detective novel epistemological issues are the primary/dominant concern: who did what, and so on. However, the level of textual self-consciousness omnipresent in the postmodern texts, such as those by Pynchon and Auster, results in a stronger focus on ontological matters.

¹⁶ McHale illustrates his point by submitting the example of the Irish/French author Samuel Beckett's 1950s trilogy *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnameable* (Published in French in '50, '51 and '52; translated into English, in, respectively, '55, '56' and '59). See McHale: 1999: 12-3

¹⁷ The same tendency is observed by McHale in relation to several other writers, such as the French Alain Robbe-Grillet, the Mexican Carlos Fuentes, the Russian/American Vladimir Nabokov, and the Americans Robert Coover and Thomas Pynchon. Hence, the postmodern is a literary phenomenon across all the literary scenes throughout the western world. (Ibid.: 12-25).

taking is at all possible). Suffice it to say that some literary texts from the 1950s up to the present are predominantly dominated by the postmodern. Again, to establish whether or not the postmodern is/ever has been *the* dominant literary mode is beyond the aim of this thesis.

We can, then, surmise that to render a text ‘postmodern’ is, to some extent, a *performative* action. This is not to say that the label can be put on all texts; however, we might render some texts as ‘highly postmodern’, ‘slightly postmodern’, ‘postmodern’, or, ‘not postmodern’, as well as various graduations of such terms. The issue here is not to evaluate the ‘postmodern nature’ of texts, rather it is to stress the point that the determination of a text as, say, postmodern is not an absolute act. However, we can provide a convincing argument by producing textual evidence which indicates that a given text is postmodern.¹⁸ The following section focuses on some key postmodern poetic concepts as formulated by McHale. These lay some important foundations for the overall investigation of hypertrophied-hypothesis.

2.2.2 Hypertrophy, a Postmodern Textual Concept

According to McHale, postmodern usage of metaphor invokes some significant qualities and effects. The usage of metaphor implies both a literal meaning as well as a fictional meaning. This duality arises when a concept from the literal world (as we know it and live in) clashes with its meaning/significance in the fictional world. The meteorological phenomenon snow, for example, is tangible to us. However, in a textual universe it may take a metaphorical significance as a void, Death, loneliness and so on. Moreover, metaphors can develop into realities within their respective fictional world. Such ‘realized metaphors’ may develop into autonomous entities inside a textual world.

Throughout the remainder of this section, we will refer to such fictional worlds mainly as ‘topos’ or ‘topoi’.¹⁹ The often limited place/topos that a fictional ‘world’ constitutes is not to be mistaken with the more generic use of the term ‘world’. ‘Topos’ can refer to isolated areas, such as ones neighbourhood, the ‘Western world’ or our entire planet – indeed McHale also refers to such worlds as ‘zones’. However, by separating the concept of the real world from the fictional place of the topos we establish a didactic difference.

¹⁸ For further on the issue of defining texts as (proto-) postmodern, see section 2.3.3.

¹⁹ The term ‘topos’ is usually used in connection with describing various concepts of ‘place’ on the *spatial* plane. This is indeed the case in connection with McHale’s spatial approach to postmodern metaphor/hypertrophy as delineated in this section. However, throughout the sections on hypertrophied-hypothesis below, especially in section 8.4, the term topos is used in connection with *temporal* concepts. As such, ‘topos’ is still delineating a place. Thus, in connection with temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis the term ‘topos’ signifies a mental notion on the *temporal* plane.

In postmodern writing we encounter the foregrounding of the metaphor. Subsequently, this establishes a foregrounding of the topos that is created by the use of metaphor. The reader visualises such a topos, and by doing so we see how such a text may be defined as postmodern:

In other words, metaphor by its very nature foregrounds the ontological dimension of the text. Devices such as “realization of metaphor,” by rescuing metaphorical objects from the limbo of nonexistence and reintroducing them as existents in the presented world of the text, further foreground this ontological dimension, in effect heightening the opalescence of metaphor.

McHale, 1999: 134

We remember from above, how matters of ontology hold hegemony over matters of epistemology in postmodern texts. However, to experience a topos evoked through the use of metaphor does not mean that this dedicates us completely to this fictional universe. Rather, postmodern texts often seek to introduce ontological ‘flicker’. This arises when the concepts from our real world clash with those found in the fictional topos. Such a duality in metaphor is a driving force in postmodern texts, which helps to foreground ontological questions such as, for example, ‘how is this textual world constructed?’ and so on, as described above.²⁰ We recollect, also mentioned above, how the postmodern ‘label’ is considered performative. That is, once a text is described as postmodern this point of view tends to permeate the further reading: is it or is it not postmodern? Already here the text, or at least the reading of it, is ‘infected’.

Thus, one assumes an ontological frame of mind where one is constantly confronted with/questioning the text: the duality between text and reality is thrust into prominence. Or, put differently, ontological flicker is a ubiquitous occurrence inside as well as outside the reading of the text. How is the postmodern use of metaphor accelerated into a dominant phenomenon? It is a matter of amplifying the use of metaphor and the effects of this device to the maximum potential: the hypertrophied metaphor, or hypertrophy.

McHale describes hypertrophied metaphor as when the line of separation between ‘style’ and ‘World’ is suspended. Basically, hypertrophy is to openly refer to metaphor thus constructing a reality and/or world in its own right.

²⁰ See section 2.2.1.

McHale's example is Marcel Proust, 'the great precursor' of hypertrophied metaphor, who introduces various simple metaphors that are developed into independent parallel worlds. In postmodern texts, however, such use of metaphor often completely separates from any grounding that it might have had in the literal frame of reference. The outcome is that the primary world of the text as well as that of the reader is circumvented. Instead an entirely new reality, or world, is established - potentially autonomous and self-sufficient as regards its frame of reference.

The potential for completely isolating the hypertrophied metaphor from the surrounding 'reality' in a text is the most radical consequence of this literary device. Thus, when all ties to literal reality (the mundane as well as the surrounding textual universe from whence the hypertrophied metaphor springs) are cut, we enter the realm of the hypertrope. McHale sees this realm as being totally figurative and at its most radical the hypertrope offers no return to the literal world – its autonomy is total.²¹

2.2.3 Towards Hypertrophied Hypothesis

In the section on hypertrophy above, we see how the use of figurative language of metaphor has undergone fundamental changes. In modernist literary texts the hypertrophied metaphor is employed (for example by Proust, as mentioned above). The device is adopted into postmodern texts; however, here it is exaggerated, sometimes to the point where it becomes pure hypertrophy. The reference to metaphor can be completely suspended and the figurative is now a reality in its own right – an autonomous topos. From modernism to postmodernism, from a device of figurative language to a device that creates a fictive world/topos. Further below, we will investigate how hypertrophied-hypothesis emerges in postmodern texts. As with hypertrophy this device is also the result of a deliberate exaggerated use; in this case it is temporal hypothesis.

As regards a fictive, postmodern world, the following section deals with Baudrillard's description of reality in a postmodern setting. Here we see how terms such as 'reality' and 'fictive' and our perception of these are radically challenged. The understanding of how postmodernity has affected the perception of these concepts is a fundamental prerequisite to begin the later dealings with the parallel realities in the hypertrophied-hypothesis.

²¹ See McHale: 1999: 137-40.

2.3 Simulated Reality: Baudrillard and the Simulacrum

2.3.1 Introduction: Baudrillard's Notion of Hyperreality

Baudrillard published his work *Simulacra and Simulation* in 1981.²² This seminal work on simulation as a significant factor in postmodern culture is often mentioned when dealing with phenomena within the field of representation and reception, often in connection with various media and texts.²³ The theory in *Simulation and Simulacra* makes it a radical text in terms of how it affects the conception of the postmodern reality. In it Baudrillard forwards the concept of 'the hyperreal', which is the realm where the most extreme entity of the image is found: the simulacrum. According to Baudrillard, the postmodern simulation has taken over all that is original and it has been replaced with simulacra: "[...] the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal". (Baudrillard: 1). The term 'image' is to be construed in a wide sense. It subsumes the omnipresence of that which we perceive as our reality - the construct of both physical as well as theoretical entities. However, to grasp the full meaning, and indeed the implications, of the hyperreal, we are better served with a more thorough dealing with Baudrillard's theory.

Simulacra and Simulation comprises a theoretical part which is then illustrated in connection with sixteen subsequent short essays on different topics. This former part on theoretical matters is of the most interest to us. The latter part will not as such be introduced into this thesis; however, a few examples are included to illustrate certain aspects. The reason for such an omission is due to practical reasons: with the exception of J.G. Ballard's *Crash* and Jorge Luis Borges' short story *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*, Baudrillard's essays concentrate mainly on various postmodern cultural texts that are not literary texts.²⁴

Since the literary text lies at the centre of this thesis we are better served with other textual examples from this vast area. Thus, the remainder of this section will expound on Baudrillard's theory of simulation and simulacrum with the help of different illustrative textual examples. Subsequently, the preliminary notions on the hypertrophied-hypothesis will also be included in this context.²⁵ Such a collation is made to evoke similarities and discrepancies,

²² The original, French title is *Simulacres et simulation*. It was translated into English in 1994.

²³ See, for instance: Mark Poster: "Baudrillard and TV Ads".

²⁴ The essays are on concepts like History, hypercommodity and the media; TV productions and films such as *Holocaust*, *The China Syndrome* and *Apocalypse Now* and cloning – to name but a few.

²⁵ See Introduction above for the preliminary definitions on temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis. A detailed definition of this device ensues, see sections 5 (6, 7) and 8, respectively.

thus establishing the trajectory for the following sections on the theory of temporal hypothesis, and the section on hypertrophied-hypothesis. Moreover, Baudrillard's main theoretical points will also be contrasted with McHale's hypertrope, which is mentioned above.²⁶

Hence, the more defined and well-rounded the theory, the better we are equipped for the final analysis section in this thesis. A discursive approach is intended to occasion the most comprehensive identification of the traits unique to the use of the postmodern literary hypothesis. This is also the purpose served by incorporating textual examples: to exemplify and elucidate Baudrillard's theory by applying it in connection with textual analysis.

2.3.2 The Theory on Simulacra and Simulation

Baudrillard's view on the postmodern world is not entirely one of optimism. It is an elegy over the loss of all originality:

It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real, that is to say of an operation of deterring every real process via its operational double, a programmatic, metastable, perfectly descriptive machine that offers all the signs of the real and short-circuits all its vicissitudes. Never again will the real have the chance to produce itself—such is the vital function of the model in a system of death, or rather of anticipated resurrection, that no longer even gives the event of death a chance. Baudrillard: 2

The metaphysics of reality are lost. Hence, the possibility of striving for an ideal has become irrelevant: since all is simulation nothing serves as originator of the copy. When an object in the postmodern world is generated it is just as 'perfect' as that in whose image it was created. However, the term 'perfection' has ceased to be of any relevance in postmodernity. 'Imperfection', the binary pole, is only relevant if any discrepancy can be detected. Thus, when dealing with only copies without any original, which can all be copied without any possibility of asserting which one holds hegemony, then all is simulation without indication of origin: welcome to the realm of the simulacra.

Postmodernity is the age of the hyperreal, where imagery and real are no longer separate entities:

²⁶ See below in section 4.0, Conclusion to Part 1.

A hyperreal henceforth sheltered from the imaginary, and from any distinction between the real and the imaginary, leaving room only for the orbital recurrence of models and for the simulated generation of differences.

Baudrillard: 2-3

Reality *is* the simulation of what we consider to constitute reality. Reality is a system of simulated copies that circulate in perfect symbiosis - one simulation copying another; all 'originals' since all are copies that pass for reality.

Thus, postmodern reality merely simulates any difference that we perceive between 'original' and 'copy', between life and death. It is not the physical world so much as our perception of it that has been transmuted. To be sure, we are still mortal; however, the advent of human cloning insists that any number of perfect copies of ourselves is available. We are able to create Man in our own image—no longer placing this task with divinity. The real has ceased to produce itself; in the hyperreal all is simulation of other simulations and so on, leaving us with simulacra.

Baudrillard refers to Christian religious terminology where it is forbidden to have any simulacra in the temples, since God cannot be represented in the reality that he himself created. The Iconoclasts set out to destroy all images made to represent God. They feared that man-made images would result in an omnipotence of the simulacra: what if the power of the deity is merely the power of the graven image? What if such images resulted in eradicating God from man's conscience? What god-like images brought about the impression that only the image and not God ever existed? Such was an early realisation of the power of the simulacrum versus the power of God.

In a postmodern context, this realisation is consistent with the reduction of the entity of the real into a system of signs which constitutes the real:

[T]he whole system becomes weightless, it is no longer itself anything but a gigantic simulacrum—not unreal, but a simulacrum, that is to say never exchanged for the real, but exchanged for itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference.

Baudrillard: 5-6

'Not unreal, but a simulacrum'. Reality is a 'weightless system', since the Cartesian binary between good and evil is suspended. There is nothing *unreal* when only the reality consisting of a circulation of perfect simulations is functioning.

The transformation of reality from a matter of representational simulation to the complete enclosed system of postmodern hyperreal is described by Baudrillard in the *four successive phases of the image*. Throughout these transformational stages he delineates how the act of simulation evolves into a simulacrum that encompasses the very process of simulation:

Such would be the successive phases of the image:

it is the reflection of a profound reality;
it masks and denatures a profound reality;
it masks the *absence* of a profound reality;
it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum
[His emphasis]

Baudrillard: 6

The above axioms constitute the fulcrum of Baudrillard's theory on the simulacrum. He offers several examples of the four stages of the images by which reality is projected and perceived. The paragon, as well as the most poignant, example is his analysis of Disneyland in Anaheim, California. The American theme park is described thus:

Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, whereas all of Los Angeles and the America that surrounds it are no longer real, but belong to the hyperreal order and the order of simulation. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology) but of the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle.

Baudrillard: 12-3

'Reality' has thus ceased to be a valid term by which to refer to our reality; it merely exists as a principle. Instead we are surrounded and saturated by the hyperreal: a notion of reality, which masks the fact that all 'real' has been replaced by simulacra.

However, rather than to regurgitate Baudrillard's sociological examples we will now turn to a literary example. The intention is to thus describe Baudrillard's four stages of the projection of imaginary reality through an analysis of a given textual reality.

2.3.3 Baudrillard's Four Stages: A Textual Example

Borges' *The Garden of Forking Paths*:

The following example falls somewhat outside the main corpus of texts in this thesis. The short story was first published, in Spanish, in 1941.²⁷ However, the influence that Argentinean born author, poet and philosopher Jorge Louis Borges has on postmodern writing is not to be underestimated. Ostensibly, the plot of the story is that of a simple spy story/detective story. As such, the 'quest' is epistemological in nature, a 'whodunit', so to speak. However, the many forkings in both the story as well as the very narration of the story quickly do away with this initial assumption.²⁸

To call *The Garden of Forking Paths* a 'proto-postmodern' text is, however, as futile a task as attempting something similar with Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. Suffice it to say that Borges' short story can be considered a postmodern text since it shares many poetic similarities with more recent texts. The reason for including the text in connection with this thesis is that it so obviously illustrates and elucidates Baudrillard's notions concerning the simulacra. Moreover, as already mentioned above in section 2.3.1, Baudrillard refers to Borges' work in connection with his theory on simulacra.²⁹

In *The Garden...* we are introduced to the written narrative of a Chinese spy, Yu Tsun, who, during World War I, is working for the Germans. As his cover has been exposed, he flees from London to rural Felton. Here he visits a Dr. Albert, who has solved the mystery surrounding Tsun's great grandfather, Ts'ui Pên's, attempts to write a novel and construct a labyrinth, both of which attempt to solve the problem of time. The answer to the great mystery is that the novel *is* the labyrinth. As a letter from Ts'ui Pên reveals: "*I leave to the various futures (not to all) my garden of forking paths*". [Author's emphasis]. (Jorge Louis Borges, *Labyrinths*: 51). The crux is that every forking (that is, choice made) in a novel is one of sev-

²⁷ Borges' short story *The Garden of Forking Path* is among the eight stories which were originally published, in Spanish, in 1941. (Source: <http://www.themodernword.com/borges/borgesworks1.html#Anchor-Ficciones-1148>). (See List of Literature, under Electronic Media: Borges). The version of the text, used in this thesis is Donald A. Yates' translation from Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review, spring 1958. This version is reprinted in Borges: 2003.

²⁸ A more recent example of 'forkings' in texts is seen in Todd McEwen's novel, *Fisher's Hornpipe* (See section 8.3.4 below). Also, in Stephen Frear's film, *High Fidelity*, there is a scene where a jealous John Cusack proceeds to verbally insult and physically assault Tim Robbins in a series of what is subsequently revealed as temporal hypotheses.

²⁹ In fact, Borges is mentioned in the very first line of Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*, and his writing is the first (albeit unusable), example of hyperreality.

eral forkings of a temporal nature and not on a spatial plane. In Ts'ui Pen's novel, all forkings in time are chosen *at the same time*. These forkings, in turn, do also multiply and so on; all possible outcomes occur simultaneously.

The philosophical implications in Borges' narrative are many. However, we will limit ourselves to consider his short story in relation to Baudrillard's notion of the simulacra and the four phases of the image. The **profound reality reflected** is that of WWI. That the narrative was originally published during WWII may or may not suggest a commentary on this situation. Tsun's narrative is described as having been dictated by him upon his capture by the British. It is included to shed light on a postponement of an artillery attack in France during WWI. The account may be true; however, it may equally well be purely fictive. Such **uncertainty masks and denatures** our acceptance of the narrative as a profound reality. However, at the same time this very same uncertainty **masks the absence of a profound reality**. In sum, the ambiguous way in which the opening of the text is presented makes us oscillate between these two phases (respectively, phase two and three) of the image.

At the ending of the short story, Tsun kills Dr. Albert, thus signalling to Germany to bomb the allied artillery pieces in the French city, *Albert*. This is a return to the opening; it was this information which held back the allied attack for four days. Before this, Tsun and Dr. Albert have discussed the theories on the problem of time, as put forward by Ts'ui Pên, and the implications this has on reality. As Dr. Albert tells Tsun:

The explanation is obvious: *The Garden of Forking Paths* is an incomplete, but not false, image of the universe as Ts'ui Pên conceived it. 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. This network of times which approached one another, forked, broke off, or were unaware of one another for centuries, embraces *all* possibilities of time. We do not exist in the majority of these times; in some you exist, and not I; in others I, and not you; in others, both of us. In the present one, which a favourable fate has granted me, you have arrived at my house; in another while crossing the garden, you found me dead; in still another, I utter these same words, but I am a mistake, a ghost. [Author's emphases]

Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths*: 53

Here, *the text severs all relation to any reality whatsoever*. The quote above is a meta-commentary to the text as a whole: it is but one version of many possible. The reader of the text in question is only able to experience one 'time'. We are presented with several possibilities: "[...] you have arrived at my house; in another while crossing the garden, you found me

dead; in still another, I utter these same words, but I am a mistake, a ghost". (Jorge Louis Borges, *Labyrinths*: 53).

However, presenting a *succession* of possible simultaneous events is not the same as realising all these events simultaneously. The simulacrum that is the fictitious novel 'The Garden of Forking Paths' resembles Borges' short story by the same name. However, the relation only exists *inside* the fictive universe created by Borges; it has no relation to any reality whatsoever. That is, *our* reality. For inside the universe of both Ts'ui Pên's novel *and* Borges' short story, the pure simulacrum, which is the garden of forking paths, *is* the reality.

This is emphasised in the ending of Borges' novel. Tsun's sole purpose for visiting Dr. Albert is to kill him in order for the news story of his death to be utilised as a coded message to the Germans. That Dr. Albert has solved the mystery surrounding Tsun's great grandfather's novel/labyrinth is a mere coincidence. It is a curious twist to the narrative: that the forking paths of Tsun and his forefather converge in the presence of Dr. Albert, who holds the key to the riddle. Thus, the novel itself illustrates how the forking paths of these three men converge, with the reader as the witness. This is a deliberate construct on behalf of the author and a series of mere co-incidences.

The pure simulacrum makes itself seen when we consider the definition of the fourth phase of the image: 'It has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum'. Consider the phrase: '*Any* reality'. The realisation is that there are various realities, which all make a claim to be *the* reality. One reality is that Tsun only goes to Dr. Albert to kill him, another reality is that Borges intends for Tsun to find out about his forefather. However, the result is that there is not one clear reality which can claim unambiguous hegemony over the other possible reality. Thus, the two realities co-exist and, simultaneously, cancel out each other; it is impossible to deconstruct which one is the profound reality.

The paradox is that Borges' novel is, by itself, a garden of forking paths. Two realities are present simultaneously; it is a state of hyperreality: a pure simulacrum containing not *one* reality but two *realities*. As in Poe's short story, *The Purloined Letter*³⁰, Borges 'hides' the secret by leaving it on display – it is so obvious that it is easily overlooked. Borges' short story

³⁰ This text is Edgar Allen Poe's short story, wherein a purloined letter is finally discovered by the detective because it is hidden by being placed in plain view.

is a garden of forking paths while it brings forth a narrative of both a WWI spy-story and an old Chinese novel, which is a labyrinth of time. The text does not attempt to conceal this, for, as Dr. Albert tells Tsun of his forefather and his novel:

‘In a riddle whose answer is chess, what is the only prohibited word?’
[Tsun] thought for a moment and replied, ‘The word *chess*.’

‘Precisely’ said Albert. ‘*The Garden of Forking Paths* is an enormous riddle, or parable, whose theme is time; this recondite cause prohibits its mention. To omit a word always, to resort to inept metaphors and obvious periphrases, is perhaps the most emphatic way of stressing it.’

Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths*: 53

The text we read *is* the labyrinth. It is in, and via, the text that we come across the only concrete examples of a garden of forking paths. As in *The Purloined Letter*, however, the perhaps best way of hiding something is to place it in plain view. In the case of Borges’ short story, it is called *The Garden of Forking Paths*; it cannot be more ‘overtly hidden’ than this. The parallel to Baudrillard’s notion of hyperreality is equally apparent. The conclusion is that reality is as fragmented as literary texts: reality is not *the* reality but *a* reality among many possible. The perception that we hold of reality is only that: a point of view, not *the* profoundly real point of view.

Considering the textual example just analysed, it should now be obvious how Baudrillard’s four stages of the image can be used to analyse and demarcate simulations and simulacra in texts. In texts simulacra function from the level of small, singular incidents to a level that can be said to permeate the total structure of a text. Either the simulacra are local incidents in different sections of a text. They exist on the micro-level of the text as isolated instances with thematic implications to the overall theme(s) of the novel. Or, alternatively, the simulacra constitute the macro-level of almost the entire text. We are thus offered many alternative possible realities pertaining to global perception of time with some of the implications that this occasions.

In a marriage of the two, *The Garden...* offers both. On the micro-level, the garden, the novel and the notion of the labyrinth all represent simulations of *the labyrinth*. This maze-like construct is, in turn, the multiple forkings that are the absolute macro-level of reality. Hence, we are left with the notion that the concept of reality is, proverbially, ‘up for grabs’ – an infinite array of possible permutations and interpretations.

Concluding on the four stages of the simulacrum, they operate on a sliding scale from the smallest component up to the level of totality. As such, we can accept Baudrillard's notion that the hyperreal is a factor to be reckoned with. However, when we take his claim outside the literary text and apply it to the physical world, another logic applies. Baudrillard's notions of simulacra and the hyperreal affect the way in which we perceive the world and what we let pass as 'reality'. This is not the same, however, as to accept his theory without reservations. Thus, a somewhat trite way to question Baudrillard's notion of hyperreality as a total state where all originality has disappeared is to ask how he is able to contribute such an original work on the very phenomena which are, supposedly, undetectable.

That Baudrillard's text deconstructs his own claim is not, however, to be considered as a total dismissal of his theory. The notions that his theory instates are valid, even if they do not depict a contemporary reality. Baudrillard may be right to *foresee* a time when all will be hyperreal and originality will disappear. However, if and when such a reality will be a factual and all-dominant reality, then it will be impossible to detect. By all logic, a state where all originality is lost will also mean that no one is able to make us aware of it; such originality will not exist.

Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* does not mirror the contemporary social conditions/reality in which it (or this thesis for that matter) was made public. Rather, his theory is an elaborate hypothetical prolepsis.³¹ Thus, it is a prediction of a reality yet to come. The main part of Baudrillard's analysed examples in his work consider social and physical reality, only a few are on fictitious text, be it novels or films. His own text is a work of fiction. This claim is not, however, to be construed in a derogatory sense.³² The case is, rather, that *Simulacra and Simulation* is a narrative on reality, as Baudrillard perceives it, a narrative told unto us as readers. By means of narrating, his text makes reality known to us in much the same way as a 'conventional' novel by, say, Pynchon. The formal requirements in academia differ considerably from those in literary circles, but that does not exclude a merging of purpose. Consider the following:

³¹ Below, in section II, this term will be explained thoroughly.

³² In this context the term 'fictive' and 'fictitious' are alluded to in the same as one would use the term 'assumed'.

There is no more reality: it is the shadow that has carried all reality away with it (thus the Student from Prague, the image broken by the mirror brings with it the immediate death of the hero—classic sequence of fantastic tales—see also *The Shadow* by Hans Christian Andersen).³³

Baudrillard, 148 (in footnote 1)

Here, as on many other occasions, Baudrillard recurs to works of fiction since the intrinsic mechanisms of hyperreality are so readily available in such constructs. He poses little difference between the texts from ‘reality’ (such as physical objects, phenomena and social conditions) and fictive texts (such as novels and films). A very likely reason for this is that works of fiction are written (or filmed etc.) accounts of reality, as perceived by its author. As such they are permanent, recorded accounts of a subjective perception of reality, which are available to everyone: all exact copies of the original - all simulacra.

