

**HYPertext COMPLEMENTS PRINT? A STUDY OF NARRATIVE
RECONFIGURATION IN GEOFF RYMAN'S NOVEL 253**

by

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**TEKS HIPER MELENGKAPI TEKS CETAK? SATU KAJIAN
KONFIGURASI SEMULA NARATIF DALAM NOVEL 253 OLEH GEOFF
RYMAN**

ABSTRAK

Walaupun terdapat kebimbangan terhadap kemerosotan media cetak sebagai medium penceritaan pada masa akan datang akibat daripada perkembangan media digital, dapat dilihat usaha oleh segelintir penulis untuk membawa kaedah penceritaan tradisional ke suatu dimensi yang baru. Usaha ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan teknik teks hiper dalam persekitaran buku dengan tujuan menjana pengalaman pembacaan yang baru seperti yang mampu disampaikan oleh media digital. Namun demikian, inisiatif untuk menggabungkan kualiti teknik teks hiper dalam persekitaran material buku memerlukan perangkaan yang teliti. Kajian ini dijalankan untuk meneliti sejauh mana media digital dan media cetak berupaya untuk saling melengkapi dalam penceritaan dengan merujuk kepada sebuah novel teks hiper yg bertajuk 253 oleh Geoff Ryman. Novel tersebut ditulis dalam persekitaran digital dahulu sebelum diterbitkan dalam bentuk cetak. Bagi menerangkan kemampuan setiap medium dalam menyampaikan sebuah cerita yang sama, struktur naratif novel dalam kedua-dua media dianalisis dan dibandingkan dengan menggunakan sebuah model analitikal yang dirangka daripada beberapa analisis interdisiplin naratologi berserta dengan beberapa perspektif teoretikal terhadap teks hiper. Analisis komparatif ke atas kedua-dua bentuk media novel tersebut menunjukkan bahawa medium cetaknya menggunakan kaedah indeks untuk menggantikan teks hiper yang terdapat dalam medium digital secara keseluruhan.

Walaupun konfigurasi naratifnya agak ringkas, kaedah konvensional ini berupaya mengekalkan kedua-dua aras naratif novel tersebut. Akan tetapi, beberapa kualiti yang terkandung dalam teknik teks hiper seperti keterhubungan, kemudahan navigasi teks dan interaktiviti tidak dapat dihasilkan semula. Hal ini disebabkan oleh faktor materialiti media cetak yang digunakan. Hasil kajian ini mencadangkan bahawa kemampuan kedua-dua media untuk saling melengkapi adalah terhad. Bagi menentukan keberkesanan penggunaan kaedah tersebut dalam penceritaan berbentuk tradisional seseorang penulis perlu mencari dan menggantikan kaedah yang setaraf dengan ketiga-tiga kualiti teks hiper.

**HYPertext COMPLEMENTS PRINT? A STUDY OF NARRATIVE
RECONFIGURATION IN GEOFF RYMAN'S NOVEL 253**

ABSTRACT

Despite the concern that print books will soon become obsolete by the advancement of the digital media, there is an increasing attempt by authors to bring traditional storytelling into new dimensions. This is done by incorporating the hypertext technique in the book form with the hope that a new narrative experience offered by the digital media can similarly be enjoyed in print. However, the effort to blend some of the intrinsic qualities of hypertext within the book's materiality requires careful consideration. This study examines the extent to which the digital medium and the print medium complement each other in storytelling based on Geoff Ryman's hypertext novel 253 which is first written for the computer before being converted into book. To illustrate each medium's capability in telling the same story, the narrative architectures that are represented in both media are analysed and cross-examined through an analytical model that is derived from various interdisciplinary analyses of narratology along with various theoretical perspectives on hypertext. The comparative analysis of the two versions revealed that the book form mainly used the index method as a substitute to hypertext linking. This simple reconfiguration had nevertheless helped maintain the story-level and discourse-level of the narrative. The novel's thematic concerns and several hypertext concepts were also successfully preserved. However, the intrinsic qualities of hypertext namely the connectivity, ease of navigation, and interactivity were unable to be similarly reproduced due to the book's materiality factor. These results suggest that the two media could complement

each other only to a certain level, but for the blending of hypertextuality in book storytelling to be more successful, authors must find an equivalent to the three qualities of hypertext in their writing.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Hyperfiction: A Brief History

The rapid development of computer technology, particularly the networked and programmable media, in the late 20th and 21st century seems to in parallel with the rising interest in electronic literature. Not surprisingly, the capabilities and context provided by the computer technologies have caught the attention of contemporary culture that have come to view them as capable of producing artistic work. This includes literature that begins to migrate into the digital realm. As it evolves, a new literary genre called ‘electronic literature’ or e-lit begins to take shape in order to distinguish itself from other non-digital forms. The Electronic Literature Organization (ELO) defines e-lit as “works with important literary aspects that take advantage of the capabilities and contexts provided by the stand-alone or network computer” (Electronic Literature Organization).