Baudrillard’s text is also such a construct. It is a fictitious mirror held up to reality; however, it is conveyed via written text. The paradox is that Baudrillard's notion of hyperreality does exist *inside* texts, such as his own; however, it is yet to become part of the reality outside such fictions. Thus, it is Baudrillard’s subjective perception of reality; this is a simulacrum, which has become the text *Simulacra and Simulation*. As was the case of the novel in *The Garden...*, Baudrillard’s text is a part of the labyrinth of possible perceptions of reality – not the profound reality but one of many. It is a hypothesis as to what the future might have in store: a hypothetical prolepsis.

2.3.4 Preliminary Conclusion: Baudrillard’s Hyperreality

The notions put forward in Baudrillard’s theory regarding hyperreality are keen observations with much pertinence to the contemporary postmodern condition. As seen above, the four phases of the image is an effective method by which to analyse how a simulacrum is generated within a text, both on local as well as on more general levels. The simulacra and the theory used to perceive such versions of realities are highly effective sets of analytical tools, especially pertaining to the postmodern.

However, we have established that the time of the all-pervasive state of the simulacra, the hyperreal, is a state not (yet?) realised. We can deconstruct Baudrillard’s claim that the hyperreal reality is a contemporary fact by submitting his text to his own reasoning. Thus, if

³³ In the note Baudrillard refers to the 1913 silent film *The Student from Prague* (original title: *Der Student von Prag*), written by Hanns Heinz Ewers. (See List of Literature, under Electronic Media).

Baudrillard can analyse and demarcate the stages and intrinsic mechanisms of contemporary society, then, this cannot be a perfect state of all copies and simulations simply because his text is an original that exposes the state of things. Baudrillard's programmatic theory actually helps to destabilise his view of contemporary society as void of originality.

Moreover, a text such as *Simulacra and Simulation* may well prove a strong contribution to effectively hinder Baudrillard's predictions from ever being realised. Hence, the dawn of a simulated reality of only perfect copies is severely weakened by our ability to demarcate its intrinsic functions. Thus, if we are able to detect the phases of simulation, then, these cannot succeed in becoming a perfectly closed system of indistinguishable, circulated copies. Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* is a hypothetical prolepsis: a possible future event/reality. Baudrillard does state: "[...] it is practically impossible to isolate the process of simulation [...] it is *now impossible to isolate the process of the real*, or to prove the real". [Emphasis his] (Baudrillard: 21). However, this is to get ahead of his personal prediction of a possible future.

This is clearly a circulatory argumentation, both as regards Baudrillard's theory as well as this analysis of it. However, that which is of crucial importance as regards this thesis is not primarily the implications *of* his theory. Rather, it is the technical implications *in* the theory that are of future relevance. In short, it is the focus on the analytical capabilities that originate in the four phases of the image that matter here.

However, Baudrillard's views of postmodern society do enter in the formulations regarding postmodern poetics, especially the postmodern notion of reality. He states: "Illusion is no longer possible, because the real is no longer possible". (Baudrillard: 19). Above we have found such a dystrophic reality as not (yet) to be in effect. However, we can subscribe to the notion that there is not a *singular* real, but rather a *plurality* of realities. The latter are the many different narratives that we as individuals facilitate to describe our subjective perception of the world. As long as we believe in the notion of the real it continues to exist, even if it is only an impossible ideal. As regards illusion, Baudrillard is correct as far as we consider the *perfect* illusion. However, the illusions that we can expose by means of analysis, such as the simulacra in *The Garden...* above, are actually serving to maintain the ideal of the real. We know that the magician never reveals his tricks; however, this also implies that his magic *is*

merely a matter of smoke and mirrors. By implication it is the illusions which maintain the real.

2.4 Gender Trouble: A Different Viewpoint

In her book, *Gender Trouble*³⁴, Judith Butler confronts what she believes to be a major illusion in contemporary reality: gender identity. However, Butler is not a feminist – as feminism contributes to maintain differences based on existing gender roles. Rather, Butler seeks to answer, among other, the question: “[I]s there a political shape to “women”, as it were, that precedes and prefigures the political elaboration of their interests and epistemic point of view?”. (Butler: 128). To her gender is an arbitrary construct which the norms of society impose on the individual by ordinary daily activities. Thus, there is nothing ‘natural’ about sexual identity; it is decided by physical appearance. Butler believes that one can resist socially produced gender roles by ‘resignification’. A key way to subvert the artificial label of gender is seen in the way in which female impersonators, or ‘drag queens’, blur the definitions of male/female appearance and hence gender.

In comparison, Butler’s theory of social constructivism is rather political as opposed to Baudrillard’s constructivist sociology. Thus, Butler believes that it is still possible for the individual to resist, destabilise and potentially alter the contemporary societal order. Where Baudrillard appears resigned, Butler issues a challenge for the individual to make a difference. The concepts of gender and the body comprise the battlefield; however, fundamentally what Butler does is to re-empower the individual.

Such ‘self-defence mechanisms’ enable us to be more than impotent pawns in contemporary society. There is still hope and ways to change the world that Baudrillard sees as a mere circulation of simulations. There is still potential for individual identity via original and subjective narratives of the self. The ideal of the original is an illusion, even according to Butler:

Although the gender meanings taken up in these parodic styles [i.e. drag queen shows] are clearly part of hegemonic, misogynist culture, they are nevertheless denaturalized and mobilized through their parodic recontextualization. As imitations which effectively displace the meaning of the original, they imitate the myth of originality itself.

Butler: 138

³⁴ The full title is: *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*.

However, where Baudrillard sees the contemporary age of the simulacrum as a place where originality, and thus hope, is lost, Butler offers ways in which to destabilise and change society. For example, the subversive potential of drag queen shows is an original way of resistance – a means to influence the narrative of society³⁵:

In the place of an original identification which serves as a determining cause, gender identity might be reconceived as a personal/cultural history of received meanings subject to a set of imitative practices which refer laterally to other imitations and which, jointly, construct the illusion of a primary and interior gendered self or parody the mechanism of that construction.

Butler: 138

As regards gender, Butler opposes what we see as Baudrillard's views by deconstructing his idea of the original. If original gender roles are a myth, then this destabilises our fundamental belief in anything original. By extension, Butler debunks Baudrillard's myth of the 'original' in its fundamental premise. Thus, if there are ways of resisting gender roles, then there is nothing to hinder that Butler's findings specifically in connection with gender cannot be used in relation with other areas of resisting the constructs of what passes for 'reality'.

2.5 Preliminary Conclusion

The conclusion to be drawn from the comparison between Baudrillard and Butler is that the latter does not see the contemporary individual as lost and drifting upon a sea of unoriginal simulations. Rather, there is still room for original and playful resistance to the existing society and the norms and rules it imposes upon us. There are many narratives to be made which confront the social fictions in contemporary society.

Hence, rather than to share Baudrillard's fear of a society of simulacra, we may be better served by embracing the many possibilities that his theory contains. A clear symptom of this is the presence of temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis in postmodern texts. Above, we saw how McHale also deals with this relationship between hypothetical notions and reality in postmodern reality.³⁶

First, however, the following section shows how several other theories deal with simulated reality.

³⁵ The term 'narrative' in connection with identity and other social conventions follows Butler's reference to phenomena such as 'natural sex' and 'real women', which she describes as 'social fictions'. (See *Ibid.*).

³⁶ See also below in section 3.3.

3.0 Possible Worlds: Spatial Approaches

3.1 Introduction

Before forwarding the theory on temporal hypothesis, it is necessary to discuss other theoretical works which also deal with interfictional pockets. Thus, the area of such ‘fictions within fiction’ has attracted the attention of theorists, albeit they approach the subject somewhat differently, as we shall see below. The account of such ‘parallel’ theories serves as a theoretical backdrop against which the theory of temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis emerges.

Marie-Laure Ryan’s theory on possible worlds is a central work which accounts for various aspects of worlds within fiction.³⁷ Several important issues pertaining to this thesis are raised in her semantic approach to fiction. As one might gather from the nomenclature of the theory, Ryan’s dominant focal point is the spatial dimension within texts. The terminology implied by ‘world’ is to be taken rather literally. We shall see how such a spatial approach differs from that of the temporal approach used in this thesis.

McHale’s work on ‘subjunctivity’ offers a similar spatial approach to interfictional fictions and this will also be included. Moreover, other theoretical works by Eco, McHale, Jameson and Prince will also be touched upon. The focal point in this section is not to elaborate the included theories completely. Rather, the aim is to offer contrasts to the concepts developed below in connection with the theory on temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis. More specifically, the aim is to clarify the difference between the spatial and the temporal plane as a central difference in approach to the development of a theoretical system of analytical concepts.

3.2 Ryan’s Possible Worlds Theory

Ryan’s theory of possible worlds is founded on both philosophical and structuralist theory.³⁸ In the realm of philosophy, possible world theory applies to both the actual reality as well as

³⁷ Ryan: 1991.

³⁸ According to Ryan, the concept of possible worlds is: “a modern adaptation of a Leibnizian concept”. Among more recent theorists, Ryan mentions influences from philosophers of the 1970s analytical school such as Kripke, Lewis, Rescher and Hintikka. It is the further developments by these theorists that constitute the theoretical foundation for Ryan’s theory. As literary scholars within the structuralist movement she mentions Eco,

various textual realities. A hierarchical system is observed: the actual world surrounded by various possible worlds. What constitute the differences between a possible and impossible world are, basically, the laws of logic. Thus, all worlds that differ from the actual world, and do not ‘violate’ the laws that apply in this actual world, are possible.

From this binary definition emerges the more difficult issue of defining what constitutes the actual world – the norm by which to evaluate the possible ‘satellite’ worlds surrounding it. Among many possible approaches to this problem, Ryan focuses on two sets of criteria: 1) The actual world is defined according to the different ‘speakers’ within the text.³⁹ Hence, the subjective description by an inhabitant of a world gives the indexical definition of the actual world. Alternatively, 2) an actual world is the only world which, in ontological terms, can exist autonomously. All the surrounding possible worlds are the result of mental activities.

In connection with the thesis at hand, we might interject that hypotheses are also the product of mental activity. Moreover, it is significant that Ryan favours definitions that focus on either description and/or existence. There is a tendency to adhere to terminology that refers to what is physically present and/or which can be defined by matter-of-fact binary parameters: either it is or it is not. With Ryan’s emphasis on spatial relations this is not surprising, however; in relation to the temporal plane matters are not always so definite.

In relation to literary theory, Ryan notes that with the advent of possible worlds theory in the 1970s, the hitherto precarious issue of Truth within literary texts can now finally be addressed. Since there now is a differentiation between a textual actual world and possible worlds, textual analysis can suspend reducing texts to mere representations of reality. Possible worlds theory sees the text as a self-contained entity – the reality in a text is automatically *the* reality proper (if nothing else is specified). To elaborate, Ryan turns to reader response theory and her own ‘principle of minimal departure’. Basically, this entails that readers tend to ‘fill the gaps’ when constructing a fictional world. Readers compare their subjective experience of their reality to those in fiction. Hence, the reader will apply his own experienced definitions to all things mentioned in a text, unless something else is specified. For example, Major, the

Pavel and Dolezel as important pioneers of the concept within literary theory. (Ryan: 2003). (See List of Literature, under Electronic Media).

³⁹ In this context, the term ‘speaker’ simply refers to the different characters as well as any other textual ‘entity’ capable of defining/forwarding a possible world. This also includes definitions implicitly ascribed to an implied author.

white boar in Orwell's *Animal Farm*, is a normal farm animal until the pig clears its throat and begins to speak.⁴⁰

What, then, constitutes a possible world? Ryan offers this demarcation:

The principle of minimal departure presupposes that fictional worlds, like the P[ossible] W[orld]s postulated by philosophers, are ontologically complete entities: every proposition *p* is either true or false in these worlds. To the reader's imagination, undecidable propositions are a matter of missing information, not of ontological deficiency.

Ryan (2003): 2

Again, with emphasis on the spatial dimension, Ryan places possible worlds on the same ontological level as fictional worlds. There is, thus, much semblance to Baudrillard's notion of the hyperreal.⁴¹ The only difference in a text between an actual world and a possible world is that the former actually happened and the latter did not – and this differentiation is completely controlled by the information relayed via the text to the reader.

As for hypothetical incidents in fiction, Ryan states the following in response to literary theorist Lubomír Doležel:

Whereas Doležel regards the imaginative domain projected by fiction as less than a complete P[ossible] W[orld], Ryan [sic] argues that this domain encompasses not just one world but an entire modal system. *In contrast to modes of expression that refer to the non-actual in a hypothetical mode, such as if... then statements, fiction includes both factual and non-factual statements.* The former outline a textual actual world (TAW) while the latter allude to the virtualities of the fictional system. The contrast actual/non-actual is thus reinscribed within the textual universe. Author and reader engage in an act of make-believe by which they relocate themselves as narrator and narratee in TAW. [Emphasis mine]

Ryan (2003): 2

Ryan defines a possible world in a text as a complete simulacrum of the actual world - what we call our Reality. The 'modes of expression that refer to the non-actual in a hypothetical mode' are consistent with the term 'fiction'.

If we extend Ryan's theory with Baudrillard's notion of hyperreality, then a textual simulation of reality is one where the use of hypothesis is the same as in the actual reality. However, as we shall see in the sections below, the uses of hypothesis in postmodern fiction and reality are *not* identical – at least not entirely as Ryan describes it. Often, rather than to forward the entire modal *system* of a hypothetical world, interfictional pockets merely forward a hypotheti-

⁴⁰ Orwell, 1949: 11.

⁴¹ See above in sections 2.3 and 2.4.

cal *notion*. The contention in connection with this thesis is that readers do not create an entire world or universe at every encounter with an interfictional fiction. This is precisely what interfictional ‘pockets’ are: a place where things are placed temporarily.

Moreover, within the confines of a postmodern textually constructed reality, the use of temporal hypothesis is often rather ambiguous. Thus, the relations here between hypothesis and reality cannot always be reduced to the binary opposition consisting of real and simulated reality. The reason is simply that any validation of the textual polarization between the real and the simulated real is continually prone to change. Thus, what may start out to be the truth proper in a narrative may, at any subsequent moment, be revealed as a temporal hypothesis.⁴²

Following Ryan’s line of reasoning, we may conclude that possible worlds are all-encompassing realms, which contain both factual and non-factual statements. To her, hypothetical statements are virtualities within the virtual world of the text, the simulacrum – interfictional pockets consisting of complete worlds. Because of the relatively broad scope of Ryan’s theory, she does not deal in any detail with this ‘hypothetical mode’. Rather, applying reader response theory, Ryan describes the reader as being completely committed to the fictive world and as one who regards characters herein as ‘complete human beings’.⁴³

This observation does not, however, account for the theoretical implications of the use of hypothesis in texts. More specifically, the phenomenon of temporal hypotheses in texts is more complicated than to merely see it as a perfect simulation of the use of hypothesis in the actual world. This is especially clear when it comes to the often very self-conscious approach which postmodern texts apply to their own textual status. Thus, in connection with postmodern texts, we tend to be reluctant to accept the quote below:

From the point of view of the ‘actual actual world’ the worlds of fiction are discourse-created non-actual possible worlds, populated by incompletely specified individuals; but to the reader immersed in the text the T[ext’s] A[ctual] W[orld] is imaginatively real, and the characters are ontologically complete human beings. Ryan (2003): 2-3

This is exactly the illusion that postmodern texts seek to do away with. Postmodern texts tend to ‘alienate’ the reader from the textual world by, among other things, continually drawing at-

⁴² See section 7.5, for more on how the defined status of any given temporal hypothesis is prone to instability and fluctuation.

⁴³ Ryan, 2003: 3.

tention to the textual illusion. The use of temporal hypothesis is a good example of how to point out that a text is just one of many possible and *fictional* versions.

As regards hypothetical events in texts, Ryan turns to the work of the semiotician Umberto Eco.⁴⁴ She sums up his definitions of three types of world that texts ‘produce’ thus:

1. The P[ossible] W[orld] imagined and asserted by the author, which consists of all the states presented as actual by the fabula⁴⁵.
2. The possible subworlds that are imagined, believed, wished (etc.) by the characters.
3. The possible subworlds that the reader imagines, believes, wishes (etc.) in the course of reading, and the fabula either actualises or ‘counterfactualises’ by taking another fork.

Ryan (2003): 3

In theories on possible worlds, theorists tend to concentrate mainly on the worlds produced by type 2 texts. Thus, such ‘private worlds’ reveal both the interpersonal relations between characters as well as the more overall conflicts in the realm of the fictive world in a given text.

In relation to this thesis, it must be noted that Ryan’s observations on all three types of worlds are valid. However, the emphasis on the semantic value of the term ‘world’ is not the best terminology in connection with a poetics based on relations on the temporal plane. Moreover, Ryan favours the focus on characters and reader. This diminishes the focus on the structural features and devices that the text itself contains. Ryan’s theory primarily ‘enters’, as it were, the sub-worlds projected by characters and readers. She establishes a constructivist approach which focuses on spatial relations. Hence, in a type 1 world we see how a text is a simulation of the actual world: the author is the deity that sets up the rules which are confronted by characters’ imagined sub-worlds.

However, this does not tally with the postmodern text, where authors seek to problematize the concept of author as *the* authority. Let us reconsider the quoted passage from Vonnegut’s *Timequake*: “I have pretended in this book that I will be alive for the clambake in 2001. In chapter 46, I imagine myself still alive in 2010”. (Kurt Vonnegut Jr., *Timequake*: xiv). The text clearly denounces authorial omnipotence; there are things which are ‘merely’ fiction.

⁴⁴ For more on Eco’s theory on possible worlds see Eco: 217-25 (as well as 245-6 where Eco’s own formulation of his definitions is found).

⁴⁵ By ‘fabula’, is meant the basic elements of a story with the narrated situations and events in their chronological sequence. It is the opposite of plot, which is the way the fabula/story is arranged/‘told’ to the reader via the text. For more on Fabula, Story and Plot, see Prince: 1991.

According to Ryan, a textual passage such as Vonnegut's may be seen as projecting a possible world, a parallel physical entity, which is sustained by characters and readers. However, if we regard the passage from a structuralist vantage point, then the text contains two rhetorical devices: two temporal hypotheses. *Subsequently*, the textual information may be construed as projecting what Ryan and Eco define as type 2 and 3 worlds. In doing so the emphasis shifts from the text to various 'products' of the text. These products are the characters and the possible sub-worlds which the characters forward as well as the sub-worlds that readers entertain. Thus, the formal structure of the device, which produces these subsequent elements, is taken for granted. As Eco puts it:

...the text is not a possible world—nor is it the plot. It is a piece of furniture of the world in which the reader also lives, and it is a machine for producing possible worlds (of the fabula, of the characters within the fabula, and of the reader outside the fabula). [Emphases his].

Eco: 246

If the focus is re-directed to the strictly formal features of the text we may offer a different, more neutral and objective description of the basic function of the text. Rather than to be a world-producing machine, a text simply forwards notions of hypothetical statements. For example, Vonnegut's two hypotheses above can hardly be seen to trigger a 'world' as such. Rather, a *notion* of something ephemeral and unpredictable, such as the future, is evoked.

The crucial difference between Eco and Ryan's spatial approach and that of a temporal approach can now be established. The spatial possible worlds theory is anchored in the assumption that textual information results in a somewhat concrete spatial form. Characters and reader, across the fictional contract, relate to specific information, which is transposed into a world. As regards the temporal approach to hypothetical information in texts, the focus shifts. The notion of different Borgesian 'forks' in a text takes hegemony over any concrete values of possibility that the text carries in the spatial realm.⁴⁶ The question is not whether or not something is possible in any world, be it the actual and/or the actual text world. Rather, it is how the text *presents* the *notion* of these possibilities.

In essence the theoretical vantage point on temporal matters in temporal hypothesis theory differs fundamentally from Ryan's theory. Possible worlds theory focuses on the relationship between the characters' worlds and the reader's world. The textual device of temporal hy-

⁴⁶ For more on Borges' forking paths, see above in section 2.3.3.

pothesis re-directs the attention to the relation between the text and the reader. More specifically, the notions that reading a text activates in the reader are the area of attention – not the worlds that characters and reader might share belief in. Hence, the theory of temporal hypothesis is intended to take a different approach to the text-machine. Moreover, as regards the focus in this thesis, the self-conscious context of the postmodern text makes it crucial to re-introduce the text-machine as an integral part of the textual world.

To elaborate this point further, let us look closely at how Ryan divides the private world of the characters further. Her findings are consistent with the definitions of type 2 worlds, as described above:

- a) **Beliefs** (Deals both with representations of possible physical and mental worlds)
- b) **Obligations, desires and predictions** (Static model-worlds of how actual worlds should/will be)
- c) **Active plans of characters** (Projections of courses of events from plan to reaching the goals)
- d) **Dreams, hallucinations, acts of imagination and fictions-within-fictions** (Fantasy worlds which suggest new systems of reality, often complete with intrinsic systems of actual and possible worlds).⁴⁷

Ryan's definitions above hinge on the supposition that the definition of beliefs etc. is a straightforward matter. However, as we shall see below, it may prove difficult to distinguish between what are physical and mental representations, what are desires and what are fictions-within-fictions and so on.⁴⁸ Often the 'private worlds' of characters are interwoven into that of the author's text. Thus, postmodern texts may play with the diegetic levels in texts and seek to subvert the normal hierarchy of the author as the highest controlling authority.

The crux of the matter is that Ryan's approach is inadequate in connection with postmodern texts. By insisting upon possible worlds instead of hypothetical notions, the spatial emphasis hampers matters when dealing with the more dynamic nature of the relation between the postmodern text and its reader. Moreover, to insist upon psychological insights into the private world of characters seems to presuppose a degree of objectivity which cannot even be established in connection with reader response. The individual subjectivity that the analyst/reader brings to every text also extends to how we 'read' characters. Thus, rather than to assume that we can get to know the total psyche of characters, it seems more useful to describe how they and/or the text forward temporal hypotheses.

⁴⁷ All four points are taken from Ryan, 2003: 3.

⁴⁸ See section: 6.5.

Since there is no single Truth to which we can reduce textual meaning, more can be said by focusing on *how* postmodern texts deal with this fact. One way of doing this is to look at temporal hypotheses instead of attempting to reduce such notions to (possible) worlds – be it those in the textual universe or those in the minds of the characters. The subjective ad hoc approach used in connection with temporal hypothesis theory further acknowledges that there are textual phenomena in (postmodern) literature which cannot be reduced to spatial terms. Thus, there are potential benefits from dealing with hypothetical matters on the temporal plane.

3.3 McHale's Subjunctivity

Brian McHale's theory on subjunctivity takes a different approach to what we, presently, describe as postmodern interfictional pockets:

[I]t is the foregrounding of the subjunctivity that is such a salient feature of *Mason & Dixon*: the American West as a subjunctive space, the space of wish and desire, of the hypothetical and the counterfactual, of speculation and possibility.
[Emphasis his]

McHale 2000: 44

Although McHale focuses on a spatial approach to the matter, his findings are somewhat closer to the theory of temporal hypothesis. This is perhaps largely due to his more specific focus on postmodern texts. In this connection it seems appropriate to note that Ryan relies heavily on McHale's theoretical work on postmodern poetics.⁴⁹

Returning to the focus on spatial matters, this is obviously McHale's point of departure. The possible world of the subjunctive, as it were, is a physical locale in which different mental activities are conducted. Thus, although McHale focuses specifically on the postmodern, his text on the subjunctive pertains mainly to the works of Thomas Pynchon. Hence, McHale's text captures the poetics of Pynchon's works, and not the wider scope of postmodern texts. The overall focus is on the spatial dimension. The more subtle and all-pervading phenomenon of temporal hypothesis stays unnoticed by McHale.

⁴⁹ In her text, *Possible-worlds Theory* (Ryan: 2003), Ryan uses McHale's *Postmodernist Fiction* as the single reference on postmodernism.

3.4 Jameson's Spatial Postmodernism

McHale's insistence upon the spatial derives from several theoretical influences. One is Fredric Jameson's contention that the spatial is a decisive norm for the postmodern. As Jameson states: "So, even if everything [that is, any period in history] is spatial, this postmodern reality here is somehow more spatial than everything else". (Jameson: 365). A clear symptom of this is seen in how postmodern storytelling is dominated by 'postmodern fantastic historiography'. (Jameson: 367). This is a stance which Linda Hutcheon shares to the point that she sees 'historiographic metafiction' to be *the* poetics of postmodernism.⁵⁰

However, elsewhere in his theory on postmodernism Jameson states:

[I]f *experience* and *expression* still seem largely apt in the cultural sphere of the modern, they are altogether out of place and anachronistic in a postmodern age, where, if temporality still has its place, it would seem better to speak of the *writing* of it than any lived experience. [Emphases his]

Jameson: 154

Jameson is right to point to writing (that is, the poetics) of the postmodern as 'deserving' attention, and a way to do this is to look at the interfictional pockets which temporal hypotheses create.

Thus, even if space and spatiality are seen as the dominant in the postmodern, the writing of temporality is still an area which deserves attention. Thus, both Ryan and McHale's focus on the spatial does not exclude a different approach to postmodern texts; that of the temporal. Moreover, postmodern texts are self-conscious and direct much attention to the machine of the written text, as Eco puts it. Thus, the theory of temporal hypothesis is a re-focusing on *how* the texts forward hypotheses, their mutual relationships and the effects that such a device has on the perception of the text.