Hence, works that are merely created in digital format (e.g. e-books) or simply undergo the process of digitization (e.g. a completely scanned print novel) do not qualify as e-lit because they do not make use of the technological capabilities in the creation process. From this perspective, e-lit is by definition one that is meant to be created and read in the computer. As e-lit continues to gain attention, diverse expertise from the arts, media, graphic artists, and computer games are brought together to extend the possibilities and the potentials of the new media in storytelling. As a result, broad categories of e-lit are born and among those are kinetic poetry, computer generated poems, interactive fiction, hypertext poetry and one of which this present study is interested in, hypertext fiction or hyperfiction.

The idea of hyperfiction is not new. In fact, it is decades older than the computer when the so-called ‘unconventional’ print novels of that time such as Julio Cortazar’s *Hopscotch* (1966), Jorge Luis Borges’ *The Garden of Forking Path* (1941), and Marc Saporta’s *Composition No. 1* (1961) have tried to experiment with new narrative possibilities within the print constraints. These books are filled with hypertextual and interactive experiments which were sadly not widely known until scholars of e-lit began to pay interest in the literary dimensions of print book (Montfort, 2003). The dim response towards these works was probably because critics hardly considered them as a literary art piece which, among other things, presupposes a single narrative path. With the advent of hypertext that challenges linearity in all sorts of way, these ‘unconventional’ ideas soon became conventional in writing and reading. It has continued to become a widely accepted form of writing but mainly within the digital domain.

Generally, the new media forms have presented the society with a new way of writing and reading literary texts. They usually call forth a non-sequential order of texts whereby readers are given several different options to choose from as they pursue the narratives which may or may not adhere to narrative conventions. Such order is usually present in the hypertext poetry and the hyperfiction genre whereby hyperlink, images, or other computer tools are mainly used in the narrative constructions. Some authors find it exciting to work within the possibilities set free by the computer, principally in terms of its connectivity to open up uncertainty and endless reading. Hyperfiction itself is one genre that has undergone huge expansion in its form along with the increasing computer capabilities. This has led Katherine Hayles to make a distinction of the works created before the year 1995 as “first-generation” works and after as “second-generation” works (Hayles, 2008).

The so-called “first-generation” work includes Michael Joyce’s *afternoon: a story* (1987), Stuart Moulthrop’s *Victory Garden* (1992), and Shelly Jackson’s *Patchwork Girl* (1995). These works are created using a hypertext authoring tool called Storyspace which is highly characterized by linking structures. As the World Wide Web (WWW) developed years later, authors began shifting to this new web authoring tool which promises more elements such as picture, sound, animation, and colours. Works that are created using the multimodal capabilities of the web belong to the “second-generation” and they include Caitlin Fisher’s *These Waves of Girls* (2001), Kate Pullinger’s *Inanimate Alice* (2005-), and *The Unknown* (1999) by Dirk Stratton, Scott Rettberg, and William Gillespie. Even though other multimodal elements are highly used, hyperlinks are still an indistinguishable feature in these works and even in those written after the year 2000. The multimodal elements can just be seen as additional features that could illuminate a hypertextual work.

1.2 New Medium, Old Medium or Both?

Researchers like Murray (1997), Moulthrop (1991), Bolter (1991b) and Landow (2006) believe that the new platform for writing and reading could offer a more exciting narrative experience. The hypertext does not only offer links and non-linearity alone but a wide range of other possibilities that come with it such as collaborations, interactivity, fluidity, and liberty. More often than not, these experiences have always been compared to the range of possibilities that the physical book can only offer. Some theorists have even tried to establish a connection between the new genre and postmodern literary thought. It appears to them that hypertext as ‘the’ future of writing has long been predicted with many of the

possibilities been talked about in poststructuralist theories, and hyperfiction tend to manifest these theories in the context it provides.