3.5 Prince's Disnarrated

Another of McHale's influences in connection with defining subjunctivity, Gerald Prince, forwards an observation on literary texts in general which has much in common with the theory of temporal hypothesis. Prince's defines his term thus:

⁵⁰ This is pointed out in Hutcheon's book, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, in chapter 7: Historiographic Metafiction: "the pastime of past time".

For me, and to put it most generally, terms, phrases, and passages that consider what did not or does not take place [...] whether they pertain to the narrator and his or her narration [...] or to one of the characters and his or her actions [...] constitute *the disnarrated*. [Emphasis mine].

Prince, 1988: 3

In Prince's text on the disnarrated (wherein he states awareness of Ryan's theory on possible worlds), we see that he is adamant on distributing the ability to 'disnarrate' equally among narrator and characters. Indeed, the semantic difference between 'possible worlds' and 'disnarrated' points out that Prince weighs narration over the spatial. Also, 'did' and 'does' indicates his awareness of the grammatical and temporal distinctions to disnarrated passages. Moreover, the very specific attention to local entities in the text suggests that Prince does not see every disnarrated event as the projection of an entire possible world, as opposed to Ryan.

All these differences between Prince and Ryan above constitute similitude between the theory of the disnarrated and temporal hypothesis. However, there are some significant discrepancies. First, Prince's insistence that what is disnarrated does *not* happen seems to play down how many temporal hypotheses hinge on the uncertainty as to whether or not a given event/notion happens.⁵¹ Second, Prince's theory of the disnarrated does not pertain to postmodern texts specifically. However, he does state:

[T]he nature and content of the disnarrated (hypothetical or negative, material or spiritual, alethic or epistemic), the level at which it functions (that of "discourse" or that of "story"), the relative frequency with which it appears, and the relative amount of space it occupies can be a useful tool for characterizing narrative manners, schools, movements, and even entire periods.

Prince, 1988: 6

Thus, although Prince is very general in his approach to texts, he does indicate that attention to forms of interfictional pockets, such as the disnarrated, and by extension also temporal hypothesis, are valuable methods of investigating literary 'movements'. Hence, the area of focus in this thesis is concentrated on the much more specific area of temporal hypothesis in postmodern texts.

3.6 Preliminary Conclusion: A World of Difference

The area of hypothetical events cannot be described as uncharted theoretical territory. However, the way in which the area has been approached does leave some parts of this vast field

⁵¹ For more on how temporal hypotheses may attempt to obfuscate their status as mere possibilities, see section 6.5, Markers of Temporal Hypothesis: The Subjunctive.

untouched. Perhaps the preoccupation with the spatial realm is connected with the way in which we normally think and express ourselves. Consider this paragraph so far: ‘territory’, ‘area’, ‘field’ and ‘realm’ are all terms which denote a spatial quality. For theory to remain within this semantic realm is not a coincidence. The texts with which theoreticians deal are also representations of spatiality - the postmodern text being no exception. Take Beckett’s closed space or Pynchon’s Zone, to name but a few examples. Perhaps the best way to illustrate the preoccupation with the spatial realm in postmodernist literature is seen in McHale’s theory on the subject. Without exception, all his metaphors used in his poetics are spatial.⁵²

There are, however, still differences as to how theory approaches texts. Ryan sees texts as producing simulacra of our reality which are *or* are not possible. Using reader response theory, Ryan takes a general stance on readers as a somewhat homogenous group, whose readings can be ascertained objectively. However, there is a significant difference between the ontologically complete entities of possible worlds, and mere hypothetical notions of past, present or future ‘events’. The main discrepancy between Ryan’s theory and that of temporal hypothesis is that the latter gives temporal matters priority.

A fundamental contention in this thesis is that not all reading and/or authoring of texts is reducible to a machine that produces worlds. More ephemeral notions may also be invoked, especially as to the construction of the text itself. The construct of the postmodern text is permeated by temporal hypotheses that do not necessarily mentally create a world inside the world of the text. Rather, the *words* inside the text, and how these invoke mental activity is the area of temporal hypothesis.

McHale’s subjunctive does indicate that there is a specific practice of hypothetical events in postmodern texts. As such, there is nothing new in the spatial approach that he applies; however, to direct attention to a specific genre does narrow down the scope somewhat. It is also within this scope that we encounter Jameson’s views on the postmodern. Spatiality is a dominant feature in postmodernity. However, there is still a place for temporality in the postmodern, and it must be dealt with in the writing of it. What better place, then, to look at written temporality than in postmodern literature.

⁵² Examples of this are McHale’s use of tropes such as: ‘the zone’, ‘Chinese-box worlds’, ‘reels’ and ‘worlds on paper’. See McHale: 1999.

This brings us to Prince's focus on the narration over spatial matters in analysing texts. Attention to the text does not mean, however, that the ensuing sections of this thesis are strictly structuralist. There is a difference between approaching texts by *what* is written, and *how* it is written. Thus, the formulation of the poetics of temporal hypothesis in postmodern texts does begin with the text, and then continues with the more subjective interpretations of the plot.

The issue here is not to drive a wedge between taking a temporal and/or a spatial approach to postmodern texts. Rather, the point is to direct attention to the theory of temporal hypothesis as an alternative to the many spatial approaches which already exist. By reclaiming the writing and texts as the places where a poetics is to be demarcated *within* and developed *from*, we may proceed below to look at how this is done in practice.

4.0 Conclusion to Part 1

Narratology, postmodern theory and spatial approaches to texts are vast areas. However, in Part 1, we have limited the scope to a few theories. As such, the theoretical contents in Chatman and Genette's texts do not fall within the category of postmodern theory.⁵³ However, by way of proximity in the history of textual theory, their works do run parallel with theoretical awareness of the postmodern. This is also the case with the field of narratology since the 1960s. Whether or not a theorist acknowledges the emergence of the concept of postmodernism, the very notion of the postmodern is a (theoretically) manifested fact.

Thus, there are no problems of applicability in the way in which Chatman and Genette's theories have been utilised. The intrinsic and fundamental narratological mechanisms, which these two theories define, are easily compatible with the declared postmodern theory that McHale and Baudrillard represent. The basic concepts from narratology are given more complex meaning when they are infused with McHale and Baudrillard's concepts. However, the basic terminology remains the same. Thus, the intrinsic concepts in Chatman and Genette's narratology are connected with the external implications in concepts such as 'ontological flicker', 'simulacra' and 'the hyperreal'.

In short, the fundamental narratological concepts in this thesis are not postmodern per se, merely neutral analytical tools. As a preliminary notion, the same is to be said on the use of temporal hypothesis in literary texts. This textual device precedes any postmodern text. However, a strong contention is held by saying that the hypertrophied-hypothesis is a postmodern device. As stated above, the hypertrope is a postmodern textual device, which induces ontological flicker.⁵⁴ Such flicker bears striking similarities to the circumstances involved with hypertrophied-hypothesis. Both of these postmodern textual devices are indicative symptoms of the hyperreality that Baudrillard describes as comprising the state of contemporary reality.

Butler's view on reality does not as such complicate matters. In fact, the belief that individuals can still contribute and challenge the fictions, which our so-called 'reality' is comprised of, is mirrored in postmodern literature. Thus, the use of hypothesis in postmodern literature is closely related to such narrative 'playfulness'. As Butler points out, however, postmodern

⁵³ See sections 1.0 - 1.4.

⁵⁴ See section 2.2.2 on hypertrophy.

playfulness takes on serious matters. The narrative of one's identity is a central aspect of being an individual and reclaiming control of one's life.

It is possible to transfer Butler's views to pertain to temporal hypothesis in postmodern texts. Hence, the mental activity of hypothesis is a textual device that explores several possibilities. As in actual reality we always seek to establish and define the difference between hypothesis and textual reality. Moreover, the use of hypothesis in our mundane reality stands in constant opposition to our actual reality; we know the difference. In postmodern texts, however, we see how such a separation between reality and hypothesis is often more obscure. The ontological flicker that this suspension of certainty causes is a unique textual feature.

This view differs from the theory of possible worlds. Ryan's spatial approach to imaginary interfictional pockets hinges on the mental creation of complete, 'parallel' worlds. As a result the possible worlds theory tends to neglect the subtle interfictional pockets with which the theory of temporal hypothesis deals. Thus, there are smaller, yet prolific cogs in Eco's world-making machine that have hitherto escaped full theoretical attention.

McHale's theory of the subjunctive does point to smaller, hypothetical textual units. However, his insistence on a spatial approach falls short of taking his research closer to our specific matter of concern. Rather, it is in Jameson's pointing to the temporality of the written text and Prince's focus to the structure of narration that a challenge is issued. Hence, the remainder of this thesis will turn the focus from the spatial and onto the temporal.

The details for the above assumptions will become clearer during the ensuing sections. Immediately below are the definitions of, respectively, the various temporal hypotheses and the hypertrophied-hypothesis. Together with the preceding definitions of narratological concepts and postmodern reality this second half of the theory will enable the third and final analytical section.

Part II: Elaborations on Theory

5.0 Temporal Hypothesis

5.1 Introduction

The different categories of temporal hypotheses are ordered chronologically. Thus, hypotheses that describe the past, present and future tense are the three main categories into which the observations and definitions fall. In narratological terminology this corresponds to the terms, respectively, *analepsis*, *narrative NOW* and *prolepsis*.⁵⁵ However, before we begin dealing with the different types of temporal hypothesis, definitions of the terms ‘hypothesis’ and ‘to hypothesise’ are necessary. This is done to completely specify the etymological origin of the components that are entailed in the nomenclature of the theory.

The motivation for this is straightforward, yet crucial. Since the prefixed ‘hypothesis’ is ubiquitous in theory, there is a strong need for an unreserved ratification of this term. By thus anticipating any later misunderstandings, there will be no distracting etymological elements.

5.2 Defining the Hypothesis

The noun hypothesis derives from the Greek compound *hypotithenai* (to put under/suppose), which consists of the preposition *hypo* (under) and the verb *tithenai* (to put).⁵⁶ The first use of the word in an English text dates back to 1596.⁵⁷ Today, the word has numerous, albeit interlacing, definitions, which fall into four categories.

First: A hypothesis is put forward as a test that is performed before taking action. Thus, it is made for the sake of argument or as a yardstick by which to interpret a given practical situation. Logical or empirical results can be evaluated or ‘simulated’ by such a tentative assumption. Hence, the hypothesis is to be regarded as a subordinate particular thesis used in conjunction with a general thesis.

⁵⁵ For further dealings with the terms *analepsis* and *prolepsis*, see Genette: 1983 (under ‘Order’) and Bal (under: ‘Sequential Ordering’). For a full definition on *Narrative NOW*, see Chatman (under ‘Time and Plot’ and Order, Duration and Frequency’).

⁵⁶ The information on the word hypothesis is gathered from the following dictionaries: *Meriam-Webster*, *Oxford English Dictionary* and *The Penguin Hutchinson Reference Library*.

⁵⁷ It is used in a text written by the Earl of Essex. (See *Oxford English Dictionary* under ‘hypothesis’).

Second: A hypothesis is the forwarding of a proposition, i.e., it is a thesis. It can be forwarded as a principle merely as a premise or basis for an argument or reasoning; however, it need not present any reference to factual conditions. This is the function of the hypothesis in the sciences, mathematics and Logic. It interacts as one of several possible conditions by being supposedly true. Hence, it is used to argue for a supposition from which to reason and demonstrate a proposition.

Third: A hypothesis is, especially in the sciences, a supposition that is constructed to account for known facts. It is the ‘artificial’ point of departure for what will later be proved or disproved when the true/actual theory is eventually established.

Fourth: A hypothesis is a general supposition that is assumed to be true without it being actually and conclusively proved so; it is a mere assumption, albeit a generally accepted assumption. It is ‘the truth’ simply because it is commonly accepted as such to the degree that it no longer calls for verification before it is unconditionally accepted. Conversely, a hypothesis may be an insufficiently grounded, or even groundless, supposition. Such a hypothesis is ‘tolerated’ as being a ‘mere supposition’ or even ‘a guess’.

5.3 Preliminary Conclusion: Towards Temporal Hypothesis

Having seen the above definitions on hypothesis we now begin to introduce the two main foci of this thesis, the temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis. Moreover, we must keep in mind the different other theories, such as the subjunctive, possible worlds and the disnarrated. In varying degrees, such theories are different from the ensuing theoretical definitions.

We have already established that the watershed between the previous and the ensuing theory hinges on the differences between, respectively, the spatial and the temporal plane. The mental notion of hypothesis and the words/typographic signs by which temporal hypotheses are forwarded will comprise the hegemonic priority over the mental and spatial essence which is central in the theories described above.

The four definitions of hypothesis in the previous section indicate the path along which the remainder of this thesis will travel. Thus, hypothesis precedes action as a simulation, assuming what could be. Its demonstrative attributes render the hypothesis a convenient mental capacity for formulating notions in texts. Hypothetic statements are able to replace, at least tem-

porarily, what is factual/the truth proper in a given text. As such the notions forwarded via hypothesis constitute a textual simulacrum. Finally, by extension hypothesis holds the capacity of creating textual hyperreality: what we shall encounter below in connection with hypertrophied-hypothesis.

The hypothesis is analogous to the faux hare that is given chase by greyhounds at the dog races. It is an assumed entity that may or may not be 'true' or constitute a 'fact'. However, it is 'constructed' with such proximity to established facts that it is able to interweave and interact with these. As a test the hypothesis is used to propound or simulate assumptions, be it in arguments or in science. It is a possible forerunner for what will later become an established fact, or it may serve to eliminate erroneous assumptions, or 'facts', before they are accepted into the realm of Truth and Fact.

However, some hypotheses are so suggestive and/or even persuasive that they manage to be accepted, or 'pass', as the Truth or Fact. Some are labelled as 'mere guesswork' or 'a qualified assumption'; however, some hypotheses manage to circumnavigate the basic conditions of Truth. These hypotheses thus cease to be hypotheses; they transcend into the realm of Truth and Fact without actually fulfilling the criteria for belonging there.⁵⁸ However, they are not 'marked' by the nomenclature hypothesis and are more difficult to locate.

In this thesis, the intention is not to go into the realm of Truth and Fact to retrieve any 'illegitimate hypotheses' that might dwell there. For in the realm of Fiction and the Novel such terms are known to be bypassed. Often, the 'fictionality' of, and in, fiction is suppressed so as to merge with the text within the fictional contract. However, we all know that however real and based on/linked to reality a novel is it is still fiction; at best a reflection or simulation of Reality. Hence, in the ensuing pages the intention is to deal with different hypotheses within fiction that are marked as such. These 'self-confessed' hypotheses and the artistic effects as well as use of these constitute the area of interest on which we will concentrate.

Above in section 1 on narratology, are the theoretical formulations of analepsis, prolepsis and narrative NOW. We are now able to elaborate on these terms. In the following, the theoretical foundations established by Genette and Chatman are fused with the definition above of the

⁵⁸ This is a very idealistic definition. However, suffice it here to say that the realms of concepts such as 'truth' and 'fact' are precisely such. Their status is consistent with the extent to which these concepts *can* be verified as belonging to the specified realm – and to the extent that they are not merely *supposed* to belong within such a realm.

term hypothesis. Thus, we arrive at an elaboration of previous theory that aims at contributing a novel and original theoretical terminology within the scope of narratology. A further aim is to facilitate a completely new way to define and subsequently approach different textual instances. These areas of the text are hereafter referred to as variations within the theoretical area of temporal hypothesis.

6.0 The Individual Hypotheses

6.1 Introduction

In this section, the focus will be moved up from the previous dealings with the individual internal components of hypothesis, and centre on the different types of temporal hypothesis. Through textual examples the three main types of these interfictional pockets will be defined. Subsequently, closely related hypothetical devices will also be delineated.

The most important of the textual hypotheses are the three which are primarily seen to induce tension along the actual temporal dimension of narration: the *hypothetical analepsis*, the *hypothetical narrative NOW* and the *hypothetical prolepsis*. These temporal hypotheses are centred upon the notion of speculations and extrapolations on what *could have been, is* or *will be* happening. These three main types constitute the fundamental typology of temporal hypothesis. The individual definitions are the premise for understanding the many comprehensive and intricate combinatorial variants to which they give rise.⁵⁹ The application, understanding and further analytical implementation of such complicated terminology hinge upon the basic comprehensible definitions of these basic terms.

The above-mentioned main categories are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they constitute a way of dividing different temporal hypotheses according to their main characteristics. Hence, any given temporal hypothesis is categorised according to which distinctive mark the analyst considers to constitute hegemony. There is also the matter of the many combinations that are possible between the three main categories of hypotheses. There are potentially thousands of combinations of the individual categories that can be substantiated by textual examples. However, this is exactly the opposite of the aim of this thesis, in which we seek to analyse and explain the basic components of temporal hypothesis.

Thus, it is not a matter of ‘the chicken and the egg’; rather, the intention is to define the main categories and the most commonly appearing temporal hypotheses. The definition of the three

⁵⁹ Consider, for instance, a textual instance of ‘hypothetical prolepsis in analepsis’ in a text. Such long and complicated definitions are only possible to define, let alone apply and incorporate into an analytical effort, if the basic terminology has been established.

basic types of temporal hypotheses, along with the delineation of their intrinsic mechanics, will be used further in the analysis section below.⁶⁰

This theoretical approach is based upon subjective decisions. The terminology defined in this thesis is intended to be used on an ad hoc basis in textual analysis. Hence, our approach is not a shortcoming. Providing that such subjective categorizations are made consciously, the analyst merely has to declare the motivation for choices made. Such a self-conscious approach to textual analysis ensures that personal influence, which is inevitable in any analysis, is openly declared. In doing so there is less chance of any covert agendas, either on behalf of the reader or, more importantly, on behalf of the analyst.

In the following definition of the different types of temporal hypotheses, all terms will be elucidated by the use of several textual examples. This tallies with the intended aim of establishing an ad hoc approach to the definition of the theoretical terminology throughout the thesis. As we will see, some instances of temporal hypothesis are so complex that their actual function in a text is somewhat ambiguous. For now, however, it will suffice to establish the main theoretical terminology, which captures the overall nature of temporal hypotheses. The intention is that such an enterprise can facilitate novel and fruitful ways in which to approach and analyse texts. This will be the task at hand in the theoretical sections in the latter half of this thesis.

Immediately following the definition of the main categories of temporal hypotheses, the internal mechanics of these will be analysed. This enables further analyses to be more comprehensive. It will also facilitate a more specific and isolated selection of more specific areas of investigation. First, however, we begin by defining the methodology that is used to locate a temporal hypothesis.

6.1.1 Methodology

The methodological approach of finding the different hypothetical temporal effects in texts is described here:

All relevant incidents of hypothesis found in a given text are individually defined by the four criteria:

⁶⁰ The intrinsic details of temporal hypothesis are dealt with in sections 6.0 – 6.6.

- A) How do we tell that a textual incident is a temporal hypothesis, that is, how is it marked?⁶¹
- B) Is it a case of analepsis, prolepsis or narrative NOW?
- C) Does it refer to a specific incident or is the hypothesis of a more general nature?
- D) Put observations into perspective: be conscious of the subjective context in which any given hypothesis is analysed.⁶²

Often, a hypothesis cannot be categorised under merely one category; rather, it is of a more complex nature. Such complex instances of hypothesis are often also the most interesting and rewarding pieces of text to examine. Moreover, the list of criteria above is a set of general guidelines, which are not to be applied too rigidly. However, as suggested in criteria D above, the individual analytical situation and/or text may suggest a specific area of interest upon which to concentrate potential emphasis. Thus, as a general rule each criterion is to be considered individually. As a result, an ad hoc approach is highly recommendable in a textual analysis where temporal hypothesis is the central focus. As established in the sections above on reader response, it is up to the analyst to decide what to consider relevant in relation to a given instance of textual analysis.⁶³

The actual gathering of the hypotheses is a comprehensive task that entails the finding and registration of all hypotheses in a given text. However, the division into the different categories is to some extent of a subjective nature. The estimation as to which category a hypothesis falls into is just this: an estimate. It may be a matter of some debate if the correct category is applied. However, the main concern in this thesis is to *establish the presence of hypothetical temporal effects*, not to apply these categorically to textual examples. Moreover, a selective approach in the analytical process, that is qualitative rather than quantitative, is preferable. This entails that although all temporal hypotheses in a text are localised and categorised only a representative number of these are included in the actual analysis.⁶⁴

⁶¹ The subject of markers of temporal hypothesis will be dealt with below in section 6.5.

⁶² For more on readerly subjectivity, see sections 1.1, 3.2 and 3.3, which include discussion of reader response theory, as well as section 6.5 on markers of temporal hypothesis.

⁶³ See sections 1.1, 3.2 and 3.3 for more on reader response and subjective textual analysis.

⁶⁴ See also above in section 1.1, for a reference to Bal's stance on methodology and its application.

Thus, the ad hoc nature of the analysis results in a close scrutiny of the specific textual effects in different temporal hypotheses. In itself, the act of classification and analysis of temporal hypotheses does not constitute any ends. Rather, it is to facilitate a way into the text.

Below, the individual structural attributes specific to the three different types of temporal hypotheses will be defined and exemplified to, in turn, enable the dealings in the analysis section.

6.2 Hypothetical Analepsis

As stated above, the term ‘analepsis’ is concerned with occurrences that have already transpired.⁶⁵ When dealing with a hypothetical analepsis, however, matters tend to be more complex. In the quoted example below, the first person narrator, Hunter S. Thompson, is telling of the process of renting a car:⁶⁶

Later, looking back on this transaction, I *knew* the conversation that had almost certainly ensued:

“Hello. This is VIP car-rentals in Las Vegas. We’re calling to check on Number 875-045-616-B. Just a routine credit check, nothing urgent...”

(Long pause at the other end. Then:) “Holy shit!” [His Emphasis]

[In the span of the ensuing half page, the narrator then describes a hypothetical telephone conversation, which describes a conversation among the employees of the above-mentioned car-rental dealership].

Hunter S. Thomson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*: 105

By observing the initial adverb ‘later’ and the initial verbs ‘knew’ and ‘had’, we obviously deal with a past occurrence. This is straightforward, since the novel is narrated in the past tense. Moreover, the non-restrictive element “looking back on this transaction” places the event in the past. The passage is an analepsis narrated in the past tense. However, the emphasised ‘knew’ is a sign of awareness which signals that the ensuing passage is in fact hypothetical. This is corroborated by the ensuing conversation among the employees. Herein it is stated that the events subsequently delineated “had almost certainly ensued”. Thus, along the progression of the sentence we are transposed from a simple analepsis into the realm of temporal hypothesis. The ‘almost certainty’ by which this ensuing event is framed is a typical marker of hypothetical analepsis; or any type of hypothesis that we deal with in this thesis.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ See section 1.2 above for more on Genette’s terminology.

⁶⁶ Ostensibly, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* is based on Hunter S. Thompson’s autobiographical experiences.

⁶⁷ For more on markers of hypothesis see the ensuing section 6.5.

When a text features a hypothetical analepsis, we are invited to share the vision of a past occurrence that is only imagined to have happened. As is the case with every temporal hypothesis, a second, parallel textual reality emerges. In the case of Hunter S. Thompson's hypothetical analepsis, we are presented with a fictional account of what almost certainly *could have happened* when he rented a car. Elsewhere in the text, the use of hypothetical analepsis as a probable explanation is used again:

[...] the car-keepers knew me by name—although I'd never introduced myself, and nobody had ever asked me. I just *assumed* it was all part of the gig here; that *they'd probably rifled the glove compartment and found a notebook with my name on it*. [Emphases mine].

Hunter S. Thomson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*: 189

Again, we see a hypothetical analepsis that is initiated and framed by uncertainty. Hence, the words 'assumed' and 'probably' alert us to, as well as frame, the ensuing hypothesis. The use of the past tense to place the imagined occurrence in the past makes it a hypothetical analepsis. Moreover, since *Fear and Loathing...* is an autobiographical text, the introduction of temporal hypothesis establishes a tripartition in the text: what happened to Thompson in the 'real world', what happens to Thompson *in* the autobiographical text, and what *hypothetically* happened. The several instances of different types of temporal hypothesis that are present throughout the text amplify this effect.

Setting aside the autobiographical element, the examples quoted from *Fear and Loathing...* illustrate how hypothetical analepsis introduces an alternative layer of 'reality' into the fictional realm. From a textual analysis viewpoint, it is necessary that we regard every text as a separate entity: unique and different from all other texts. Hence, to discover the presence of one or several instances of hypothetical analepsis in a text does not constitute, by itself, a complete textual analysis. Rather, it manifests a way into the text; it facilitates new facets on how to approach textual analysis.

From this a pattern emerges. Hypothetical analepsis may be used to establish (possible) explanations; it is a way to analyse the past. Moreover, by *marking* such attempts as hypothesis by overtly stating that the following is 'probable', 'could have happened' and so forth, it is clearly stated that it is not an equal part of the fiction. Rather, it is a fiction *within* the fiction. Thus, a paradox is at play; that which is fiction *times two* is less deceptive than the fictional text proper. The text within the text, which is a temporal hypothesis, is overtly declared to be fictitious.

Let us consider another example:

“I often think that *Eliot would not have turned out as he has, if there hadn't been all that whoop-dee-doo about his being mascot of the Fire Department when he was a child*. God how they spoiled him—let him ride the seat of the Number One Pumper, let him ring the bell—taught him how to make the truck backfire by turning the ignition off and on, laughed like crazy when he blew the muffler off. They all smelled of booze, of course, too—“. He nodded and blinked. ”Booze and fire engines—a happy childhood regained. I don't know, I don't know, I just don't know. Whenever we went out there, I told him it was home—but I never thought he would be dumb enough to believe it.” [Emphasis mine]

Kurt Vonnegut Jr., *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*: 71-2

We here witness the regrets of a father (Senator Rosewater), whose son (Eliot Rosewater) has not turned out as desired. The father attempts to locate the root of this evil: where did it go awry, why and how did it happen? In the novel, Eliot Rosewater is presently living in the fire station mentioned above. He is an alcoholic who helps the local population with advice and money from the Rosewater family's fortune; hence the references to 'booze'.

The senator states that he has often indulged in what we now recognise as a hypothetical analepsis. His son would not have turned out as he did, *if* there had not been... Here we come across the perhaps most common marker of any type of hypothesis, the conjunctive use of 'if'.⁶⁸ Following the hypothetical analepsis there is an elaborate description of how Eliot's childhood was. Through the father's recollection we are given a vivid summation of Eliot's childhood in a fire station; it is a dream come true for most boys. However, this is contrasted with how the father speculates into the hypothetical possibility: if things had not been so.

The description of Eliot's childhood is not directly a part of the hypothetical analepsis; rather, it makes it more vivid. The father is not specific about any alternatives as to what went wrong. He forwards what seems to us a happy childhood; however, he also casts a grim shadow of alcohol abuse and deception (“I told him it was home—but I never thought he would be dumb enough to believe it”). Thus, this hypothetical analepsis is as uncertain as those above from *Fear and Loathing*... Moreover, it forwards possible explanations as to how events led to what they are at the present time in the novel. However, there is also a strong notion of remorse - if only things had not turned out as they are now. Thus, an alternative version of textual reality in fiction by means of hypothetical analepsis can also be evoked by its absence. We are told what was and confronted with a gaping hole of impotence instead of an alternative (version of reality). As the senator states: “...a happy childhood regained. I don't know, I

⁶⁸ For more on the marker 'if', see section 6.5 below.

don't know, I just don't know." Thus, no alternative to the present situation is forwarded, just a sense of disappointment. Senator Rosewater regrets his past actions; however, he also realises that one cannot actually change the past.

The same regret is expressed in Laurence Sterne's novel, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. Herein the eponymous narrator of the novel expresses his regrets considering his conception:

Had they [Tristram Shandy's parents] only duly weighed and considered all this, and proceeded accordingly,—I am verily weighed persuaded I should have made a quite different figure in the world, from that, in which the reader is likely to see me.

Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*: 5

The implication is that one is free to extrapolate from the hypothetical axiom of the past. Intrinsic to this statement is the tacit realisation that one cannot undo past occurrences. However, it is widely accepted that the realm of the fictional text offers alternative, hypothetical versions of the past.

From these examples the paradox emerges: the declared fiction within fiction of hypothetical analepsis points to the fact that reality is static. It is only how we choose to narrate it that is subject to variation and alternative versions. The paradox is that this hypothetical analepsis, a parallel version of textual reality which is only suggested and not fleshed out, is what draws our attention to this realisation.

The following excerpt is an example of how two fictional 'realities' (i.e., a reality that is within the realm of a work of fiction) are contrasted: that which *is* and that which *could have been*. We are still dealing with hypothetical analepsis. However, since the past is, logically, the preamble to both the present and the future, analepsis can be closely interwoven with present time or even events to come.

I think now that *Mother and I should have driven him to the County Hospital for detoxification*. But we got into his car with him, and told him where the funeral was. [Emphasis mine]

Kurt Vonnegut Jr., *Dead Eye Dick*: 183

The context of the excerpt is not of crucial importance. Suffice it to say that the narrator realises (in the temporal realm of the 'subsequent narrator' when and where he is narrating

from)⁶⁹ that he should have acted differently in the past. The implication is that this hypothetical analepsis is concerned with that which should have been. However, the ensuing sentence starts with ‘But’: the hypothetical analepsis is immediately dismissed. The persons involved made the wrong choice; however, nothing can be done about it. The narrator continues his narration of the past event, “But we got into his car...”, thus illustrating his impotence to change matters.

Such inability to undo the past is also present in Richard Brautigan’s *Dreaming of Babylon*. The narrator forwards a hypothetical analepsis and accepts his powerlessness as regards the past.

I put the coat back on that had a gun in each pocket: one loaded and one empty.
Looking back on it now, I wish I had taken the empty gun out of my pocket, but
you can’t go back and redo the past. You just have to live with it.

Richard Brautigan, *Dreaming of Babylon*: 99

In dealing with hypothetical analepses, we are presented with an alternative by means of hypothesis as well as the limitations to what this literary device is capable of. The hypothetical hypothesis is confined to acting as a parallel to the ‘reality proper’ of the text. This is the typical way in which to use all types of temporal hypothesis. They are confined to a parallel realm that only touches the limits of the text’s ‘reality proper’, and are often seen to constitute a contrast to it.

Below, in section 8 on hypertrophied-hypothesis, we see how this is not always the case. First, however, we continue with hypothetical narrative NOW.

6.3 Hypothetical Narrative NOW

When dealing with the delineation of a hypothetical narrative NOW, the primary thing to notice is that it is a construct. As stated above in the section on Genette’s narratology, the ‘present’ is an ephemeral notion. The narrative NOW can be determined by ruling out what is the past and future in a text. It is a construct that is forwarded to establish the ‘temporal ground zero’ in a text.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ For more on subsequent narration, see Genette, 1983, Chapter 5 on ‘voice’, especially pp 220-7.

⁷⁰ See section 1.3 for Chatman’s definition of Narrative NOW.

However, hypothetical narrative NOW does not have to be at this temporal centre of the text. Rather, it is a hypothesis that shares its temporal domain with the one in which it is produced. Hence, it is stated ‘on the spot’, so to speak. Nevertheless, it still belongs to a parallel realm, which is that of the hypothesis. The direct implication is that the hypothetical narrative NOW is a contemporary hypothesis that runs parallel to the ‘reality proper’ in a text. Thus, that which is neither analepsis nor prolepsis is, by a process of elimination, an instance of narrative NOW:

Lee Mellon looked at the rooster. *He decided to steal it, and then he decided to leave her some money for it along with a note on the kitchen table telling her that he had bought the chicken,* and then he decided to hell with it. Let her keep the chicken. That was big of him. All the time that this was going on, it was going on only in his mind, for he did not say a word. [Emphasis mine]

Richard Brautigan, *A Confederate General from Big Sur*: 86

The narrator grants us access to the thoughts of Lee Mellon. These internal ponderings are stipulated as “going on only in his mind”. The decisions to steal the fowl, to pay for it and to leave an explanatory note are all part of a hypothetical narrative NOW. The sight of the animal causes Mellon to begin his hypothetical narrative NOW. The instant dismissal of it, “and then he decided to hell with it”, marks the closing of it. Although this statement is part of the same train of thought as the previous, it is seen, none the less, to belong to the ‘reality proper’ of the text.

Hence, to dismiss a hypothesis is to declare one’s awareness of it. Moreover, the ensuing sentence is a negotiation with the hypothetical narrative NOW: “Let her keep the chicken”. Lee Mellon has produced a co-contemporary hypothesis in his mind, which creates an imaginary contrast to his present reality. An alternative, parallel reality is produced for the character to consider; it is, then, dismissed.

Let us consider another example, this time involving a cinematic text. In Kenneth Branagh’s 1996 adaptation for the screen (*Hamlet*) of Shakespeare’s play *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, a remarkable deviation from the otherwise faithful rendition of the original text occurs.⁷¹ The departure is not seen as an alteration in the dialogue. Rather, it is an inserted piece of action, of which there is no mention in the printed stage direction.

⁷¹ By ‘original’ is meant the manuscript of *Hamlet* as it appears in *The Collected Works of William Shakespeare*.

In this excerpt from the play manuscript, prince Hamlet enters at the end of act III, scene iii. He contemplates murdering his stepfather, the usurper Claudius, who is in the midst of confessing the killing of his brother to God:

Enter Hamlet.

Ham. Now might I do it pat, now he is
praying;
And now I'll do't; —and so he goes to heaven;

[Here, in the filmed version, is injected a shot of a sword being thrust into the King's ear, piercing through his brains, which results in a massive bleeding]

And so am I reveng'd: —that would be scann'd:
a villain kills my father; and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven
O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.

Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. III, iii

The inserted scene is a hypothetical narrative NOW, a cinematic version of a parallel realm where we witness the execution and result of Hamlet's hypothetical action. The excerpt from Shakespeare's text features another temporal hypothesis. However, this is an example of hypothetical prolepsis, which is dealt with in the following section. The discrepancy between Shakespeare's manuscript and Branagh's film is that the latter incorporates a hypothetical narrative NOW into its aesthetic expression.

To analyse why Branagh chooses to do so is not within the scope of this section. However, the fact remains that in Branagh's film, *Hamlet*, we observe a hypothetical narrative NOW. The implementation of it in a postmodern text such as Branagh's film goes to illustrate how ubiquitous the use of this literary device is.⁷² The hypothetical narrative NOW functions as a parallel version of reality against which to contrast textual reality proper. By forwarding a dichotomy between two textual truths, as it were, the text draws attention to the ephemeral nature of 'reality'.

In Douglas Coupland's *Life After God*, the narrator is contemplating his existence in the postmodern world - a world where, according to Nietzsche, God has left us. An omnipotent deity is no longer determining our fates, we are left to live and narrate our own life's story:

⁷² An argument for classifying Branagh's film, *Hamlet*, as a postmodern text is seen in how the film universe is set sometime in the first half of the 20th century, and not in the contemporary Shakespearian era (16-17th century). Such interplay of historical facts is what Linda Hutcheon defines as historiographic metafiction, which she describes as belonging to the poetics of postmodernism. (Hutcheon: 1996).

I have to admit, the evening was fun – I was a stranger in a strange city among friendly people. It was as though my past life no longer existed – *that other life where I theoretically should have been in a jet eight miles above Idaho, headed to Vancouver* and the life I was losing my ability to understand. [Emphasis mine]

Douglas Coupland, *Life After God*: 259

The narrator identifies his musings as ‘theoretical’. We here see how the hypothetical narrative NOW runs parallel with the narrative NOW of the story proper. The two versions of reality are clearly separated: “where I theoretically should have been”. There is, thus, no confusion between these two levels of fictional description of reality. However, within this statement we uncover the paradox: all that we read in the text is fiction. By examining examples of hypothetical narrative NOW, we direct attention to the fact that all textual information is narrated, and as such, it is *versions of reality*.

Hence, the distinction between fictional reality and hypothetical fictional reality is a subdivision of layers within the fictional realm. They are both constructs. The alternative reality represented through a hypothetical narrative NOW is a certain way in which to voice the postmodern awareness of the notion that the concept of reality is not reliable and unequivocal. Rather, contemporary life and existence within society is a choice among several narratives.

When we deal with instances of hypothetical narrative NOW, the distinction between hypothesis and the ‘reality proper’ in the text must be defined. It can be less self-evident than the very overt examples given above. Below, we encounter some less obvious instances of hypothetical narrative NOW.

The first example is from Todd McEwen’s novel *Arithmetic*. In his 1960s pre-puberty childhood, the narrator, Joe Lake, is living a great proportion of his life in a fantasy world. Unfortunately, he is struggling with arithmetic. His father has purchased a dense theoretical tome on the subject, “Arithmetic Town”, and Joe has to spend his Saturdays improving his skills.

I had my own bathroom in my closet. I shut the closet door and in the dark I aimed for the round box, man, was that thrilling, wait till I could tell Fard, who cared that it didn’t flush. It would just go away like most things do. I felt good, and mad, at the same time. I went out to my table, grabbed *Arithmetic Town*, my wiener was still sticking out, went back in the closet and holding *Arithmetic Town* over my secret toilet, with steamrollers and sofa feeling going up and down me, I PEED ALL OVER IT. I wish. [Emphasis his]

Todd McEwen, *Arithmetic*: 68-9

It is not until the very last sentence that we are told that entire incident is a hypothetical narrative NOW. As stated in the introduction to the thesis, to wish and to forward hypotheses are

closely related. Here, the verb ‘wish’ clearly marks the incident as belonging within the realm of temporal hypothesis. In the example, the stark contrast between the incident and the sudden disclosure at the end amplifies the contrast between hypothesis and textual reality. The excerpt is only partly, or *during* the first reading, a covert hypothetical narrative NOW. While this ‘delusion’ takes place it is completely unrecognisable; however, when it is disclosed it makes a lasting impression.

What ostensibly constitutes textual ‘reality’ is retroactively transubstantiated into the realm of temporal hypothesis. This sudden overturn induces a transvaluation of how to comprehend the text. Our sense of the text’s reality is put to the test – the distinction between what is real and what is merely fiction is blurred. When seen in the context that all text is fictional this, again, directs attention to the paradoxical attempts of defining ‘reality’ within fiction.⁷³

Finally, a very subtle example of hypothetical narrative NOW is found in Borges’ *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*. In the delineation of the metaphysics of Tlön, we are told of the philosophical schools of this invented world, which exists only within the textual realm.

Another school declares that *all time* has already transpired and that our life is only the crepuscular and no doubt falsified and mutilated memory or reflection of an irrecoverable process. Another, that the history of the universe – and in it our lives and the most tenuous detail of our lives – is the scripture produced by a subordinate god in order to communicate with a demon. Another, that the universe is comparable to those cryptographs in which not all the symbols are valid and that only what happens every three hundred nights is true. Another, that while we sleep here, we are awake elsewhere and that in this way every man is two men. [Emphasis his]

Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths*: 34-5

Regarding hypothetical narrative NOW, we see how Borges describes alternative realities. This is done in general terms; however, the different philosophical schools also constitute hypotheses that are contemporary to the narrative NOW in the text proper. Moreover, given the fact that the text is written in a very general and scholarly manner, we can even say that the text *is* written in present time.⁷⁴

If we regard the text thus, the implication is that Borges succeeds in creating several parallel realities all of which exist in their joined capacity of being hypotheses. It is no longer a question of the bifurcation between textual reality and its contrary opponent, the hypothetical nar-

⁷³ This is consistent with the McHale’s definition of ontological flicker, see section 2.2.2.

⁷⁴ Throughout the text the generic pronoun ‘we’ is used much. Thus, the general ‘style’ of the text is construed as formal.

rative NOW. Rather, a multilateral universe emerges within the textual realm. Such a multifarious version of textual reality is a unique feature that few other than Borges master. His concept of ‘forking paths’ in the text does encompass the use of temporal hypothesis.⁷⁵ Borges’ constant questioning and undermining of the text as a stable entity (i.e. his use of various metafictional ‘effects’)⁷⁶ work in close collaboration with the use of temporal hypothesis. Our awareness of texts as a construct and as mere narrative is not confined to only regard the realm of written fiction. Borges’ description of the different schools of philosophy on Tlön and his use of the hypothetical narrative NOW direct attention to the unstable state of what we cling on to under the name of ‘reality’.

6.4 Hypothetical Prolepsis

Following the logic of the preceding two sections, the last of the three major temporal hypotheses is connected to the future. The hypothetical prolepsis is concerned with that which is to come. It is a very common type of temporal hypothesis and thus also one that often passes fairly unnoticed in texts. A likely explanation for this is that we are accustomed to the prevalence of hypotheses concerning the future. The task of envisioning the future is so mundane that one scarcely notices it. Indeed, the suggestion that we ‘should live in the present’ or ‘let bygones be bygones’ is sometimes used to remind us that we spend much time speculating on the past or what is to come.

When dealing with hypothetical prolepsis, it is important to distinguish between this literary device and the more consistent use of it, which is very common in the literary genre of science fiction. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into a comprehensive definition of science fiction; suffice it to say that a great many texts in the genre often involve actions that take place in the future. Thus, it is important to differentiate between a literary effect and a literary genre. However, this does not preclude the possibility of finding hypothetical prolepses, or indeed any other type of temporal hypothesis in works of science fiction.⁷⁷ To demonstrate

⁷⁵ For more on Borges and forking paths, see above in section 2.3.3.

⁷⁶ Some of these effects are: Chinese-box worlds, Trompe-l’œil and metalepsis. These areas of postmodern fiction are described in detail in McHale, 1999: 99-132.

⁷⁷ Science fiction as a genre hinges on extrapolation, a ‘what if’. However, an entire genre cannot be defined by merely one textual device. Moreover, where science fiction is ‘the literature of cognitive estrangement’ (Darko Suvin’s definition, see List of Literature), hypertrophied-hypothesis is a ‘*cognitive familiarization*’. That is, to offer a parallel to reality which is just as plausible, had it not been for time’s arbitrary forking paths. Science fiction reflects *back* upon our so-called ‘real world’; the various types of temporal hypothesis are a potential part of the real world. The difference is that reality harbours several individual realities. In ‘mild’ cases, we can tell the

this, the first example of hypothetical prolepsis is taken from a novel that may well be considered science fiction. However, as genre is often an inconstant label we can also consider Frayn's novel, *A Very Private Life*, to be an allegory on the disappearance of the public sphere, as well a (post)modern fairy-tale:

Once upon a time there will be a little girl called Uncumber. Uncumber will have a younger brother called Sulpice, and they will live with their parents in a house in the middle of the woods. There will be no windows in the house, because there will be nothing to see outside the forest. [...] Then again, windows might let the air in, and no one would want the congenial atmosphere of the house contaminated by the stale, untempered air of the forest, laden with dust and disease. From one year's end to the next they won't go outside, and the outside world won't come in. There will be no need; all their food and medicine and jewellery and toys will be on tap from the mains [...] through the network of pipes and tubes and wires and electromagnetic beams which tangle the forest.

Michael Frayn, *A Very Private Life*: 5-6

The initial sentence is oxymoronic. By employing the standard fairy-tale opening, 'once upon a time', we expect to be taken back into the temporal realm of a past filled with bean stalks and Little Red Riding Hood. However, the use of the future tense clashes with this imagery.⁷⁸ As we read on into the text, we begin to comprehend that we are in fact dealing with a hypothetical prolepsis. It is an imaginary and future world where nature is a health hazard and automation renders going 'outside' superfluous. The novel is an Orwellian extrapolation of how the need for privacy could destroy the public sphere.⁷⁹

The use of the future tense, however, does not last long. Past page 14, the novel is mainly narrated in the present tense. Having established the hypothetical prolepsis, the future tense narration completely subsides. However, the implication is that we, the readers, are now *inside* the hypothetical prolepsis that is the whole text. The literary effect of theoretical prolepsis is used to set up the specific textual realm: the hybrid of genres that constitutes *A Very Private Life*. Thus, this is an extreme example of the effect which hypothetical prolepsis can have. The parallel realm of temporal hypothesis can be so dominant that it is absorbed into the

hypothesis from the reality proper, but in the case of hypertrophied-hypothesis all footing/ grounding to our concept of reality is seen to slip away. (See section 8 on Hypertrophied-Hypothesis).

⁷⁸ The use of future tense in Michael Frayn's *A Very Private Life* is pointed out by David Lodge in his book, *The Art of Fiction*: 135.

⁷⁹ The specific text in mind here is of course George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where the ubiquitous Big Brother cancels out all semblances to what is understood as 'privacy'.

text to the point that it is completely overt. The paradox is that the hypothetical prolepsis *is* the text: it is dissolved into the text via overexposure.⁸⁰

In the light of these findings, we now turn the focus onto some more subtle examples of hypothetical prolepsis. In doing so we will be able to study some of the more overt mechanisms of this literary device. Consider the first example. Paul Auster's tells of the real life inspiration that motivated him to write the story, 'The City of Glass', in his novel *The New York Trilogy*. Auster tells of how he experienced two wrong numbers, both from a man asking for a detective agency. Upon putting down the receiver for the second time, Auster starts to speculate:

This time, however, I started thinking about *what would have happened if* I had said yes. *What if* I had pretended to be a detective from the Pinkerton Agency? I wondered. *What if* I had actually taken on the case?

To tell the truth, I felt that I had squandered a rare opportunity. *If* the man ever called again, I told myself, I would at least talk to him a little bit and try to find out what was going on. I waited for the telephone to ring again, but the third call never came. After that, wheels started to turning in my head, and little by little an entire world of possibilities opened up to me. [Emphases mine]

Auster, Paul, *The Red Notebook*: 36

As with the example from *A Very Private Life* above, we can argue that Auster's entire novel is a hypothetical prolepsis. In the novel the third telephone call *does* come. However, the individual examples of temporal hypothesis tend to be overlooked if we begin to consider the whole of the novel. Thus, we confine the scope of investigation to concern mainly what is stated in the excerpt above.

A predominant 'marker' of the use of hypothesis is the recurrent use of 'if' and 'what if'.⁸¹ These questions constitute the catalyst for what the plot in the novel, 'The City of Glass', is based upon. Auster touches upon the very crux of what a hypothetical prolepsis is. It does harbour "an entire world of possibilities" that can be explored. This type of temporal hypothesis is by far the one most often employed in texts. It seems that most texts are prone to hypothetical speculations on what might come far more than they are concerned with alternative versions of past events. A likely reason for this is found in the 'teleological desire' that is a motivating force when creating or reading texts. As the theorist, Gerald Prince defines it:

⁸⁰ For more on the exaggerated use of the various types of temporal hypothesis, see section 8 on hypertrophied-hypothesis.

⁸¹ For more on markers of temporal hypothesis, see section 6.5.

Students of narrative have pointed out that the end occupies a determinative position because of the light it sheds (or might shed) on the meaning of the events leading up to it. The end functions as the (partial) condition, the magnetizing force, the organizing principle of narrative: reading (processing) a narrative is, among other things, waiting for the end, and the nature of the waiting is related to the nature of the narrative.

Prince, 1991: 26

Following this reasoning, it is what lies ahead in the narrative that constitutes a dominant interest. There may be different reasons for attempting to disclose the end or further occurrences in a given text; however, hypothetical prolepsis is an effective way in which to investigate this uncharted land. Hints to what will eventually transpire, forebodings, false leads and so forth are all possibilities when deploying hypothetical prolepsis.

Whatever the reason, there is a strong resemblance between texts and our every day existence. We are all concerned with what the future has in store; texts hold a mirror to these our desires. In fiction as well as in 'real life', we journey toward a 'telos' – whether it is through life or from left to right, page by page. The hypothetical prolepsis is symptomatic of this urge.

In Don DeLillo's novel, *White Noise*, an example of this is seen in the way the people in an airport react to the narrative of a co-passenger, together with whom they have just survived a spell of in-flight turbulence. The passenger has reached the climax of his story: the status of the imminent crash is altered from 'crash' to 'crash landing':

"Crash landing, crash landing." They saw how easy it was, by adding one word, to maintain a grip on the future, to extend it in consciousness if not in actual fact. They patted themselves for ballpoint pens, went fetal in their seats.

By the time the narrator reached this point in his account, many people were crowded around, not only people who'd just emerged from the tunnel but also those who'd been among the first to disembark. They'd come back to listen. They were not yet ready to disperse, to reinhabit their earthbound bodies, but wanted to linger with their terror, keep it separate and intact for just a while longer.

Don DeLillo, *White Noise*: 91

The statement 'crash landing' is a hypothetical prolepsis, just as the statement, 'crash', which preceded it. Within the span of seconds, the passengers in the plane hurling towards the ground go from predicting certain death to a state of preparing for a rough ride along the landing strip. Neither of the hypothetical scenarios are yet part of the contemporary narrative NOW realm which constitutes 'reality'. Rather, both statements trigger narratives of death or survival that belong within the realm of hypothetical prolepsis. However, the predictive force of both hypotheses is seen to influence the present.

The implication is that a narrative of a hypothetical future does have a causative effect on the realm in which it is produced. Moreover, this also goes to support the notion that all of what we conceive as ‘reality’ is comprised of narratives. In the case of hypothetical prolepsis, the impact on our apprehension of (textual) reality must take into consideration that contamination between the different temporal realms does occur. This is seen clearly in how the use of temporal hypotheses causes us to address unavoidable questions about our notion of ‘reality’.

Later in *White Noise*, the narrator and his family are fleeing a cloud of toxic waste. From the car radio they learn of how exposure to the agents in the cloud is capable of affecting the human organism:

A woman identified herself [on the radio] as a consumer affairs editor began a discussion of the medical problems *that could result* from personal contact with the airborne toxic event. Babette and I exchanged a wary glance. She immediately began talking to the girls while I turned the volume down to keep them from learning *what they might imagine was in store for them*.

“Convulsions, coma, miscarriage,” said the well-informed and sprightly voice. [Emphasis mine]

Don DeLillo, *White Noise*: 121

In the case of the toxic contamination, the hypothetical prolepsis is a simple binary situation: either one is exposed to the agents, or, one is not. As such, this example is less complicated than the previous, in that there is no initial graduation of the theoretical damage. However, as the female speaker progresses, she fills in the details of the hypothetical prolepsis concerning physical damage. Convulsions, coma and miscarriage constitute the tripartition that elaborates on, as well as widens, the imaginary field, which resides in the realm of the hypothetical prolepsis. The narrator, his family as well as we as readers are issued with an array of hypothetical scenarios among which we may choose.

Hence, we get to share the experience of uncertainty that the characters in the text experience. Moreover, the realisation that all of reality, both in- and outside texts, is just this: speculations as to what the text that is ‘the future’ will bring. We realise that instances of hypothetical prolepsis co-exist on the same level of ‘truth’. Whether they are in the textual realm or in the realm that we have named ‘reality’ is, then, a matter of investigation.