Essentially, those who are captivated by the new platform have talked about hypertext as an entirely new poetic art form. First, there is the rhetoric of interconnectivity of texts or ideas which is not bound by any physical dimension. Unlike traditional book whereby storytelling is always restricted to the pages and the definite front and back pages, readers of hypertext are free to wander within the vast space whereby texts are all scattered but interconnected in multiple directions through links. This brings to light the second rhetoric in which readers of hypertext have now a clearly defined role – a role that is claimed to be almost equal to the author. Fundamentally, the printed text presupposes an authorial figure that is seen as the creator of text. The reader will read the way the story is exactly told without other options. However, the hypertext requires the reader to weave through a series of interconnected texts and they can choose which direction they want to go. As they read, they conjure a story of their own without being entirely prescribed to them beforehand.

However, hyperfiction is not everyone's cup of tea. In fact, not many are aware of the genre and the hyperfictional works are almost invisible to readers. Despite an increase in the creative output and discussions of the genre in recent years, it appears that they only involve a number of people who are actually 'working' with hyperfiction such as authors, journalists or academics (Pope, 2006). Attentions from the majority of 'ordinary' readers are scarce and if there is a place where their opinions about hyperfiction could be found, it would seem only in the classroom setting where reading e-lit is compulsory. As much as hyperfiction could offer a new narrative experience, many have reported that such experience is far

from intriguing. The negative response mainly comes from the rupture that hypertext imposes on narrative aspects such as closure, plot structure, and narrative control (Evans & Po, 2007; Miall, 1998, 1999; Petrelli & Wright, 2009).

While the debate over hyperfiction as new emerging aesthetics and its future continues, there is another concern of the physical book being outrun or outsmart by the promises of digital medium. Indeed, on one side of the coin, there is the anxiety or the proclamation of the imminent end of the print (Coover, 1992; Fitzpatrick, 2006; Hayles, 2008). On the other, there are always some new computer technologies being developed by the minute. For Bolter, it is not at all surprising as the print has been argued to have suffered exhaustion in possibilities (Bolter, 1991b). Threats like this, however, have helped the ‘endangered’ medium garner a lot of attention, not in the sense of an increasing number in book reading, but in the introduction of hypertext in the book form in the hope of achieving the new narrative experience offered by digital media (Kendall, 2000). In a challenging environment where any new media can become old in a very short time, Bolter and Grusin argue that, “...print media are seeking to reaffirm their status within our cultures as digital media challenges that status” (Bolter & Grusin, 2002, p. 5).

However, many undue reactions have been raised from this ‘renewed’ attention to the book. Based on the definition of e-lit by ELO, if e-lit works are exclusive to computer technologies, one may think that any attempt to convert any e-lit form to print would only destroy the original creative investment behind the work. However, if the idea of e-lit has already existed in history and existed in print forms such as *Hopscotch* and the like, wouldn’t it make sense to think that the conversion would be possible without necessarily affecting any of its creativities? Then again, the question raised is what exactly separates the two media despite the usual

contestation of the old versus new or the print versus digital? In spite of the distinction of the two media forms and the possible implications from the conversion, many authors have started publishing their work in the two media. Such works include Stephanie Strickland's hypertext poems *True North* (1997), Robert Kendall's hypertext poem *A Life Set for Two* (1996), Lanse Olsen's hyperfiction *10:01* (2005) and one that the present study will be focusing on is Geoff Ryman's hyperfiction *253* (1998). All of the examples except *253* are originally created in print form before being converted to hypertext.

In either way, when a work takes on two different media, the print is usually the one that is frowned upon against the computer technology. As Kendall laments over the publishing of his poem *A Life Set for Two* in print, "much is lost in this printed version" (Kendall, 2000, p. 6). However, proponents of hypertext like Robert Kendall himself, Katherine Hayles or even media moguls and politicians believe that the print medium and digital medium can be complementary. There are some works that are capable of attaining similar achievements either in print or hypertext. Stephanie Strickland's hypertext poem *True North* which won the Ernest Sandeed Poetry Prize takes advantage of both media's specific capabilities to allow readers to explore a wide variety of subjects and gain richer experience. What this means is that, on one hand, not all e-lit works can take many media forms; on the other, print and hypertext can actually complement each other to achieve greater success. However this may have triggered the initiation of this study, the research interest will be more inclined to the middle stance and find out exactly what can and cannot be complemented when a hyperfictional work is told in the print medium and the electronic medium.