6.5 Markers of Temporal Hypothesis: The Subjunctive

Above, in section 3.3, we dealt with McHale's theory of the subjunctive. Although his work on Pynchon's text focuses on the spatial aspects of subjunctivity/hypothetical occurrences, McHale's terminology does define a most crucial circumstance as regards 'marking' hypothetical textual passages. Hence, the use of subjunctive is the prevalent marker of the presence of hypothesis in a text.

According to the theoretical grammar of Jane E. Aaron, the use of subjunctive mood is one which:

[...] expresses a suggestion, requirement, or desire, or it is a condition that is contrary to fact (that is, imaginary or hypothetical) [...] Contrary-to-fact clauses state imaginary or **hypothetical** conditions and usually begin with *if* or *unless* or follow *wish*. For present contrary-to-fact clauses, use the verb's past tense form (for *be* use the past-tense form *were*). [Emphasis in bold mine]

Aaron: 100

Moreover, Aaron defines the subjunctive mood as often indicated by a conditional sentence, which: "states a factual relation between cause and effect, makes a prediction, or speculates about what might happen". (Aaron: 97). The use of the subordinate clause starting with 'if' is used to express speculation. As such, to *speculate* does tally with what occurs in the course of a temporal hypothesis.

We see how the use of certain verb moods, certain verbs and clause-patterns may indicate a hypothesis in a text. The implementation of *spatial* subjunctivity, as pointed out by McHale, has much in common with *temporal* hypothesis. When it comes to the markers of both these separate poetics there are no discernible discrepancies to be found. In the theoretical aspects of how to define and implement the findings potentially marked by the subjunctive mood, however, the two theories differ.⁸²

Thus, we can extend such uses of verb mood as potentially indicative of temporal hypothesis. This is often seen in connection with the use of the word '*if*', which is often a marker of temporal hypothesis. A small survey on the texts used in this thesis does support this assertion. Whether or not these markers, when it comes to the analytical dealings with a given text, ac-

⁸² For the difference between McHale's spatial approach to subjunctive/hypothetical texts and the temporal approach in this thesis, see sections 3.0 – 3.6 on Possible Worlds and other theories.

tually *are* indicative of a temporal hypothesis is a matter of a subsequent subjective discrimination on behalf of the analyst.

When dealing with the different categories of temporal hypothesis there are certain markers which indicate that one is dealing with hypothetical occurrences. Consider a word such as the aforementioned ‘if’; modal verbs such as ‘could’, ‘would’, ‘should’ and so forth; and clauses such as ‘if I were rich’. All these examples are various aspects of the use of the subjunctive, which *potentially* mark hypothetical passages in texts. Potentially, since the above markers have various other grammatical and textual functions.

Let us, however, return to the matter at hand: the markers of temporal hypothesis. The following is not meant to be an exhaustive account of all markers of temporal hypothesis. Rather, the intension is to account for some of the most common concurrences of such markers. This will provide an insight into the function of the markers as well as its usages. Thus, we will facilitate the means for further detection of markers of temporal hypothesis, which will benefit other textual analysts.

There is much of an ad hoc approach to the location and definition of temporal hypothesis. In addition, the above descriptions of markers are, of course, only valid in connection with overtly declared temporal hypotheses. Above in the sections on hypothetical analepsis, narrative NOW and prolepsis, we have already encountered numerous examples of clearly and overtly marked temporal hypotheses. There is little point in rehashing these findings; suffice it to say that there are enough examples of overt use of markers above. Let us, rather, turn the scope of our investigation to those markers of temporal hypotheses that are much less conspicuous, that is, almost covertly embedded in the text.

In such cases a much closer, and ad hoc, approach is called for. One may often find that a text saturated with markers of temporal hypothesis also, often, features a proportional amount of temporal hypotheses. However, texts may, and do indeed, often deviate from this general rule. Thus, authors may seek to make their use of temporal hypothesis inconspicuous, even largely covert. Of course, a completely covert temporal hypothesis is not feasible: if the hypothesis is not declared, then how does the reader know it to be one? Authors can, however, obfuscate matters considerably by marking/declaring a temporal hypothesis *subsequently*.

Perhaps the finest example of this approach is found in Nicholson Baker's novel, *The Fermata*. The protagonist, Arno Strine, has the ability to enter the fermata, to literally suspend the progression of time and move around in this 'frozen' world. In the span between pages 187 to 255, Arno tells of his sexual adventures with a woman, Adele, who is driving alongside him on the Massachusetts Turnpike. He enters the fermata, reads aloud a pornographic story (which is included in its entirety as chapter fourteen of the novel) onto a cassette tape and places it in Adele's car tape-player. Strine then proceeds to follow Adele and plans to lure her into having sex with him. Throughout the narrative of what *would potentially* transpire in the motel, (essentially another pornographic story), the use of the subjunctive of the verb 'would' is constant. However, due to the frequency of the verb it becomes so 'habitualised' that its significance as a marker of temporal hypothesis slides into the background.⁸³

However, eventually the 'spell' is broken:

That [pages 228 to 254] was what I planned to happen. What did happen, though, is that after an hour and a half or so of steady driving on the Mass Pike, an hour and a half full of hope and keyed-up concentration, I saw a small twirling shape fly out of Adele's car window.

She hadn't liked it. [The taped reading of the pornographic novel].

Nicholson Baker, *The Fermata*: 254-5

Suddenly, after nearly 100 pages, the reader is made aware of the illusion: Strine never succeeded in anything that he planned for. Despite having overtly declared it all to be a hypothetical prolepsis (by leaving a trail of subjunctive breadcrumb 'woulds'), it is only subsequent to the massive hypothetical prolepsis that it is declared to be just that. Our loyalty to the fictional contract prevails; we tend to suspend our disbelief and commit to the illusory belief that what we read *does* transpire, even when repeatedly being told differently.

Another approach is to mark and/or declare hypothesis in a more general manner, thus leaving the reader to decide whether or not a specific passage is a temporal hypothesis. This sort of approach is found more in the deliberate and playful applications of temporal hypothesis. An example of this is this paradoxical comment in Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*:

⁸³ The term 'habitualisation' refers to Shklovsky's concept of the same name in his seminal article, *Art as Technique*. Originally the term is used in connection with the description of objects in poetry and prose. If an object is repeatedly described in the same way, it is 'automated', or 'habitualised', into 'the greatest economy of perceptive effort'. When similar circumstances are transferred onto the consistent use of a verb in a text, a similar 'numbness' to its meaning is seen to occur. As Shklovsky states: "Habitualisation devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war". (Shklovsky: 20).

[T]here was no need to choose: the memory could have been left so far behind that one day its “reality” wouldn’t matter any more. *Of course it happened. Of course it didn’t happen.* [Emphasis mine]

Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity’s Rainbow*: 667

Gravity’s Rainbow is not a novel in which temporal hypotheses dominate.⁸⁴ However, it does ‘post-modify’ those instances of temporal hypotheses that are present in the text. Thus, it directs attention to the preceding instances of temporal hypothesis. Moreover, it helps classify such passages by defining the uncertainty at play in such interfictional pockets: did it, or did it not, happen?

Markers of temporal hypothesis may be carefully omitted by the author, thus intentionally withholding and concealing the nature of a given textual passage – until later in the text. The reasons for such ‘covert behaviour’ are too numerous to deal with presently. Suffice it to say here that any textual device is subject to authors’ playfulness and subversion of the conventions of reader protocols. Moreover, the fact that authors are seen to deliberately manipulate the perception of a textual device, in this case temporal hypothesis, marks the inauguration of this device into the system of literary devices.

The crux of the matter with temporal hypothesis and markers of such is to keep in mind that one is not dealing with uniqueness of reference. A certain amount of ambiguity is always present. Temporal hypotheses may be marked as such *before* they commence, any time *during* one, or *subsequently*. Moreover, the marking may be anything from completely overt to being almost successfully obfuscated. However, there is no such thing as a completely covert temporal hypothesis. There may be ambiguity at play – did it happen or did it not? However, the notion of (temporal) hypothesis hinges on the textual reality proper being pitted against what is only a suggested reality: a hypothesis.

6.6 Preliminary Conclusion: Observations on Findings

We have now defined the three fundamental categories of temporal hypothesis. Intrinsic to the formulation of these we have introduced the methodological approach to how one goes about analysing these individual categories to a considerable extent. This ad hoc methodology is prevalent throughout the thesis – indeed; Part III is dedicated exclusively to temporal hy-

⁸⁴ To support this claim, see McHale’s article, *Mason & Dixon in the Zone*. Herein, on page 44, he observes the presence of hypothetical incidents in *Gravity’s Rainbow* to be “relatively rare”. (McHale’s definition of hypothetical events is: ‘subjunctive events’ – see section 3.3 for more on this matter).

pothesis analysis of a single text. Moreover, we are now able to detect the potential markers of temporal hypotheses and subsequently the terminology by which to categorise them.

What we have seen in sections 5 and 6 is that every text is unique in its own way. As a consequence every instance of temporal hypothesis in texts is also unique; especially when the analytical endeavour becomes more detailed in its undertaking. The corollary of this is that every instance of temporal hypothesis must be treated accordingly: always consider how and to what ends this textual device is applied.

However, before a thorough textual analysis is initiated, we will first continue with a more detailed look into the temporal hypothesis as well as looking at temporal hypothesis at its most extreme.

7.0 Inside the Temporal Hypothesis – An Introduction

7.1 Introduction

This section concentrates on the technical aspects that are intrinsic to any temporal hypothesis. Here, the many different types of hypotheses are defined and an array of textual examples will help illustrate their complex nature. The actual technical definition of any type of temporal hypothesis may appear deceptively uncomplicated. This, however, actually works to our advantage. For, if the delimitation of a specific type of temporal hypothesis is easily conducted, then we may concentrate on the more complicated analysis of textual examples.

Before beginning to define the different types of temporal hypotheses, it is necessary to establish the basic internal components that form their internal structural make. Several conditions come into play and it is from this interaction that we are able to typify any given temporal hypothesis. When dealing with these there are several intrinsic modifications to be observed and accounted for. These have to do with the implications of any given hypothesis. Hence, if we wish to have a more comprehensive array of modifications by which to define and categorise the functions of any temporal hypotheses, then the following sub-categories, and the definitions of these, are called for.

7.2 Intrinsic to Temporal Hypothesis

If we take a textual passage and identify it as a temporal hypothesis we can, then, further subdivide it into the following categories: *Tense*, *Range*, *Mode* and the *Degree of Realization*. All categories will be illustrated below by means of a range of textual examples in order for us to observe the practical nature of the textual analysis involved.

Although some of these terms are based upon the terminology in Genette's theoretical work, the terms used in this section are not to be confused with this text.⁸⁵ Rather, the following terminology is specifically connected to the study of temporal hypotheses. It has been modified to accommodate the specifications and meet the requirements of this particular theoretical field. Hence, comparison with Genette's terminology is appreciated; however, it is not crucial in connection with the matter at hand.

⁸⁵ See section 1.2 on Gérard Genette's narratological terminology, and List of Literature.

7.3 Tense

The first thing to notice is: *in which tense(s) is the overall narrative presented?* This may seem trivial and very self-evident; however, it is important to distinguish between a temporal hypothesis that *was, is or will be* occurring. It is important to determine the relationship between the tense of the narrative and the ‘temporal direction’ of the temporal hypothesis.⁸⁶

Thus, the second thing is to establish when the hypothesis is forwarded: *where in the temporal plane of the narrative is the temporal hypothesis produced?* Are we dealing with a hypothesis that *was, is or will be* stated, and how does this tally with the narrative tense? Having established the narrative tense, the determination of the relationship between tense of narration and the time when the temporal hypothesis is forwarded must be demarcated.

Therefore, finally, we can establish *when the temporal hypothesis is imagined to take place.* Now it can be established if we are dealing with the past, present or future in relation to the moment the hypothesis is stated. It is here that the importance of tense becomes apparent. For it is in the tension between the tense *of* the narrative and the tense *in* the narrative that we encounter several possible interpretations.

Let us take an example. The narrator in the excerpt below, Arno, has the ability to stop time and having done so he has climbed up upon the bonnet of a speeding car that is ‘frozen in time’. He then ponders:

I held the quasi-crucifixional position for a time, looking out at the hills and the cars ahead, considering that if I pulled on my glasses right then to resume time, my car would race off driverless and would eventually crash, and I, left in the middle of the road, would almost certainly be hit by one of the cars behind ours.

Nicholson Baker, *The Fermata*: 191

The narrative is in the past tense. The temporal hypothesis is directed into the future (‘If I pulled on my glasses right then’).⁸⁷ However, whether the narrator is adding this speculation while he narrates or whether he did actually think so at the time is a matter of interpretation. It is more important to register the tension between the narrative tense and the direction of the temporal hypothesis. Thus, we can proceed to establish that the hypothesis is projected into the future; however, it is told retrospectively and narrated in the past tense.

⁸⁶ See section 10.3 for a concrete example of this.

⁸⁷ Which is a hypothetical prolepsis, see section 6.4.

7.4 Range

Having dealt with tense we now turn to a closely connected issue, that of range. Consider the above excerpt from Baker's novel. *How long is the temporal hypothesis declared to last, and how long does it actually last?* The first matter is relatively easy: if the narrator does what he proposes, then, he will be dead in a matter of seconds or minutes, depending on the density of traffic. This is relative as narrated time is not measurable in the same way that, say, a movie is.⁸⁸ Hence, we can only approximate the duration.

In relation to the second matter, the answer is simpler. It transpires that the narrator in the novel does not pull on his glasses and so we never learn what would have happened (although we are provoked to imagine a body crushed beneath a speeding car). However, *had* he done it, then we could register any discrepancies between the hypothesis and the actual happenings. Here we must consider the fact that the narrator is narrating in the past tense, a strong indication that he is alive to tell of his experiences.

The crux of the matter is to account for the range of a temporal hypothesis and what actually transpires. It is in the discrepancies that the potential for interesting tensions arises.⁸⁹

7.5 Mode

In close connection with the range of temporal hypothesis is the matter of its 'quality'. I.e., is there some overt or, alternatively, more tacit evaluation of the forwarded hypothesis? More directly, *is the hypothesis specific or general?* Moreover, *is the hypothesis forwarded as positive or negative?*

Whether a temporal hypothesis is specific or general is relatively easy to determine. In the case of Arno above, the hypothesis is strictly confined to his own situation. A general temporal hypothesis is, then, ostensibly the opposite:

⁸⁸ As Genette states: "The narrative text, like every other text, has no other temporality than what it borrows, metonymically, from its own reading". (Genette, 1983: 34)

⁸⁹ See also below in section 7.6 on degree of realisation.

And yet, if the Japanese designers did get rid of personal air outlets, murmuring contemptuously among themselves about “barbaric holdovers from the infancy of cabin pressurization,” I expected to feel, the first time I noticed this absence, the same sort of long-awaited jolt of grief I felt when [...] I came across horrifying articles in the Arts and Leisure section with titles like “Is the Symphony Orchestra Dead?”

Nicholson Baker, *Room Temperature*: 47

‘If the Japanese’ is rather general; however, it is soon graduated into the more specific. The air outlets are less general, and when we see that the hypothesis is motivated by a personal expectation: ‘I expected to feel’. Hence, the relationship between the specific and the general is one of tension and it is often a matter of graduation rather than stating the absolute.

As regards the matter of determining whether a hypothesis is positive or negative, this is also a matter of interpretation. If we evaluate the matter of Arno’s potential death above, we tend to see ‘almost certain death’ as rather negative. Whereas someone considering winning the lottery is forwarding a positive hypothesis. The tension here lies between the positive or negative mode of the hypothesis and how events actually transpire, if indeed they do transpire.

7.6 Degree of Realisation

The perhaps most pertinent matter when dealing with temporal hypotheses is whether a hypothesis is *conclusive or inconclusive*. As we have seen in connection with the examples above, we can sometimes establish that a temporal hypothesis becomes a factual entity during the course of the narrative. Conversely, there is also the possibility that a hypothesis is left ‘lingering’ within the narrative sphere. This means that there is no textual information in the remainder of the narrative that transmutes the hypothesis into a factual entity in the text. Thus, the notion is to establish *whether the temporal hypothesis is realised*.

The epistemological uncertainty between when a temporal hypothesis is forwarded and when it is, if ever, realised is the basis of a variable degree of tension. Some hypotheses are almost immediately realised. This is what happens in the example above from *The Fermata*. Within two sentences, the narrator moves from the bonnet of the car to a safe position within the same car: “I looked through [the female driver of the car’s] window at her, my face inches away from her profile. I went around and opened her passenger door [...] and got in next to her”. (Nicholson Baker, *The Fermata*: 191). Hence, the image of a hypothetical maiming, or even death, beneath a speeding car is emphatically removed from the scope of possibility. The

hypothesis is not realised and its 'window of opportunity' is closed. It can be reopened; however, this will call for the renewal of a similar hypothesis and/or a textual restatement of a similar dangerous situation. We can summate that the hypothesis in question is realised and conclusive.

An example of the opposite, when a temporal hypothesis is not realised, is found in Nicholson Baker's novel *U & I*. The text centres on a relationship between the narrator and John Updike. The narrator forwards several hypotheses about Updike's funeral: "Immediately I tried to picture what sort of "popular manifestation" there would be at Updike's funeral". (Nicholson Baker, *U & I*: 18). Here, to the best knowledge of the contemporary readers of *U & I* (as well as those of this thesis) we know that Updike is *not* dead. Thus, we see that the realisation of the hypothesis is not possible within the scope of the novel, or indeed in the reality which lies outside the text for that matter.⁹⁰ This hypothesis is, then, labelled as inconclusive.⁹¹

Whether a hypothesis is conclusive or inconclusive, and whether it is realised/not realised is not a strictly binary decision. In fact, the relation between these pairs of definition is to be seen more as a spectrum. However, the analysis of temporal hypotheses is a matter of interpretation and temporal hypotheses are often more complex than the examples submitted so far. Hence, it must be emphasised that although the ideal is to arrive at a finite categorisation, the reality of a given analysis situation may be far more ambiguous.

7.7 Preliminary Conclusion

The definition of the term hypothesis (see section 5.2 above) makes it apparent to us that it is a very comprehensive term. This is also the case with the temporal hypothesis. In the dealing with the intrinsic components of it, we see that we must accept a certain degree of ambiguity. This may seem frustrating; however, in literature matters are fortunately not as definite as in, say, algebra. The findings in the above sections facilitate several effective ways to approach the analysis of temporal hypotheses.

⁹⁰ There are many metafictional and postmodern issues at play in this example that could be elaborated, however, this falls outside the scope of this thesis. What is relevant here is to note that authors and narrators are within their 'artistic rights' should they choose to narrate the death of any person, either 'real' or fictional. However, John Updike 'survives' throughout all 179 pages of *U & I*, leaving the potential realisation of his hypothetical demise unrealised.

⁹¹ For a thorough analysis of *U & I*, see Part III.

The application of these categories is primarily meant to be carried out ad hoc. There are no definitive approaches to a temporal hypothesis. What may be effective for one instance may prove utterly ineffective in another. It is possible to approach all temporal hypotheses schematically and make it one's methodological approach. In the course of this thesis, however, the approach will be to analyse all temporal hypotheses as individual instances that require individual appearances.

8.0 The Hypertrophied-Hypothesis

8.1 Introduction

The previous section on temporal hypothesis deals extensively with local incidents of the device. We turn the scope now to consider the use of temporal hypothesis as it pertains to the status of *entire texts*. In the previous section, the individual intrinsic components of temporal hypothesis as well as how to classify these are established. The matter of hypertrophied-hypothesis, however, still remains. During this section, the focus will be on what occurs when temporal hypotheses are the dominant poetic device in texts. By means of several textual examples and by incorporating the findings from the sections above, a novel textual device is demarcated. Thus, we see a sliding scale, which spans from texts with none or few temporal hypotheses to the use of temporal hypothesis at its most extreme—and even beyond this realm. In connection with this section, a new terminology - hypertrophied-hypothesis - is introduced.

Following the definition of hypertrophied-hypothesis, its specific relationship with the postmodern text is investigated and discussed. Moreover, the analytical implications of such new narratological terminology are also considered.

8.2 Introducing Hypertrophied-Hypothesis

In Hegelian Logic, we find the ‘trilogy’ of (hypo)thesis, antithesis and synthesis. If we suppose the first part of this trilogy to be temporal hypothesis, then, logically, the antithesis is constituted by the textual ‘reality proper’. The two are mutually exclusive matters: if it is a temporal hypothesis it cannot (yet) be part of reality. Hence, when temporal hypothesis and its antithesis, textual reality proper, are merged, the resulting synthesis is a clear demarcation of the two different areas.

However, when this assumption is applied to postmodern textual examples, matters are far from always so unequivocally binary. If expressed as a sliding scale, the closer we get to the realm of the hypertrophied-hypothesis and beyond, the more uncertain it becomes to draw the line between hypothesis and reality. Instead we enter a textual realm where the synthesis between hypothesis and reality *is* the norm: the realm of hypertrophied-hypothesis. In this ‘zone’ the dominant is constituted by temporal hypothesis.

Fundamentally, the definition of hypertrophied-hypothesis is when temporal hypotheses distort the distinction between textual reality and textual hypothesis. Hence, hypertrophied-hypothesis is a textual condition which hinders a final deconstruction of its elements (consisting of various temporal hypotheses) into a ‘coming into the open’ as we see it done in the sections above on temporal hypothesis.⁹² Moreover, as the ensuing sections show, hypertrophied-hypothesis holds the potential of ‘infecting’ an entire text. When this happens hypertrophied-hypothesis is a/the dominant trait of the entire text. This resembles Genette’s notion of perverting narrative time, only here it is the ‘reality/hypothesis principle’ within texts which is at stake.

8.3 Sliding Scale: Reality to Hypertrophied-Hypothesis

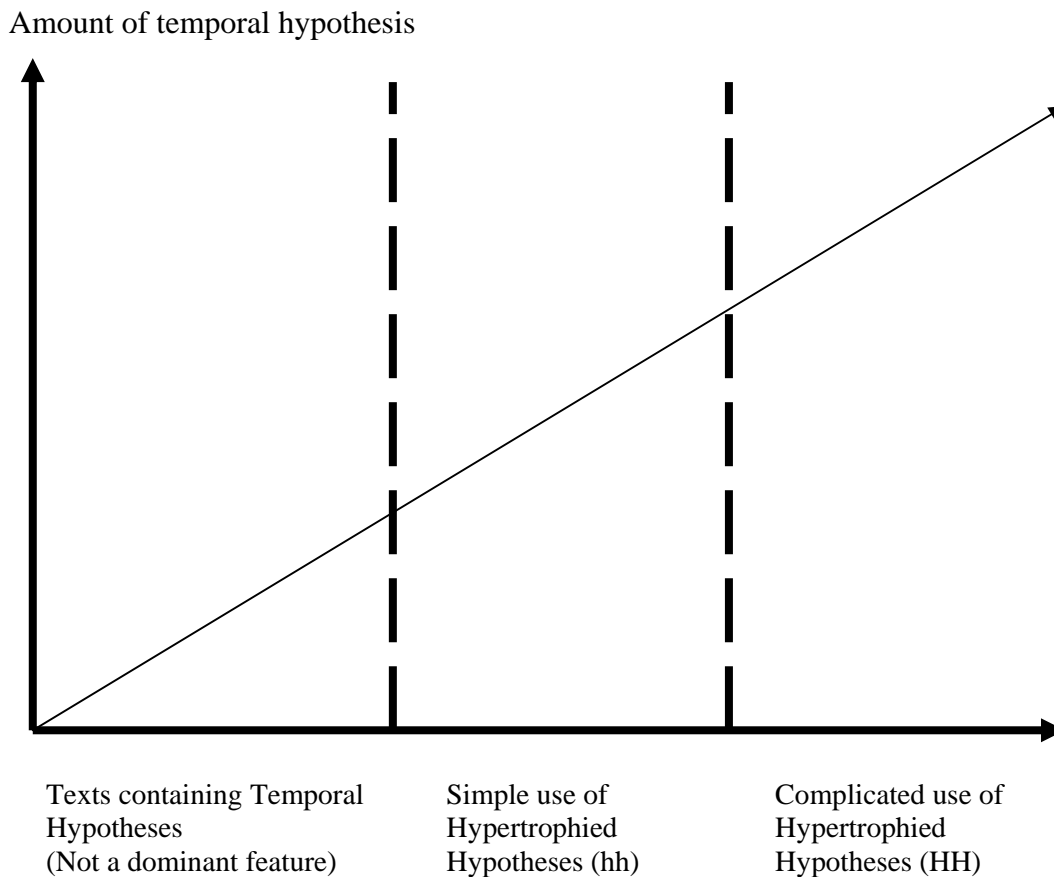
The basic concepts for approaching temporal hypotheses and, more pertinent in this section, the hypertrophied-hypothesis will now be forwarded. This is done as a three level spectrum. The span consists of texts with little or no temporal hypothesis; over texts that belong in the category hypertrophied-hypothesis, and finally texts which fall beyond the realm of the two former categorisations.

The levels are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they comprise a sliding scale: from the subtlest use of temporal hypothesis to the most extreme deployment. An example of this is the intrinsic span *inside* the scale when it comes to hypertrophied-hypothesis. Thus, the sliding scale below is not an exact tool. The reason for the textual analyst to carry out such an evaluation of postmodern literature is to indicate the approximate status of a given text in relation to the terms temporal hypothesis and/or hypertrophied-hypothesis.

The practical application of such findings will be evident below in the final analysis section. For now, we will concentrate on defining the sliding scale:

⁹² See sections 6.0 – 6.6.

Fig. 1: Temporal hypothesis pertaining to types of text



The three columns in figure 1 represent different types of text wherein temporal hypothesis occurs. The rising curve represents the amount of temporal hypothesis: the amount of temporal hypothesis is exponential in relation to the different types of text. The two broken vertical lines illustrate the sliding scale along which the different types of text progress. Thus, the exact watershed between two categorisations is to be understood as somewhat fluid. The abbreviations ‘hh’ and ‘HH’ within the second and third column signify the gradation from, respectively, ‘slight’ to ‘extreme’ hypertrophied-hypothesis. The use of lower case and capital letters expresses the intensity/amount of temporal hypotheses in texts. Column 3 also marks the outer limits of hypertrophied-hypothesis beyond which the terminology in this section ceases to bear direct relevance. Such a demarcation does contribute to a clearer understanding of the matter at hand, and it will be returned to below in connection with Figure 2.

Having explained Figure 1, it must be stressed that it is a graphic simplification of matters, not an exact formula for analysis. Hence, we will now illustrate the individual criteria by textual examples.

8.3.1 On ‘Texts Containing Temporal Hypotheses’

In texts where the level of temporal hypothesis is straightforward, the use of hypothesis is simple. It is used to delineate what could have been done, could happen, or, what might happen.⁹³ Thus, the use of temporal hypothesis never rises to a level where it decisively challenges the ‘reality proper’ of the text.

As such, the basic use of temporal hypothesis in texts is actually more epistemological in its nature than ontological. The epistemological concern is primarily to determine unrealised potential occurrences, rather than to contrast these with realised textual occurrences in the textual reality proper. However, in postmodern literature the overall concern renders texts predominantly ontologically challenging. Hence, the local epistemological implications are that such interfictional pockets, in turn, do cause ontological flicker. The reader is reminded that textual reality holds a fragile and potentially ephemeral hegemony over hypothetical reality. Thus, even a modest level of temporal hypothesis does intimate ontological uncertainty unto the reader, albeit on a subtle level.

This basic level of use of temporal hypothesis is where texts are not dominated by hypothesis. The most important common denominator for this type of texts is that the level of temporal hypothesis is limited to a level which creates a primary centre of attention. That is, the level of temporal hypotheses is either simply non-existing, or so limited that other textual features hold hegemony. The temporal hypothesis is, so to speak, inconspicuous.

8.3.2 On ‘Hypertrophied-Hypotheses’

Conversely, there are texts where the level of temporal hypothesis is more complicated. Here, the level of confusion between textual ‘truth’ and hypothesis is dissolved into a realm where the establishment of hegemony between the two becomes increasingly difficult. As a consequence, epistemology is completely eclipsed by ontological concerns. The text is ‘upset’ by flicker and hesitation: what in the text is textual reality, and what is hypothesis?

The more intricate (or ‘perverted’⁹⁴) this web of temporal hypotheses is in a text, the more confusing it is to continue to constantly choose between the forkings in the textual path. Hence the reader oscillates between several layers of hypotheses, and the concept of ‘truth’

⁹³ See sections 6.0 – 6.6 on temporal hypothesis.

⁹⁴ See below in section 8.4., where the term ‘perverted’ in connection with Proust is explained.

grows increasingly ambiguous and arbitrary. Thus, the realm of hypertrophied-hypothesis may also be seen to approximate a state of aporia.⁹⁵ This is expressed in how the possibility for establishing hegemony between textual fact and hypothesis grinds to a halt; the realm of hypertrophied-hypothesis begins.

This second level is entered upon when a text contains temporal hypotheses in such a number that the literary device reaches a level where it attracts attention.⁹⁶ More precisely, the presence of frequent use of various temporal hypotheses becomes a significant part of the text. The level of attention in hypertrophied-hypothesis is again sub-divided into a range that also varies in intensity, (expressed in figure 1 as hh to HH). Hypertrophied-hypothesis can be consistent with one or several other literary devices. Or, it can become more and more *the* dominant poetic device, up until the point where it actually cancels itself out. Immediately below we will return to the final column in figure 1. First, however, a textual example of a ‘modest’ hypertrophied-hypothesis is forwarded.

8.3.3 On ‘Simple Hypertrophied-Hypothesis’ (‘hh’)

DeLillo’s novel on the life of Lee Harvey Oswald, *Libra*, contains a fair amount of temporal hypotheses. Not, however, in so great a number that the scales tip in favour of classifying the text as one where hypertrophied-hypothesis dominates the text. However, the use of this textual device is a decisive formal trait in DeLillo’s text.

In *Libra*, the main portion of the temporal hypotheses is set in contrast to what we know will happen: the assassination of President Kennedy. In the excerpt below, a conspirator against Kennedy, Win Everett, contemplates his plans to stage a *failed* attempt on President Kennedy:

He worried about the deathward logic of his plot. He’s already made it clear that he wanted shooters to hit a Secret Service man, wound him superficially. But it wasn’t a misdirected round, an accidental killing, that made him afraid. There was something more insidious. He had a foreboding that the plot would move to a limit, develop a logical end.

Don DeLillo, *Libra*: 221

⁹⁵ According to Abrams, ‘aporia’ is a term from the classic logic of Plato and Aristotle, which deconstructionist Jacques Derrida introduced into literary theory. Aporia is: “[A]n inseparable deadlock, or “double bind,” of incompatible or contradictory meanings which are “undecidable,” in that we lack any available and sufficient ground for choosing among them”. (Abrams: 228). For more on Plato, Aristotle and aporia, see Ranner. (See List of Literature, under Electronic Media).

⁹⁶ The term ‘attracts attention’ is not to be understood in the light of Jakobson’s notion of the dominant. However; it does signify that the literary device contains the potential to become a/the dominant feature in the text wherein it appears. See section 2.2.1 above and McHale, 1999: 6-25.

In DeLillo's text, the usage of temporal hypotheses is mostly pitted against the reader's knowledge of how history *will actually* turn out. Hence, the use of temporal hypothesis gains its own momentum and functions as an overt textual device. An ironic distance emerges between our knowledge of history and the hopes and plans made by various textual/historical characters. However, the use of temporal hypothesis does share the limelight with the deep psychological insights into the motivations of the characters. Hence, temporal hypothesis is not *the* dominant textual device, albeit one of several.

8.3.4 On 'Complicated Hypertrophied-Hypothesis' ('HH')

The use of hypertrophied-hypothesis may be manifold in type and employment; however, if it eclipses all other artistic effects it, then, enters the extreme level, HH. At the other end of the scale of hypertrophied-hypothesis, the device completely permeates and dominates the structure of a text. In the most extreme cases, we see the use of temporal hypothesis in a text as all-pervasive: the hypertrophied-hypotheses take over. Here, the use of temporal hypothesis is so exaggerated that the texts are completely beyond the realm of hypertrophied-hypothesis.

In the final, third Part of this thesis, the analysis of Nicholson Baker's novel, *U & I*, hinges on the assumption that this text *is* an example of complicated hypertrophied-hypothesis. Hence, there is little point in offering a lengthy analysis of the phenomenon at this point. Instead, consider the following example of a *local*⁹⁷ complicated hypertrophied-hypothesis (consisting of six temporal hypotheses) - it introduces the gist of a text dominated by temporal hypotheses:

Fisher looked at Frank of Oregon who was smoking a cigarette. Honestly. Openly. Fisher considered what to say.

- 1 Well Frank of Oregon I was just so surprised what with Jillian being a middle class law student inviting you to her bed while I the only other middle class person in the house was allowed to rot in my puddle on the floor. And not just the once but exactly how many times have you coupled and etc.?
- 2 Well Frank of Oregon I have hit my head and in fact it does very much have something to do with my behavior I must be honest I really can't

⁹⁷ As such, the quoted complicated hypothesis is an example of how temporal hypotheses are seen to dominate a text. However, the example only shows a local, isolated part within a novel. Thus, there is an important difference between this example and that which comprises the final part of the thesis.

think things out at all if indeed I ever could. I really must plead inability to see connections between one thing and another etc.

- 3 Well Frank of Oregon even though I unfairly condemn you I have a right to do so as I am administrator at the Institute of sciences and a violinist and you in comparison are draff, slops etc.
- 4 Well Frank of Oregon you see I am filled with repressed hate, the bits of my broken woodpecker kit etc.
- 5 Well Frank of Oregon I have drunk too much etc.
- 6 Well Frank of Oregon I have not drunk enough etc.

None of these was any good. Fisher was becoming embarrassed as the honest face of Frank of Oregon deserved a reply but he had to sit and think it out.

Todd McEwen, *Fisher's Hornpipe*: 156-7

For now, let us proceed to consider an example which marks what falls *outside* the realm of hypertrophied-hypothesis.

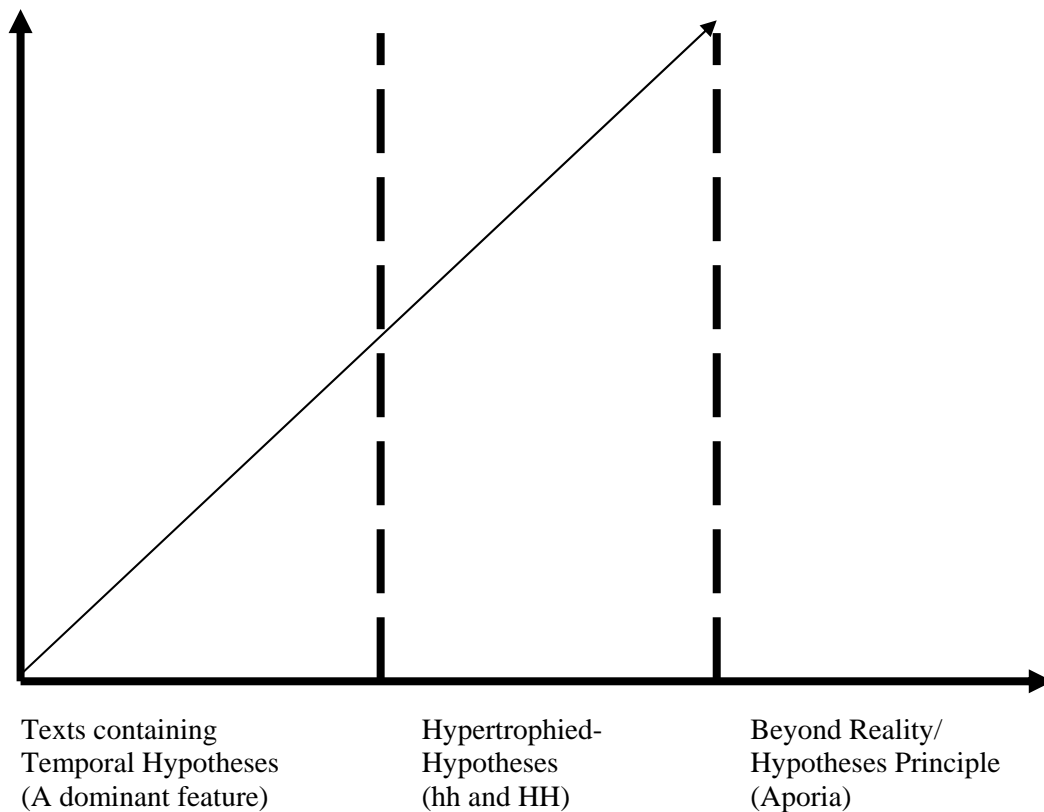
8.3.5 On 'Beyond the Reality/Hypothesis Principle'

As we have seen so far, the principle of separating what is real from what is parallel, hypothesised truth in texts is the most decisive distinction when it comes to analysing temporal hypotheses and/or hypertrophied-hypotheses. However, some texts by authors such as Pynchon, Burroughs and Borges, to name but a few, forward textual universes where the methodology of this thesis cannot be applied.

Considering Figure 1 from above, we may elaborate it to a figurative representation that includes texts which fall beyond our method of analysis:

Fig. 2: Beyond the Reality/Hypothesis Principle

Amount of temporal hypothesis



In the third column, the degree of temporal hypothesis and/or hypertrophied-hypothesis cannot be quantified since such textual devices cannot be delimited and thus not counted – a state of aporia is reached in the text. To illustrate this we turn to a textual example, Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow*:

In a lengthy sub-plot to main character Slothrop’s adventures in the zone of Berlin after WW II, we follow the German rocket engineer Pölker as he works on the V1 and V2 rockets for Nazi-Germany. His wife and his daughter, Ilse, have been sent to a ‘re-education’ camp. As a reward for his work Pölker is allowed to meet once a year with his daughter. However, he soon begins to doubt if the girl he meets each year really is his daughter or merely a different impostor each time. On one occasion Pölker has sex with the girl. Is it incest?

No. What Pölker did was to choose to believe that she wanted comfort that night, wanted not to be alone. Despite Their [the SS] game, Their palpable evil, though he had no more reason to trust ‘Ilse’ than he trusted Them, by an act not of faith, not of courage but of conservation, he chose to believe that. Even in peacetime, with unlimited resources, he couldn’t have proved her identity, not beyond the

knife-edge of zero tolerance his precision eye needed. The years Ilse would have spent between Berlin and Peenemünde were so hopelessly tangled, for all of Germany, that no real chain of events could have been established for sure [...]

It was not, in fact, even clear to him that he had made a choice. [...] Pölker knew that while he played, this would have to be Ilse—truly his child, truly as he could make her. It was the real moment of conception, in which, years too late, he became her father.

Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*: 421

There is no final dénouement as to whether or not Pölker commits incest. *Unconsciously* (the narrator informs us) he chooses to believe so, convincing himself that it is his daughter; surely a father would *know*. As readers of the text, however, we are made aware that we have to make an impossible choice: either Pölker commits incest, or else he has lost his daughter. What is the text reality proper and which is a mere temporal hypothesis? In the realm beyond hypertrophied-hypothesis such choices are perpetually circulated.

Appropriately, the penultimate part of *Gravity's Rainbow* is called "In the Zone".⁹⁸ Indeed, as mentioned above the hypertrophied-hypothesis is a zone, an interfictional 'pocket', where conventional literary norms are unsettled.⁹⁹ However, *Gravity's Rainbow* falls outside the constructivist approach of analysis that accounts for temporal and/or hypertrophied-hypothesis. For one thing, as McHale has observed, hypothetical events are 'relatively rare' in *Gravity's Rainbow*.¹⁰⁰ More significantly, there is no definitive 'reality' as such throughout the novel.

Hence, those hypotheses which are found cannot be validated as such except locally, as seen in the excerpt immediately above. In connection with the text as a whole, such a temporal hypothesis cannot be validated according to the parameters set up in sections 7.0 - 7.6. Or, put differently, *Gravity's Rainbow* is a novel where the concept of reality is completely subverted to the degree that 'truth' is an arbitrary concept. Pynchon's novel marks the outer limits beyond which the theory of temporal hypothesis does not apply.

⁹⁸ More precisely in part 3 of the novel, which commences on page 279.

⁹⁹ See section 3.3 (as well as 3.4 – 4.0).

¹⁰⁰ In an article on Pynchon, McHale uses the terms 'subjunctive events' and 'subjunctive spaces'. (McHale: 2000). These terms largely correspond with what is understood as hypothetical events in this thesis, albeit McHale approaches the subject from the different vantage point of spatiality. For more on McHale's work on subjunctivity, see section 3.3.

8.4 Hypertrophied-Hypothesis and the Postmodern

Section 2.2 above is an insight into McHale's descriptive poetics of postmodern fiction. We may now reintroduce the cardinal findings from his theory with emphasis on hypertrophy and recontextualise these in the context of hypertrophied-hypothesis. Since the nomenclature of the latter terminology is greatly inspired by McHale's work, a comparison of the two is suitable. It must again be stressed that McHale's definition of hypertrophy as *tropological worlds* signifies a spatial approach which differs significantly from the temporal approach in hypertrophied-hypothesis. However, from these seemingly incompatible discrepancies several interesting conclusions may still be derived.

As McHale shows, the ontological flicker induced by hypertrophied metaphors and hypertrophy comprises a literary device, which has significant impact on the perception of the text as well as the act of reading it. By virtue of the qualities described above, hypertrophy is a device that reflects the postmodern preoccupation with ontological questions. We have also seen how 'flicker' is induced by hypertrophy. Moreover, it centres as much attention on the reading of text as on the text itself.

Having thus established the realm of hypertrophy as a topos consisting of mental notions, and its potential to invoke ontological flicker, we might draw some comparisons to hypertrophied-hypothesis.¹⁰¹ Above, we see how temporal hypotheses can lead to hypertrophied-hypothesis. Such constant and extreme use of hypothesis creates a parallel concept of the notion 'textual reality'. Thus, the two literary devices - hypertrophy and hypertrophied-hypothesis - exhibit a strong kinship.

However, there are crucial differences between the two devices. Hypertrophy hinges on separate, (semi-)autonomous textual realities. Hypertrophied-hypothesis differs on a decisive point: it subsumes the interrelations between two, or more, parallel textual realities. Autonomy for any of the individual realities is not possible, since duality and ambiguity are the preconditions for hypertrophied-hypothesis. One textual reality may claim hegemony over another; however, it is the tension between textual realities *present within the same text* that causes hypertrophied-hypothesis.

¹⁰¹ For a definition of the term 'topos' and its general signification as well as how it is used particularly in connection with temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis, see above in section 2.2.2.

When different types of temporal hypotheses feature extensively, or even dominate, in a text, it can be said to enter the realm of the hypertrophied-hypothesis. Genette observes on Marcel Proust's novel, *A la recherche de la temps perdu*, that the author 'perverts time'. It seems equally feasible that a text can be so saturated, or even 'perverted', by temporal hypotheses that this becomes a classifying term for this text.¹⁰²

A 'hypertrophied-hypothesised' text contains several instances of hypertrophied-hypotheses, i.e., an extensive and complicated interlacement of such hypotheses appears throughout the text. One hypertrophied-hypothesis is repeatedly seen to launch the next and so on. Such a daisy chain of various hypertrophied-hypotheses thus 'fixates' the reader into reading until the internal hegemony between the many hypotheses is (potentially) realised *by/in* the text. Moreover, readers also seek to establish or clarify the textual hegemony between the hypotheses and the 'truth proper'.

As is the case is with temporal hypothesis, hypertrophied-hypothesis may also both be a local phenomenon in a section of a text, or, it may permeate the entire text by repeated instances of hypertrophied-hypothesis. However, a text wherein a high amount of temporal hypotheses is present may also be considered hypertrophied-hypothesised without a single local instance of a hypertrophied-hypothesis. Thus, hypertrophied-hypothesis may both be an isolated textual occurrence as well as a dominant feature by which we categorise an entire text. It is a matter for the analyst to discriminate between these possibilities.¹⁰³

If we return to the difference between the spatial hypertrope and the temporal hypertrophied-hypothesis, there are significant differences. Consider McHale's conclusion that hypertrophy is the foregrounding of topoi created by metaphor. This implies that the hypertrope is a concrete, albeit local, place. This approach is also prevalent in both Ryan's possible worlds the-

¹⁰² The use of the term 'perverted' owes much to Genette's dealings with the concept of narrated time:

"[...] perhaps we see better now how this contradictory aim functions in and takes possession of Proust's work: interpolations, distortions, condensations—the Proustian novel is undoubtedly, as it proclaims, a novel of Time lost and found again, but it is also, more secretly perhaps, a novel of Time ruled, captured, bewitched, surreptitiously subverted, or better: *perverted*". [Author's emphasis]

Genette, 1983: 160

Thus, just as time can be 'perverted', so the 'reality proper' in a text can be so distorted that the very effort of establishing such a type of 'reality' becomes impossible or futile.

¹⁰³ For more on the ad hoc approach to textual analysis in connection with this thesis, see above in Introduction to Thesis and section 6.1.1 on methodology.

ory and in McHale's theory on subjunctivity.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, McHale sees hypertrophy as: "rescuing metaphorical objects from the limbo of non-existence and reintroducing them as existents in the presented world of the text". (McHale, 1999: 134).¹⁰⁵

In principle, hypertrophied-hypothesis has a similar function. However, the 'topos' here is predominantly a mental construct - a notion which is forwarded, and which is to be considered on the temporal plane.¹⁰⁶ The notion considered may well include a world, zone or topos. Consider the statement: 'What if I had actually taken on the case?'¹⁰⁷ Where Ryan and McHale insist on the text as projecting the spatial representation of this example, hypertrophied-hypothesis centres on the temporal and mental projections. Hence, the matter in question is not an alternative physical entity (be it a possible world or a subjunctive topos). Rather, it is the *notion* of such an altered reality which is brought into play in the text.

If 'the case' in the statement above is taken, it seems valid to see the statement as an instantly negated temporal hypothesis that temporarily suspends the textual reality proper. To claim that the statement projects an entire possible world or subjunctive zone is to exaggerate matters beyond all probable reason. However, we have seen that a complicated web of temporal hypotheses causes various degrees of hypertrophied-hypothesis. Ultimately, this may result in texts which lie beyond the realm of temporal hypothesis analysis.¹⁰⁸

The contention in relation to hypertrophied-hypothesis is that readers do not construct an entire physical world wherein hypothetical statements take place. It seems far more likely that we consider such hypothetical notions in relation to the temporal plane of the entire text. Thus, a temporal hypothesis (such as the hypothetical analepsis above) is not a possible 'world'— it is a self-proclaimed parallel textual reality that temporarily 'borrows' the status as the textual reality proper. When such use of temporal hypotheses is exaggerated into hypertrophied-hypothesis this causes confusion as to what *is* the textual reality proper.

As such the result of hypertrophied-hypothesis and hypertrophy is similar: ontological flicker occurs. It is in *how* this flicker is induced that hypertrophied-hypothesis differs from McHale's theory. Moreover, and this also regards Ryan's possible worlds, we see how the

¹⁰⁴ See sections 3.2 and 3.3, respectively.

¹⁰⁵ For the full quoted passage, see above in section 2.2.2.

¹⁰⁶ See footnote 19.

¹⁰⁷ For the full quoted passage, see Paul Auster's *The Red Notebook*: 36, or, above in section 6.4.

¹⁰⁸ See figure 2 in section 8.3.5 above.

ontological status of the flicker is ‘constant’ in hypertrophied-hypothesis. More precisely, the mental notion of a temporal hypothesis is directly transferred from the text to the mind of the reader. The status as a mental construct is the same for the temporal hypothesis; a hypothesis is a hypothesis both in the mind of a character and in the mind of the reader. Thus, the topos created by temporal hypothesis exists merely on the temporal plane – in the text as well as in the consciousness of the reader. Conversely, the ontology of a topos in the spatial dimension, be it McHale’s or Ryan’s, undergoes a ‘translation’ from the spatial dimension in the text to the mental dimension in the reader’s mind.

This significant difference has implications when we consider hypertrophied-hypothesis. An extreme use of temporal hypotheses does, as we see above, result in hypertrophied-hypothesis. Where spatial topos and spatial possible worlds are created there is much activity involved in translating the text into a mental image of such a realm. Hypertrophied-hypothesis is the result of an ‘entanglement’ of the reader into a web of temporal hypotheses, which he/she must then relate to. Moreover, the reader will attempt to order a text into what is hypothetical and what is textual reality. This textual flooding suspends the reader’s perception of what actually constitutes textual reality; the concept of reality is ‘perverted’. If we consider the findings of both Baudrillard and Butler, then we know that contemporary ‘reality’ is also a narrative. Hence, our ‘Reality’ is permeated with temporal hypotheses – we may even see reality as a hypertrophied-hypothesis or even to be beyond this state.

8.5 Preliminary Conclusion

Hypertrophied-hypothesis is a textual phenomenon with unique potential. It is a way of presenting hypothetical notions in texts, which we can adopt mentally without any transmutation. Unlike the spatial realms of possible worlds or subjunctive zones, hypertrophied-hypothesis is not influenced by subjective input from the reader. The reader may form an opinion about a hypothesis, but only *after* it is defined, and by then it has been conveyed. Possible worlds and subjunctive zones involve readerly participation. Thus, we participate in the ‘building’ of such spatial realms forwarded by the text—the ‘envisioning’ of spatial realms is a collective effort between text and reader.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Reader response theory points to meaning as occurring as an oscillation between text and reader. In connection with hypertrophied-hypothesis, the meaning/content of this literary device is seen as entirely defined in/by the text. The meaning/sentiment of the hypothesis may be further developed subsequently by the reader. Until

The ability for ‘undistorted’ translation of hypothetical notions from the text to the mind of the reader results in a very direct and pure communication of ideas. If we consider Baudrillard’s definition of the simulacra we see how hypertrophied-hypothesis in texts is very similar to how we perceive the reality which surrounds us.

Whatever the case is, there is a clear similarity between the textual ontology of hypertrophied-hypothesis and the ontology of our contemporary reality. Hence, the Borghesian garden of forking paths is a dominant part of our postmodern reality. Today, we see Truth not as a final or constant entity. Truth is not *the Truth*; rather it is merely *a truth* until the narrative that supports it is changed, modified or even refuted. Moreover, contemporary reality is often comprised of several ‘truths’ which co-exist contemporarily—we must then choose (as Butler points out above) which truth makes the most convincing case in the personal narrative which is our individual life.

Compared to McHale’s hypertrope and Ryan’s possible worlds, the theory on hypertrophied-hypothesis offers many points of resemblance. However, the crucial difference is located in the overall manner in which one approaches the individual theories. McHale and Ryan centre on the spatial plane whereas hypertrophied-hypothesis is primarily an approach based on the temporal plane. Thus, all three theories may be used descriptively to demarcate ‘zones’, which have the potential to ‘take over’, or, dominate texts. However, as demonstrated throughout this section, there is a world of difference (pun intended) between forwarding a temporarily hypothetical notion on the temporal plane and forwarding possible worlds/subjunctive zones in the spatial realm.