1.3 The Novel 253

The novel 253 first appeared as an Internet version in 1996. As a hyperfiction, it won the Philip K. Dick Memorial Award for best novel on the Internet as well as several other recognitions. This success has prompted him to publish a book version or the “print re-mix” of the novel two years later. The novel employs many innovative concepts in its narrative architecture to portray the coincidences and fate of 253 passengers on the London Underground. These passengers have their own personal histories, thoughts about themselves as well as other, but none of them know that the train is about to crash in the journey that only takes approximately seven minutes and thirty seconds. Every passenger is given 253 words long narrative. Reading the novel is unusual. It gives readers the illusion that they are able to tap into everyone’s thoughts. It is an incredible idea but not all thoughts are as amusing as they would think them to be. Readers may well be surprised to realize some of the people are inspiring, some are tragic, some are scary, and some may even share the same fate and be connected in ways beyond their expectations. In order to highlight the theme of coincidence and fate of the passengers in the London Underground, the Internet version mainly uses hyperlinks and its manipulation of textual space to provide a basis for readers to perceive the connections. Readers jump from one passenger to another and one car to another in any direction by simply clicking on the embedded hyperlinks. The print version, however, uses indexing as an alternative to hyperlinks within the linearly numbered bound pages.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Based on the responses and reviews gathered from online reviews and research papers, there seems to be a mixed opinion about the hypertext and print versions of 253. There is a group of readers from the online reviews who are impressed with both versions of 253 but another seems to think that the conversion has resulted in the loss of much of its pleasure. Besides readers, authors of electronic literature who have had experiences with hypertext writing also claim that the print and hypertext can coexist in storytelling. From the readers' positive responses, one may essentially assume that both print and hypertext can indeed complement each other in telling the same story. However, the negative responses show that such an observation that both media are complementary can only be made superficially. The claim that the two media are complementary based on just a simple substitution of hypertextuality in the conversion process (as in the case of 253) or that readers are equally pleased with both versions is perhaps too ambitious. As a matter of fact, the substitution is a clear indication that there would be some elements that cannot exist in print and it is believed that this will result in different narrative appreciation. But what truly counts as complementing media anyway?

According to Ryan, "the abstract cognitive structure we call narrative is such that it can be called to mind by many different media, but each medium has different expressive resources and will therefore produce a different concrete manifestation of this general structure" (Ryan, 2002, p. 594). Hence, it is possible to say that not all media will produce the same narrative (there are plot types or characters types that can best be told in certain medium, e.g. long narrative can be best told in book form) but if they can, it is most certainly not based on a mere hyperlink and index substitution. To be able to say that both media are complementary, the media

involved should be able to represent the same story at the same time preserving the material qualities that are used in the storytelling process in the original medium. In doing so, the conversion process will need to consider the suitability of a story in a particular medium. It may not necessarily be similar in form but at least the original story and qualities in the storytelling process are able to be maintained in a different medium.

In the case of 253 which is mainly constructed of hyperlinks, converting the entire structure to the print form could involve some levels of reconfigurations of the hypertext narrative to the print medium specific features. Two aspects of reconfigurations should be kept in mind in the complementation; the narrative structure of the story and also the nature of the media involved in the narrative transfer. Several research papers have directed to the issue of complementation of the novel 253 in both media forms. However, the issue has been addressed quite superficially. Others have approached the novel from various perspectives such as psychology and technical writing. A thorough examination of the issue from both the narrative structure and the media has not been conducted. Therefore, before such unwarranted conclusion that the print and hypertext can complement each other is made, it is crucial that the extent to which these two versions of a hyperfictional piece can go side by side is analysed.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the extent to which the print and the electronic media can complement each other in storytelling based on the narrative reconfiguration of the novel 253. Several research objectives are formulated in order to achieve the purpose. The objectives are:

- i. To examine the materialities of the novel 253 in the two media forms.
- ii. To investigate the narrative architectures of the novel in the two different media forms.
- iii. To analyse and assess comparatively the complementing elements of the novel 253 in the two media forms.

It is hoped that the results obtained from these examinations will allow readers and writers to have a better understanding of the relationship between the two media forms as well as the extent to which each medium can emulate one another in the storytelling process.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The topic of media complementation is not a specific branch of study in the field of literature but one that can be related to is information technology (e.g. the study of cross-media news content to provide users with complementary information by Ma, Nadamoto, & Tanaka, 2006). In the art, it has close resemblance with the term *mixed-media* that describes “the techniques and materials used to create collage artwork. [It] combines paint, ink, fragments of paper and fabric, along with other art supplies and fusible adhesives, all layered together to create a work of art” (Meier, 2009, p. 6). The term *multimedia* can also be evoked in relation to media complementation but it is normally referred to the combination of text, graphics (including drawings and pictures), animation, sound, other computer programs, and moving pictures in a computer system (Thomas, 1992). For the purpose of the study, I wish not to employ the term to refer to the combination of the computer and book from technological perspective, per se, but to the blending of their intrinsic qualities

(e.g. hypertextuality or interactivity) in the narrative constructions within the medium's materiality. Note that the scope of the study has close affinity with literary adaptation which involves the adapting of a literary work to a different genre or to another medium. However, the focus of the present study will be given to the narrative aspects of a hyperfiction and also the aspects that are reconfigured as a result of the medium change based on Geoff Ryman's hyperfiction 253 which is published in two media forms; first on the Internet and then book.