Hypertrophied-hypothesis is a trope. It is a mental topos which holds a temporal origin and forwards notions that contrast textual reality. Hypertrophied-hypothesis is based on the temporal plane. However, its internal terminology (that it consists of exaggerated temporal hypotheses) ‘perverts’ textual concepts. The notion of hypertrophied-hypothesis within a text becomes a new reality in its own right—a hyperreality where the concept of Reality is open to multiple explanations and simultaneous parallel versions.

then, however, the notion forwarded by the hypothesis ‘resists’ interpretation. See section 1.1 above, where reader response is elaborated.

9.0 Conclusion to Part II

In the penultimate part of the thesis, we have established a terminology and methodology by which to approach temporal hypotheses and hypertrophied-hypothesis. The definitions of the individual temporal hypotheses, as well as their intrinsic specifications, more or less speak for themselves.

Hypothetical analepsis, hypothetical narrative NOW and hypothetical prolepsis and their specific characteristics are now an integral part of the theoretical terminology, which will be used in the final analysis part of the thesis. The ability to account for all narrative movements on the temporal scale has been established. Be it retrospective, contemporary or future possible events, such hypothetical textual events/notions can now be defined, described and put into an overall context.

Moreover, along with the terminology on temporal hypothesis we have established the prerequisites which are fundamental in dealing with the elaboration of this theory. Thus, we begin to embrace and comprehend hypertrophied-hypothesis. We have established the sliding scale along which various degrees of temporal hypotheses and hypertrophied-hypothesis are seen to operate.

Finally, establishing such a terminology along a trajectory which takes its point of departure in a temporal approach has brought about an alternative view by which to deal with postmodern texts. Thus, the ontological uncertainty which is all-pervasive in postmodern society may be located and analysed in the texts of this era by the aid of the theory on temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis.

In the final part below, we will carry the terminology and methodology of our formulated theory into effect. The declared approach to analysis in this thesis is defined as *ad hoc*. Hence, the intention of the ensuing textual analysis section is not to approach the text adhering to all the terminology sections in a point-by-point manner. Rather, the intended purpose is to demonstrate how an ad hoc analysis based on the theory of temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis reveals fundamental conditions and circumstances in a postmodern text.

Part III: Analysis Section

10.0 Introduction

All preceding sections of this thesis – the various theories as well as the methodology – are not merely intended as preparatory measures leading up to this section, which is dedicated to the analysis of Nicholson Baker's *U & I*. As such, the ensuing analytical work is concordant with the rest of the thesis. Yet, it is intended as an example of how temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis function in the postmodern text. The overall purpose is to illustrate theoretical points and to offer discussions of these, hereby demonstrating the effectiveness of the theory and methodology formulated above. Hence, the analysis section is the culmination of the original theory on temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis.

Section 10, then, illustrates the ad hoc approach which is the dominant mode of the methodology developed above. This includes dealings with the more intrinsic components of the temporal hypothesis: Tense, Range, Mode and Degree of Realisation. Parallel with this there are also discussions of the implications that are prompted by the analytical findings—be it on the theory, the methodology or postmodernism.

The choice of *U & I* is a direct consequence of the above stated intentions. Of all the different texts examined in connection with this thesis there are several which may be equally, or even better, suited as examples. However, this is only the case when considering the three different types of temporal hypothesis *individually*. As regards a text that contains an abundant variety of all types of temporal hypothesis as a clearly dominant trait of its narrative and thematic structure, Baker's text is simply peerless. Moreover, *U & I* contains multiple very complicated, almost opaque, structures of temporal hypotheses that intertwine various temporal hypotheses into the aporia that we now know as hypertrophied-hypothesis. Obviously *U & I* is a clear example of a text which clearly belongs to the category of text whose dominant narratological feature is hypertrophied-hypertrophy.

The analysis of *U & I* will adhere to the general methodology followed throughout the preceding sections. The ad hoc approach means that Baker's text is not a rendition of the complete number of various types of temporal hypotheses and instances of hypertrophied-hypothesis. The intention is, rather, to make thorough accounts of the most interesting in-

stances of such textual devices. This will also comprise detailed analyses that will account for the basic details intrinsic to temporal hypotheses. Moreover, several instances of hypertrophied-hypothesis will be mapped out and parallels will be drawn between these and the above findings on the simulacrum as well as the postmodern.

In other words, the following analysis is an eclectic and subjective selection of examples that are primarily meant to shed light on the overall theoretical and methodological findings in this thesis. Moreover, these analytical efforts will invariably provide us with broader insights into Baker's *U & I* as regards its status as a postmodern text and how the theory on temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis opens up such a text.

The ad hoc approach to textual analysis means that textual passages are chosen according to two criteria: a) how they exemplify various aspects of the theory on temporal hypothesis, and b) how such excerpts are central for the overall understanding of the whole text. Regarding the latter, it should be noted that this has less priority than the first point. However, the theoretical dealings with temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis will lead to a more general discussion and comparisons with areas such as simulacrum, the postmodern and possible worlds theory, which is the purpose of the final section in this thesis.

10.1 A Presentation of Author and Text

The American writer Nicholson Baker is the author of several novels and works of non-fiction. Several of his literary texts deal with what can best be described as aspects of mundane life. By applying special attention to details such as paper towel dispensers, shoelaces, paperclips, doing the dishes and so on, Baker reveals a novel approach to how to narrate about the important philosophical issues of life.¹¹⁰

In 1991, Nicholson Baker's *U & I* was published. It is a 'self-confessed' essay in which the author displays self-consciousness to such a degree that the term 'meta-essay' is a fitting description. The entire text is reminiscent of the modernist technique, 'stream of consciousness'. This is not surprising, considering that *U & I* is declared by the author to be an essay. Thus, the text takes on the appearance of an essayistic style of writing as in, say, a magazine

¹¹⁰ Theorist and critic Ross Chambers deals with Baker's characteristic style of writing in some detail in the book, *Loiterature*. See also Christensen: 2001 a.

piece. The metafictional traits, however, are constant throughout the entire text. This affects the text itself: the first two chapters (as well as multiple sections throughout the remainder of the text) are dedicated to the description of the genesis of the text itself.

As an essay, *U & I* clearly shows traces of being written by an author of literary works. Indeed, the overall subject of the text is the relationship, both real and hypothetically, between the 'I' (Nicholson Baker) and the 'U', American author and critic, John Updike. Baker admits his admiration for Updike as a 'genius' and as a strong influence on his own efforts as a writer. Significantly, Baker invokes Harold Bloom's text *The Anxiety of Influence* on several occasions.¹¹¹ Yet, Baker is not the devoted, uncritical 'son'; rather, he discusses and argues with his 'literary father'.

Baker's approach towards such a confrontation with his primary literary influence is rather specific:

[...] one of the worst hazards of the sort of criticism of Updike I'm engaged in here, a style of book chat that, in the unlikely event that it has not already been recognized and does not already have a name, might be called something sexy like *memory criticism*, or *phrase filtration*, or *closed book examination*. If it is merely a subset of the "reader response" school (which I know nothing about), or is a variant of the old Paterian impressionistic criticism or of Arnold's touchstone technique, fine—but if it is something new, I'm raising my flag now! Nobody can take this supreme moment away from me, if it is a moment!
[Emphases his]

U & I: 87

As to whether or not Baker's methodology is an original contribution to the theoretical approach of reading is a matter which lies beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the fact remains that Baker imposes a rigid set of rules upon himself and his text, which reveals how the mind and memory of the reader function. Baker lays bare his far from perfect recollections of the texts he has read, and we see how the active act of reading is extended to the active (and creative) act of remembering what one has read.

Consider the excerpt below, in which *all* parentheses, square brackets and emphases are made by the author:

¹¹¹ In 1973 Harold Bloom published *The Anxiety of Influence*. Here, Bloom describes how authors (with varying success) seek to achieve an individual position as a writer – to, as it were, overcome the oedipal conflict with their literary predecessors.

Don DeLillo went even further in the copyright page of his first novel about football: he said “in a *very* different form” (italics mine), which I used unfoundedly to take to mean that he’d gotten pissed off by the degree of editorial intervention at *The New Yorker* and employed that “very” of the final version as his tiny revenge. [None of this is true, oddly enough: *End Zone* is not DeLillo’s first novel, and there is nothing like the “in very different form” that I remembered reading in the acknowledgement. What is wrong with me?]

U & I: 154-5

Whatever the formal definition is, Baker, in his honest disclosure of how the mind actively alters the texts we read, makes an important observation. Moreover, he reveals how suggestive a text is and just how highly susceptible to influence we, as well as our memories of texts, are.

In connection with the theory on temporal hypothesis, we see how the ‘mapping out’ of hypotheses in a text clarifies the differences between textual reality and temporal hypotheses. However, a closer look at temporal hypotheses may also reveal how the two become so intertwined that they, combined, create a new layer of ontological consciousness in the text: the hyperreality of the hypertrophied-hypothesis. In both instances, the theory on temporal hypothesis can be of use. It draws attention to the complicated relationships between reality and hypothesis in texts. That is, the textual Real and the simulacrum of textual Real.

10.2 Nicholson Baker’s *U & I*, A Quantitative Approach

Before analysing textual examples, we will take a preliminary and quantitative overlook of the amount of temporal hypotheses in *U & I*. Such an approach deviates from the subjective and ad hoc oriented approach intended in this thesis. Due to the limited amount of pages, however, the making of such a census will provide some idea of the frequency with which temporal hypotheses occur. It is an attempt of creating a vantage point from which to appreciate the eclectic and representative limited selection of examples that *is* included in the text analysis below. The amounts are all seen in relation to the 177 pages of *U & I*:

Fig. 3: Book Pages vs. Temporal Hypotheses in Nicholson Baker's *U & I*.

Amount of book pages vs. hypothetical analepses (177 / 40):	4.4
Amount of book pages vs. hypothetical narrative NOWs (177 / 37):	4.8
Amount of book pages vs. hypothetical prolepses (177 / 60):	3.0
<hr/>	
Amount of book pages vs. total of temporal hypotheses (177 / (40+37+60)):	1.3

Although the figures above do not consider parameters such as letters or words per page, they nevertheless suggest that there is almost one temporal hypothesis per page. Such a predominant frequency indicates that we are dealing with a text that is most likely a hypertrophied-hypothesis. It is most probable that such an abundance of temporal hypotheses will affect (even dominate) a text considerably. However, such a definition requires a subjective analysis, which is established in the following pages.

An irrefutable preliminary observation made from the calculations above is that there is a majority of hypothetical prolepses. These hypotheses amount to almost half of the total number of temporal hypotheses in the text. Again, this is not that surprising since the person 'Nicholson Baker' who we encounter throughout the text is at the outset of his literary career, and thus often imagining how his future career will turn out.

The amount of the remaining temporal hypotheses can also be interpreted. The circa 25 per cent of hypothetical narrative NOWs is a relatively unusual high frequency, even for a postmodern text. The reason for this lies in the self-conscious meta-narrative quality of the text. Thus, Baker is often contemplating what to write *in media res*:

If I were to pop-quiz myself, *right now*, "Hey, what about Henry's brother, old William James—what do you think of him?"—the irritating bluebottle phrase "blooming buzzing confusion" would be first to answer my solicitation, and it would be impossible to wave away, once summoned, in that thought-session. [Emphasis mine] *U & I*: 38

The text forwards the illusion of the reader looking over Baker's shoulder as he is *writing* the text. By referring to Borges' analogy of the garden of forking paths, we may say that reader and author negotiate the forkings in the narrative 'together'. The hypothetical narrative

NOW is used to place us readers at the same junction in the text as the writer, and at the same time—it is certainly an illusion, but an effective one.

The final category, hypothetical analepsis, features as frequently as hypothetical narrative NOW. As noted above, the text has a remarkably high number of these latter, ‘present-tense’ hypotheses. Hence, the expected amount of hypothetical analepses must yield ground to the high level of hypothetical narrative NOWs. Often, hypothetical analepsis is used in connection with the retrospective evaluation of what we might call ‘Fate’:

[...] readers would be sure to assume that your later returns to [a certain] subject came about because you were *drawn inexorably* toward a certain theme, when in truth you would have been delighted never to have to mention it again if there had been any reasonably graceful way to include all of it in one extended shishkebob. [Emphasis his]

U & I: 85

We know that time’s arrow cannot be reversed. The past is forever left undone. No longer can it be altered such as the present and the future may. However, via temporal hypothesis several alternative notions of the past can be forwarded to aid an understanding of the present situation.

The above somewhat conjectural conclusions are by no means an attempt at more than an introductory look at how temporal hypotheses can be used in a text. Much greater precision can be achieved through analysis of local instances in the text. However, a quantitative approach to an entire text offers some indications as to the attributes of the individual temporal hypotheses. These indications do contain traits which are generally valid; however, the individual text may still use temporal hypotheses in other ways as well as for other ends.

10.3 Cautionary Remarks on the Analysis

The conclusion in connection with the above section is that an ad hoc approach is the most expedient method by which to analyse temporal hypotheses.¹¹² A quantitative approach invariably means a more objective approach. When it comes to the analysis of quantitative data, however, the scope of these is often so comprehensive that the conclusions drawn from such material are equally indistinct. The conclusion is that the cost of objectivity is that we end up being too remote from that which is analysed.

¹¹² For a description of the ad hoc approach in this thesis, see sections 6.1 and 6.1.1.

To decrease the distance between analyst and textual material we must, then, opt for a different analytical point of entry to the methodology. The chosen approach for our methodology is based on a subjective selection and evaluation of temporal hypotheses. It is more subjective than the quantitative approach used immediately above. However, this is a necessary sacrifice to make in order for us to obtain a far more detailed insight into the text. The skill lies in selecting the key portions of the text, which are seen to function as synecdochical representations of the text. Collectively, such a selection will enable the analyst to arrive at a greater understanding of the text in question. The more general quantitative approach, however, may often be an excellent means by which to select material for the more specific qualitative approach. Thus, the combination of these two approaches is to be considered: the combination of the two must be balanced to accommodate one's analytical ambitions.

In the following sections, we see how much more comprehensive the eclectic approach to individual temporal hypotheses is, and how it presents us with invaluable insights into a text. Thus, since these insights are based upon the theory on temporal hypothesis above, the analysis to come is less arbitrary in nature. Before embarking on the analysis, however, there are two matters that must be elucidated to pre-empt any doubt that might arise in connection with the definition of the individual temporal hypotheses.

First, as stated in section 7.3, an important preparation for analysing the text is to determine the overall tense in its narrative. According to Genette, the far majority of narratives are told in the past tense, and *U & I* falls into this category.¹¹³ Formally speaking, then, the entire text is in analepsis. However, for practical reasons we will refrain from labelling every temporal hypothesis in the text with the suffix 'in analepsis'. Rather, this is taken to be implicit – except when we are dealing with the various metafictional comments within narrative NOW. Naturally, this does not apply to the many meta-comments *in* the text *on* the text itself, which are, or so the narrator would like us to believe, made 'on the spot' in the present tense.¹¹⁴

Second, it is important to confront and shatter the illusion that one might succumb to: that *U & I* was written, as it were, 'on the spot'. According to Baker's application of 'memory criti-

¹¹³ According to Genette there are four types of narrating, among which: "[The] *subsequent* (the classical position of the past-tense narrative, [is] undoubtedly far and away the most frequent)" [Emphasis his]. (Genette, 1983: 217).

¹¹⁴ See above in section 10.1 and immediately below in this section.

cism'¹¹⁵ to his writing of *U & I*, he has re-edited the text after it was first written. Thus, the text itself deconstructs and shatters the illusion of it being a standard text written in a stream of consciousness from an essayist. This is done by the repeated insertions of comments and corrections (in square brackets) throughout the text of the author's many misrecollections of portions of texts and quotes. Thus, we are dealing with a text wherein the strategy for the use of temporal hypotheses is carefully structured. Rather than being incidental, the use of textual reality and hypothetical textual reality is a conscious and premeditated act.

¹¹⁵ See above in section 10.1.

11.0 Baker's Ninth: A Temporal Hypothesis Approach

The following selected examples of temporal hypotheses and/or hypertrophied-hypotheses, are a string of interrelated passages, all of which are found in the last chapter of *U & I*. This final portion of the text offers a good impression of the overall complexity in the use of temporal hypothesis in the novel. The ninth chapter also exemplifies how intricate constellations of temporal hypothesis in the text permeate it to such a degree that it becomes hypertrophied-hypothesis. Moreover, the culmination of the text is, not surprisingly, in the final chapter. It is here that the threads in the plot are gathered, however; it is also where the paths in the narrative ramify into 'forkings'. Thus, the hope is that by narrowing down the material for analysis we may be able to convey some general overview to those who do not have access to the full text of *U & I*.

In the penultimate chapter, the narrator/Baker describes how he meets Updike face to face for the first time. It is in 1981, at a book signing after Updike has made a speech on Melville. Baker, the budding author, ventures to address Updike to inform him that they are fellow contributors to the magazine *The New Yorker*. They exchange pleasantries which are memorable for Baker – and quite trivial to Updike.

11.1 Examples of Hypothetical Analepsis

In chapter nine, we learn of Baker's motivation for addressing his greatest literary ideal:

I would never have done it either—drag in *The New Yorker* name so obviously to get his attention—except that *life was too short* not to. Those ticking seconds of signature might be the only chance I would ever get to embarrass myself in his presence. [Emphasis his]

U & I: 158

Here Baker forwards a hypothetical analepsis where the span of its range is determined by the second time that the two authors meet. As such, the degree of realisation is conclusive – an encounter over a signed book is *not* the only occasion where Baker interacts with Updike. However, we sense Baker's urgency: he did not know this at the time; tension is built up until the notion is later dismissed. Thus, we share Baker's agony until we read of their second meeting, which makes this specific temporal hypothesis a positive one.

A second interlocution does indeed take place between the two: in late 1984, after a Harvard-Yale-game party, in the offices of the *Harvard Lampoon*. Baker learns that Updike is present and this comes as a surprise to him:

Did he come every time the game was in Cambridge? Had he actually been to the Harvard-Yale game that day? God I hope not. It was very important to me that this postgame Lampoon visit was not typical Updike behavior. [Emphasis his]

U & I: 160

The hypothetical analepsis expressed in the first sentence is rather unusual.¹¹⁶ It is what we, with terminology borrowed from Genette, will define as an *iterative* hypothetical analepsis.¹¹⁷ ‘Every time’ indicates what might have occurred more than one time. Collectively, the range of this specific hypothetical analepsis may stretch as far back as Updike has been able to attend such social functions, and as such Baker’s notion is very unclear. Nevertheless, we can see that the iteration intensifies Baker’s discontent. However, since the text never discloses information on the matter (which may confirm or dismiss the hypothesis), we cannot determine its status as either conclusive or inconclusive. Moreover, to deal with the degree of realisation in this hypothetical-hypothesis is also a moot point due to its ambiguous nature. All of this adds to our understanding of Baker’s frustration: there is no way for him to attain certainty and his use of an iterative hypothetical analepsis conveys this notion.

Baker goes on to explain that his dissatisfaction is due to him being of the opinion that Updike is a rather isolated and private person. Baker, however, is not ignorant of the fact that it is due to Updike’s (in Baker’s opinion unusual) public appearance that he gets to meet his literary hero:

And yet if he hadn’t felt enough fondness for his old school magazine to show up that day, I wouldn’t have had my chance to wait for him near the ham tidbits, steeling myself to be pushy. [My emphasis]

U & I: 160

This quoted passage, also a hypothetical analepsis, functions as a ‘post-modifier’ to the previous hypothetical analepsis. With the marker ‘if’, this hypothetical passage functions more

¹¹⁶ Both sentences are instances of hypothetical analepsis. However, the first is of far more interest since it is ‘iterative’ (see immediately below in the section). Hence, this unusual temporal hypothesis will constitute the analytical focal point.

¹¹⁷ It would reach too far to attempt to recapitulate Genette’s dealings on iterative passages in texts. (See chapter 3 on Frequency in Genette, 1983: 113-60) Suffice it to say that in this thesis iterative merely means that which is repeated.

as we would expect a temporal hypothesis to do. If we contrast this hypothetical analepsis with the one in the previous quote, we see, retrospectively, that the former hypothesis is positive. Only when it is ‘mirrored’ in its negative alternative (“if he hadn’t felt enough fondness”) do we, and Baker, see this. Hence, the construction of textual simulacra which are forwarded via such hypotheses illustrates that simulated textual reality may clarify our understanding of the narrator’s motivation in real life.¹¹⁸ By gaining access to the forking paths of the mind, we are told several parallel narratives of which only one is true. This, however, does not mean that textual reality is where the most useful and/or interesting information is located. Often, seeing several forkings in the narrative ‘path’ is the matrix from which textual meaning arises.

11.2 Examples of Hypertrophied Prolepsis

In their brief conversation, Updike inquires if he remembers correctly that Baker once wrote a piece on musicians on the West Coast, in the publication *Little Magazine*. With some reservations Baker recalls the story, which he regrets since it appeared in a (in his opinion) magazine too obscure for his taste. Baker finds the story to be inappropriate as the first entry in his bibliography.

This view is elaborated in a complex series of temporal hypotheses. It is an intricate example of hypothetical forkings where the narrative NOW is altered several times, which also has implications for the use of temporal hypothesis:

[**HP: ?**] Now when I collected my stories in a book if I ever published more stories, [**HP: 1984**] (which by 1984, when I stood in the Lampoon building, was looking doubtful, since I wasn’t writing much of anything by then and *The New Yorker* and *The Atlantic* had rejected or bought the few pieces of fiction I had sent out), [**HP: ?^a**] I would either have to leave out the *Little Magazine* story entirely, [**HP: ?^b**] or I would have to *begin* the book with it, since, in another case of copyright page anxiety, [**HP: ?^{a/ b}**] I was determined to do just as Updike had done [...] in proclaiming that “They [the stories] were written in the order that they have here.” I had more or less decided to leave the story out. [Square brackets in bold mine]

U & I: 162-3

The abbreviations in the square brackets above describe the temporal ‘movements’ of the five hypothetical prolepses in the quote. When we compare the first inconclusive hypothesis

¹¹⁸ Or, as ‘real’ as life can be said to be in an autobiographical text.

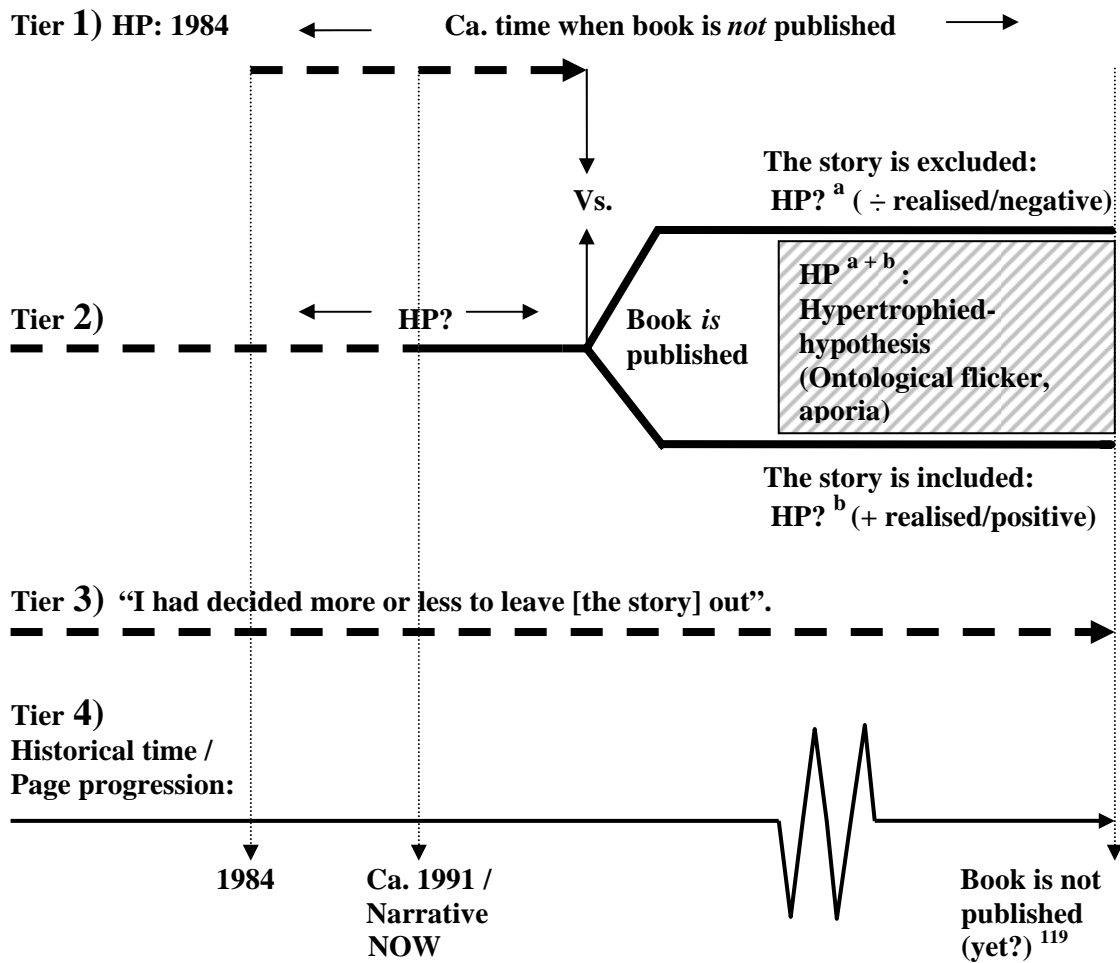
(**HP: ?**) with the second (**HP: 1984**), we might claim that they are contemporaneous (in the year 1984). However, the former may actually originate at an earlier time, since this notion was most likely formulated *before* the meeting with Updike, as opposed to ‘on the spot’. The second hypothesis is dated to concur with the Updike meeting. The third and fourth hypothesis (respectively, **HP: ?^a** and **HP: ?^b**) describe a forking in the prolepses, which belong in the same undefined temporality as the first hypothesis. The final hypothesis (**HP: ?^{a/b}**) continues to describe the notions put forth in hypotheses one, three and four, which supplies us with the overall motivation for Baker’s choices in future actions.

Reduced into formula the quoted passage above is expressed as:

HP?, (HP 1984), HP?^a, HP?^b, HP?^{a/b}

Expressing the quoted passage through a graphic model will help us to better apprehend the concept of the ‘forkings’ that temporal hypotheses create in narratives:

Fig. 4: An Example of Narrative Forking



In figure 4 we can plainly see how hypothetical prolepsis causes a forking in the perception of the textual truth in a narrative. What will eventually happen is a matter which is distorted by the layers of temporal hypotheses in the text to such a degree that we arrive at a hypertrophied-hypothesis. Below follows an account of figure 4.

The three numbered horizontal lines represent the three tiers of hypothetical prolepsis. The final horizontal line is a combined representation of the progression of time and the progression of the pages in the text, which both are seen to increase as we read. The three vertical broken lines represent benchmarks that all three tiers share. Moreover, this line also denotes temporal aspects that occur both in textual reality as well as in actual reality. Thus, 1984 is

¹¹⁹ As of the time of the publication of this thesis, no book, such as a volume of Baker’s collected stories, has been published (As described in *U & I.*: 162-3). However, in 1996 Baker’s *The Size of Thoughts – Essays and Other Lumber* was published, but there is no mention of it being a complete collection of Baker’s stories. Thus, it remains to be seen if Baker will eventually do as stated in *U & I.*

an actual date; the narrative NOW of *U & I* can be said to be occurring some time before the publication of the text; and finally, a book containing Baker's collected stories has still not yet been published.¹²⁰

Tier 1 (HP:1984) is actually the second hypothetical prolepsis in the excerpt. It is put in first in the figure, however, because it denotes the time of the meeting between Updike and Baker, and loosely denotes the future date when the collected stories is *not* published. Hence, the broken line in tier 1 signifies a hypothetical prolepsis which is negative as regards its realisation throughout its entire span. Moreover it forwards the notion of a publication *wherein* the particular story in the *Little Magazine* could be included. Tier 1 ends where it collides with the second tier, that is, the positive hypothetical hypothesis in which the book of collected stories *is* published.

However, tier 2 (HP?) is not the exact mirror image of tier 1. As it appears from the broken line up until the time of the narrative NOW, there is some ambiguity as to when exactly this hypothetical prolepsis is formulated. It may be the first time the narrator has ever contemplated the notion, or, it may have been something which has preoccupied him over a longer period of time: we cannot say for sure. What is certain, however, is that the distinct dividing line between HP:1984 and HP? (signalled by the 'Vs.')

is constituted by the hypothetical prolepsis that forwards a notion supposing that the collected stories are indeed published.

Beyond the mentioned intersection, we see the forking of tier 2/HP? elaborate into two additional contrasting temporal hypotheses, HP? ^a and HP? ^b. Thus, the narrator contrasts the notion of a publication that, respectively, excludes and includes the *Little Magazine* story which Updike and he discussed. Between these two incongruous hypothetical hypotheses yet another possibility is forwarded: to do as Updike. Here the narrator forwards an ambiguity which cannot be resolved. Thus, to emulate Updike still leaves the narrator with a choice: As long as the stories are in chronological order he is free to include or exclude the specific story in question.

The fact remains that we here see the combination of HP? ^a and HP? ^b, however, without any clear distinction to be made between the two. Hence, within this forking in the narrative between two distinct hypothetical prolepses we arrive at a point of such an impenetrable com-

¹²⁰ See footnote 119.

plexity that we must render it an instance of local hypertrophied-hypothesis (expressed in figure 4 as the hachured, boxed area). A state of aporia prevails over our ability to distinguish between textual reality and the simulacrum of textual temporal hypothesis.

Finally, tier 3 places further emphasises on the ambiguity contained above in tier 2 by yet another ambiguous statement. Hence, by stating to have ‘more or less’ decided to exclude the *Little Magazine* story from a future book of collected stories, one might be inclined to envision the publication in question as one without the specific story. However, the statement is not unequivocal due to the statement ‘more or less’. Moreover, there is no certainty as to establishing the genesis of it on the temporal plane—we are not told *when* the narrator made the decision. Thus, the hypothetical prolepsis in tier 3 is in fact a display of the narrator’s ambiguity throughout the entire account of the story in question. The fact that it rounds off this chain of hypothetical prolepses makes tier 3 serve as a final modifier of the aporia as to the narrator’s plans and what will actually transpire in the future.

Consequently, we can now establish a fourth tier. Expressed in the final line in figure 4 is the combined account of the progression of the pages in the text and the progression of historical time. Tier 4, then, points to the tension between the temporal plane of the text and the temporal plane on which the reader is situated. Hence, as already touched upon, there is no such work which comprises Baker’s collected stories. This adds an additional tension between textual reality and, as it were, the reality proper of the reader. As historical time progresses, the temporal distance between the reality of the text’s narrative NOW and the reader’s reality increases accordingly. Thus, the reader holds a vantage point to how the narrator’s plans may be, or have been, carried out in reality. This induces ontological flicker as the reader is reminded of the schism between text and reality. The narrator is the omniscient god within the textual universe; however, in the realm of reality shared by both author and reader there is no hegemony – no one has the power to see the future.

The use of hypothetical prolepsis simultaneously emphasises and blurs the fact that the future is an uncharted land. The ‘mental probes’ into the future that hypothetical prolepses essentially are seen to constitute do not constitute any spatial essence. Rather, on the temporal plane, such mental notions may help to anticipate and influence the future, acting as signposts by which to navigate. However, only in hindsight and from a position past the narra-

tive NOW can one, in this case the reader, verify or dismiss the realisation of a hypothetical prolepsis.

In the case of the passage accounted for in figure 4, we see how forkings in the textual reality may lead to a state of hypertrophied-hypothesis. Below, this is the topic for the final textual examples. First, however, we will deal with the final category of temporal hypothesis.

11.3 Examples of Hypertrophied Narrative NOW

We now turn the analytical scope on a passage of hypothetical narrative NOW. Baker is recalling the praise he received from Updike in the Lampoon building:

[...] *he said that I should keep writing because I had a gift. Should I not be including this pronouncement here? Is it self-serving? No, because mainly it shows Updike to be civil and generous in person, which is a thing worth knowing, and because it could easily be nothing more than the “mere babble of politeness,” as Henry James called some of his letters, and because my patently self-serving inclusion of it shows me to be even less likable than I might possibly otherwise have seemed.* [Emphasis his]

U & I: 164

This is a display of sustained self-consciousness, which the use of hypothetical narrative NOW only amplifies. Thus, we are given the impression of having a say as to whether or not Updike’s pronouncement is included in the text. Such an illusion of readerly participation in the writing process is a recurring phenomenon in postmodern literature.¹²¹

This aforementioned metafictional effect is combined with a hypothetical narrative NOW: ‘Should I not be including this pronouncement?’. Hence, the hypothesis runs practically parallel with the textual reality. The fact that this evaluative comment comes immediately after the actual quoted utterance does mean that there is a slight displacement on the temporal plane. However, here we will consider the two as simultaneous (that is, as simultaneous as it is possible in a printed medium), since the discrepancy is minimised by the use of the present progressive in ‘be including’. The result is that the question of range implodes, since the

¹²¹ One of the most successful examples of ostensible author/reader equality as regards the artistic presentation is found in Barthelme’s *Snow White*. Pages 88-9 feature a fifteen-point questionnaire, which gives the impression that if the reader submits it then the author will take the comments and suggested alterations into consideration. It is an illusion, however, since there is no address for which to submit the form and besides, the book has *already* been printed.

declared length coincides with the actual length of the hypothetical narrative NOW in question.

Moreover, the degree of realisation is also a paradox. Strictly speaking, the utterance in question *is* included, which makes the hypothetical narrative NOW conclusive. However, there are several types of post-evaluations of the motivation for it to be included. (Respectively: the *negative*: “is it self-serving”; the *positive*: “No, because mainly it shows...”; the *deflating*: “it could easily be nothing more than...”; and the *metafictional deflation*: “my patently self-serving inclusion of it shows me to be even less likable”). Together, these evaluations of, and arguments for and against the initial quote, are an extended series of hypothetical narrative NOWs. Collectively, this constitutes an extensive effort towards giving the impression that it is possible to retract what *is* printed above on the page.

Thus, this specific and positive hypothetical narrative NOW succeeds in inducing ontological ‘flicker’. At the core of this ‘confusion’ lies a confrontation. On the one hand, the textual reality is constituted by Updike’s quoted passage and the readerly connotations to this information. On the other hand, there is the simulated reality of what happened if the quote is omitted—forwarded via hypothetical narrative NOW. Together this situates the reader in the *mise en abyme* of hypertrophied-hypothesis: is the quote (which is printed) still mentally *present* when it is negated? The quote enters a state of simulated hyperreality. It is a quote/copy of the real statement which then oscillates between being retracted and then reinstated as ‘valid’ in the text. We know that the sentence is present physically on the printed page—however, through the use of hypothetical narrative NOW it is blurred into a representation of itself.

11.4 Hypertrophied-Hypothesis Exemplified

The above shows analysed examples of all the three categories of temporal hypothesis. Moreover, these analysed passages in *U & I* display close connections with hypertrophied-hypothesis. In fact, there is an increasing tendency, as we proceeded through these examples, towards the excerpts actually *being* hypertrophied-hypothesis.

Due to the limited allotment of pages, there is not enough room to submit a thorough analysis of the entire text of *U & I*. Thus, we cannot include all the examples of local passages of

hypertrophied-hypothesis throughout it which, collectively, clearly constitute the textual device as a dominant feature. Instead we will turn to the final passage in the text and use this hypertrophied-hypothesis as a synecdochical example. This is clearly to simplify matters, yet it is hoped that the emblematic nature of the example will compensate for the lack of quantitative argumentation.

On the penultimate page of *U & I*, Baker quotes from his 1981 story about musicians on the West Coast.¹²² Baker offers a quote wherein a callus is mentioned:

[...]The cellist said, “You know that Miriam’s callus on her middle finger split once just before a concert, and she had to play the whole Lalo concerto with a Band-Aid on?”

U & I: 178

Baker then contrasts this with a quote from Updike’s 1984 novel, *The Witches of Eastwick*:

[...] He pulled her left hand closer to his face and caressed the side of her thumb “See that ?” he said to Alexandra, brandishing Jane’s hand as if it were detached, a dead thing to be admired. “That is one beautiful callus.”

U & I: 179

In the final passage of *U & I*, having juxtaposed the two text thus, Baker ascertains what he finds to be evidence of the fact that, “[Baker has] in at least one tiny and characteristically dermal instance, communicated with [Updike] in a permanent way”. (*U & I*: 178):

Laughably tiny, you say? Hard to credit? Maybe. Still, I suspect that Updike would not have written about Jane’s beautiful cello-callus unless I had first written about a musical callus that I had once seen and touched in Southern California. Because I exist in print, Updike’s book is, I think, ever so slightly different. For a minute or two, sometime in 1983, the direction of indebtedness was reversed. *I* have influenced *him*. And that’s all the imaginary friendship I need. [Emphases his]

U & I: 179

Initially, we detect a hypothetical analepsis in Baker’s suspicion as to whether or not his writing has influenced Updike. Upon closer examination, however, matters are more complicated. In fact, as we will return to below, this is an instance of temporal hypothesis, which lies right on the line of demarcation between hypertrophied-hypothesis and the aporia of the being beyond the reality/hypothesis principle (as described in figure 2 above).

¹²² This text is the topic in the hypothetical prolepses above in section 11.2.

An initial ambiguity which is established as: “laughable tiny” and “hard to credit”, is contrasted against: “Maybe. Still I suspect that...”. A matter of semantics to be sure; however, it emphasises that subjective conviction is central to how one perceives the point on Baker’s influence on Updike as valid. The text forwards two binary mental notions: either there *is* influence, or, there *is not* influence. Regardless of which of the two one believes to be the ‘truth’, the other will invariably be ‘untrue’. Here the simulacrum sets in: the ‘untrue’ notion is a perfect simulation of the ‘true’ notion. Or, expressed differently, the only difference between the mental notions is reflected in which of the two is ascribed (by the reader) to the value ‘truth’. In the case of the author we are not in doubt: ‘*I* have influenced *him*’.

If we confer with the sliding scale accounted for above in connection with figure 1 and 2, the hypertrophied-hypothesis in this example does display a very complicated temporal hypothesis (described as HH). However, the level of hypertrophied-hypothesis does not transgress beyond this level and into a state of aporia since we can analyse and account for all the levels of temporal hypothesis. Ontological flicker - as to what is the truth and what is merely hypothesis in the text - is induced. However, every forking in the narratological sequence above can be accounted for within the defined terminology on temporal hypotheses.

Having already analysed several instances of hypothetical analepses, it will suffice here to identify the components in the hypertrophied-hypothesis analysed as belonging to exactly this sub-category of temporal hypothesis. What is of main interest here is how this specific use of hypertrophied-hypothesis constitutes a *mis en abyme* that signifies the main trope in the text: the relation between an author and his literary ideal and main influence; here personified by John Updike.

The full title of Baker’s text is: *U & I – A True Story*. This oxymoronic statement raises several central issues: why this insistence on truth? Why should the author be ‘untruthful’ to his readers? Just who is Baker trying to convince – the reader(s), himself, Updike or perhaps all of the mentioned? What is, fundamentally, the difference between a story and a ‘true’ story? In this connection what value do we place on the word ‘true’ in a text such as *U & I*, where a vast concourse of temporal hypotheses, which permeates the whole text, is a hypertrophied-hypothesis? During one’s reading of *U & I*, the comprehensive view of what is real and what is hypothetical is lost and we realise that the text is in fact a hyperreality where we cannot

differentiate between the many simulations. The reason for this is that no textual truth can claim hegemony, simply because it *is* a text.

We have come full circle and realised that *U & I* is a true story—how can it be anything but? However, by realising this we enter the postmodern vortex of ontological flicker: it is the individual who, subjectively, decides what constitutes his or her truth. Thus, we may choose to believe the narrator's description of the perfect chiasmus between Baker and Updike. Finally, if only for one brief moment, Baker becomes the inspiration for Updike. During the final pages of the text, the narrator convinces himself that sometimes 'U' just means 'you' and not invariably Updike. Moreover, this realisation may cause the reader to ponder if the declared true story of *U & I* also pertains to the relation between 'You', the reader(s) & 'I', the narrator of this 'true story'. In more than one way we realise that the tables are turned for U and I.

11.5 Preliminary Conclusion

We have now illustrated how to perform textual analysis using the theory and the methodology defined throughout this thesis on interfictional pockets. More specifically, the aim is to illustrate how the postmodern text implements textual devices such as hypothetical analepsis, hypothetical narrative NOW, hypothetical prolepsis and hypertrophied-hypothesis. The ad hoc approach to Baker's text has been proved to go beyond accounting for technical and structural matters. We are able to appreciate the discussions of the relationship between author & reader; narrator & reader; artistic ideal & artist and text & critic – all of which are represented by the basic relationship between the 'U' and the 'I' in the text.

The postmodern aspects are visible in the way the text reflects the contemporary notion of reality. By going to the very edge of hypertrophied-hypothesis induced aporia, yet never transgressing totally into this realm, *U & I* sheds light on how every individual narrates his or her own reality. In this narrative process, temporal hypotheses generate interfictional pockets: the mental notions which are fundamental for understanding, shaping and coming to terms with the narratives that constitute our past, present as well as future existence.

Temporal hypothesis and simulation *are* parts of our daily lives. Understanding their intrinsic functions and the variety of possibilities that such interfictional pockets offer us, both in fictional texts and in our reality, is a positive characteristic which is to be reckoned with as well as further developed.

12.0 Conclusion to Thesis

The theoretical nature of interfictional pockets has now been investigated. We have defined and explored the realms of the hypothetical analepsis, the hypothetical narrative NOW and the hypothetical prolepsis, as well as established the methodology necessary to detect, define and apply these devices. Moreover, by defining these theoretical concepts, similar goals have been reached in the dealings with hypertrophied-hypothesis. Although thoroughness has been applied to the dealings with these four basic devices that comprise the theoretical field of interfictional pockets, there are still plenty of further complicated theoretical constellations to investigate. However, this is not due to any shortcomings in the thesis in hand. Rather, the rise of further questions (and their potential answers) is the very gauge of the success by which the fundamental theory of the temporal hypotheses that comprise interfictional pockets has been established. The combination of a formulated methodology as well as the numerous examples of how to apply it ad hoc is meant as an analytical example for future work of textual analysis. A novel analytical approach and the proper basic tools by which to set about the endeavour are presented as an increment to the field of narratology.

However, important questions have been addressed. In this section, the queries which initiated this thesis will be returned to. Moreover, this will include the main points that surfaced in the several preliminary conclusions in the above text. Together this will provide the required synthesis to this thesis. Moreover, this will also facilitate further future investigations of the vast area of interfictional pockets.

As a norm, the hypothetical content in a given text is not an isolated textual entity. Rather, it is a dynamic device that has the potential of constituting hegemony; to be a/the dominant feature in a given text. As seen in connection with the sliding scale of temporal hypothesis, interfictional pockets span the range from being a single, isolated occurrence to being *the* dominant feature; sometimes to the degree of aporia where the relation between textual reality and textual hypothesis is suspended. However, the contention is that isolated interfictional pockets will most probably remain undiscovered or even dismissed as a viable further topic for analysis. For, if a text only features a single instance of temporal hypothesis, or very few, it is highly likely that there are other (dominant) features which are more interesting and fruitful in an analytical context.

As regards forwarding an original theory, this promise has been redeemed. We have seen how various theorists deal with different aspects of hypothetical events in texts. All of these, save Prince, place the emphasis on the spatiality in connection with hypothetical occurrences. By offering a completely different vantage point this thesis has established a new area of theoretical approach to texts. The focus is on mental notions which are concentrated on the temporal plane in connection with the forwarding of interfictional pockets. In this connection it is imperative to place emphasis on the fact that the theory on temporal hypotheses is meant as an expansion of the range of analytical methodology within the field of narratology; it is not meant as an attempt to displace other theoretical approaches. The objective is to provide analysts within the field of narratology with more colours to put on their palettes.

Apart from the formulation of the original methodology of hypothetical analepsis, hypothetical prolepsis and hypothetical narrative NOW, perhaps the best example of the expansion of analytical possibility is seen in the definition of hypertrophied-hypothesis. With the definition of the most extreme use of interfictional pockets, both the realm of temporal hypothesis and the realm outside it have now been clearly demarcated. By defining the sliding scale of temporal hypothesis analysts may now establish a criterion by which texts containing interfictional pockets may be 'graduated'. This is not to say that such an endeavour constitutes an end by itself. Rather, the mere definition of various temporal hypotheses may open up new and different points of entry into a given texts. Moreover, when an interfictional pocket is seen to constitute hypertrophied-hypothesis - either by itself or in coalition with several other temporal hypotheses - then, this presents a completely new window of opportunity for analytical work.

This holds true especially in connection with postmodern texts where the principle of Reality and hypothesis is often fragmented or even completely dissolved. The theory on interfictional pockets, and especially its ad hoc methodology, presents several options for the analyst to apply in the dealing with such texts. The phenomenon of aporia in relation to the relationship between the actual Reality and the textual Reality in postmodern texts may now be approached. Thus, by applying the theoretical and methodological findings in this thesis the scope for understanding the postmodern poetics has been expanded.

Thus, several views on the postmodern condition are defined by the application and discussion of various theories in part I. Baudrillard's dystopic views on postmodernity are contrasted with Butler's empowering theory. There is no one Truth or a unanimous Reality that we can all agree upon. However, we do not have to surrender ourselves to powerlessness; rather, we may embrace this view and narrate the stories of our own lives. Within the framework of narratological concepts, there are several spatial approaches to how the ambiguity of reality is relayed via texts. By far the majority of such theories are concerned with hypotheses within the spatial realm; with possible worlds and subjunctive incidents. An alternative approach has now been formulated. A terminology and an ad hoc methodology are presented and exemplified, and their capabilities have been demonstrated.

The temporal plane is a useful approach. Such is the case, both in connection with the postmodern texts where hypothesis may be a dominant, as well as in relation to the understanding of the texts that constitute our so-called Reality. Following the notion of the subjective reader in reader response theory, we cannot but concede that texts mirror the times in which they are produced and read. Hence, by gaining a greater understanding of the theory of inter-fictional pockets we have also gained a greater understanding of the narratological mechanisms which we apply to the construction of our day-to-day existence.

The concepts of temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis are fundamental to the reading of postmodern texts, such as we see in the analysis of Nicholson Baker's *U & I*. The question now remains: do we not all from time to time entertain thoughts of a similar nature? Daily we are confronted by forking paths, choices to be made, decisions to be taken. 'What if I had done this instead of that'; 'maybe I could do this tomorrow...' and so on. Whether we are conscious of it or not, life *is* a garden of forking paths. By gaining awareness of this fact we may better begin to accept the similarity between the temporal hypotheses in postmodern texts and the temporal hypotheses in our reality. The reality is that there is no Reality, only realities.

To be sure, the laws of physics still prevail—the stories to be told are not a free-for-all where no rules apply. However, since every individual constructs his or her own narrative text of what their life is, we are all constantly facing the aporia of hypertrophied-hypothesis. Which reality holds hegemony is a constant issue of debate – be it of a philosophical, intellectual,

ideological or ontological nature. By embracing this at the same time both serious and playful relationship between hypothesis and reality, the theory on interfictional pockets shows us that the postmodern text holds a mirror up to our contemporary condition. Thus, by gaining increased insights into the narratological mechanisms we are gaining insights into our own situation as well as how we go about narrating our own life story.

This thesis presents an ad hoc methodology as well as how to apply it *in praxis*. The overall aim has been achieved: to formulate an original theory and its methodology which is also a new narratological approach to the postmodern text. The thesis centres upon mostly literary texts and widely demonstrates the applicability of the theory. However, there is nothing which suggests that the theory on interfictional pockets cannot be applied to the analysis of other areas of text, such as cinema, commercials, theatre or pictorial art - to name but a few. Moreover, the analytical scope does not have to include postmodern poetics such as this thesis has done. Other literary genres, such as science fiction, poetry, political texts as well as texts from periods other than the 'postmodern' may also be submitted to the methodology forwarded above on interfictional pockets.

However, as demonstrated in Part III, the theory on interfictional pockets constitutes a part of postmodern poetics that is significant. The ad hoc application of the elements in the methodology offers new ways to approach Nicholson Baker's text. In *U & I*, the relationship between what is real and what is temporal hypothesis is *the* dominant literary trait which is subject to critical analysis. In conclusion, the analytical work in Part III stipulates the importance of the findings in this thesis. The application of the methodology for analysing temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis has emphasised this complex of themes, to which the overarching term is interfictional pockets.

A narratological path has now been cleared. It is my sincere hope that others will walk down it to explore the many forkings that have been suggested.

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Summary of Thesis

This thesis is a contribution to postmodern narratology. The overall ambition is to present an original and innovative approach to temporal aspects in fiction. More specifically, the thesis concentrates on various hypothetical instances in texts which are established in parallel with what is conventionally understood as 'reality' within fictional texts. Moreover, those instances where the hypothetical is seen to achieve hegemony over the real in texts – that is, when a state of hypertrophied-hypothesis is reached – are also subjects for analysis and definition.

The thesis commences with an analytical part that introduces both pertinent fundamental concepts and various definitions of postmodern poetics, as well as Marie-Lure Ryan's spatial approach to hypothetical instances in fiction: 'possible worlds'. The latter is intended to provide the contrast to the temporal approach that constitutes the tenor in this thesis.

Part II is a presentation of three types of local temporal hypotheses (hypothetical analepsis, hypothetical narrative NOW and hypothetical prolepsis) through an array of textual examples. Moreover, the intrinsic components of these hypothetical 'pockets' are also defined. Following this, a definition of textual hypothesis at its most extreme, the hypertrophied-hypothesis and beyond, is supplied. This is illustrated as a sliding scale from the most subtle use of temporal hypothesis and to when all coherent narrative logic is seen to disappear and is replaced with a global state of aporia within the text. Finally, the second part ends with an investigation of hypertrophied-hypothesis in the light of the postmodern, as defined in section I.

Part III sees the application the newly established theory in praxis. Here Nicholson Baker's novel, *U & I*, is subject to an ad hoc analysis which illustrates both how to apply the various theoretical tools, as well as the relevance and significance that this novel and temporal approach has as a valid method of textual analysis.

The conclusion to the thesis centres on the validity of the theory on temporal hypothesis and hypertrophied-hypothesis as a supplement to the existing narratological theory, and espe-

cially in connection to postmodern literature. However, a final claim is expressed in that the theory is of both interest and value to other literary genres and literary 'periods', as well as other types of text, such as commercials, theatre and cinematics.