1.7 Significance of the Study

A look into the transformative changes in the literary narrativity that have occurred in the print form under the influence of new media technology is crucial. As it continues to occur, between literature and new media principally the hypertext, the study could find answers to the issues much debated today; "How have computer technologies come to redefine our literary traditions?" and consequently "How have computer technologies reconfigure the relations between authors and readers or human and intelligent machines?" or "How will digital culture portend the print literature and the future of writing?"

While these questions may sound overly enthusiastic, they cannot be answered without an exploration of how these two traditions collide, converge, and cooperate with each other's peculiarities in order or enhance each other's limitations. This study will also allow authors to examine more deeply the way traditional literary writings could profit from the various communicative tools developed by the computer technologies. As such, authors who wish to combine the two traditions could refashion the traditional conceptions of narrative into new heights in order to provide a more refreshing experience for readers.

1.8 Review of Related Literature

Ryman is the author of many well-known science-fiction novels such as “The Warrior Who Carried Life” (1986), “The Child Garden” (1989), and “Was” (1991). His novel *253*, however, is an exception to this genre. The novel *253* illustrates Ryman’s experimentation with hypertextuality in a time when hyperfiction flourishes. Written first as an Internet novel embracing the networked media, its popularity has somehow converted it to the print novel. It has since garnered many analyses from scholars from various disciplines. Most of the analyses do not provide a comprehensive discussion on the issue of complementation nor the possible narrative reconfiguration of the novel when the issue is discussed. However, their insights could offer a good foundation for the purpose of the study.

One notable analysis of the work comes from Richard Saint-Gelais & Rene Audet in their essay entitled “Underground Lies: Revisiting Narrative in Hyperfiction” (Saint-Gelais & Audet, 2003). In their study of the novel’s narrative style, they argue that hyperfictions cannot always be reduced to hypernarratives – that is works that offer multiple narratives or reading possibilities whereby readers simply reconstruct their own way through the texts. Such reading will lead to the problems of orientation that is usually associated with hypertextual reading. Using the Internet versions as their case study, they illustrate that each page in the novel constitutes its own sense of story which does not easily come together to form even a small continuous piece of narrative. Even though each page contains links to another, following these links do not necessarily weave up a plot, much less a complete narrative whole. The experience of reading the novel is fragmented whereby readers need to constantly challenge themselves to fill the narrative gaps between each page. As result, an attempt to build up the world behind *253* may or may not be successful.

The essay provides a good examination of how certain narrative constructions that completely defy conventionality in hyperfiction could disrupt reading pleasures.

In “On must be calm and laugh”, JanVan Looy offers another narrative analysis of the Internet version in terms of its representation of modernity through the thoughts of two hundred and fifty three people in the London subway (Looy, 2003). Contrary to Saint-Gelais & Rene Audet’s argument, he maintains that although the story requires a lot of linkings between the passengers, the author somehow succeeded in providing reading enjoyment in the new medium. In his analysis, Looy identifies the careful borrowing of peculiarity of Internet medium in creating a navigational network as one reason the novel is able to reduce cognitive overload. While many fictions or hyperfictions lay out their thematic concerns on the subject, Ryman’s *253* based his thematic construction upon the links which readers could easily appreciate.

Being the two most comprehensive studies to the novel on reading, it is no surprise that the issue of hypertext reading has become their central concerns as hypertextuality has always been associated with reading disorientation whether in informational text or literary texts (Dobson & Miall, 1998, 2001; Landow & Kahn, 1993; McDonald & Stevenson, 1996; Petrelli & Wright, 2009; Pope, 2006). It is also a concern for Ralf Schneider as he tackles the issue of potential disorientation through the lack of coherence in the Internet version of *253* (Schneider, 2005). Although readers of hypertext are constantly faced with uncertainties due to the multiple linking of different pages, Schneider relates that reading the novel does not provide disorientation due to several reasons. Firstly, there is the idea of “slice-of-life” short story which only focuses on just a glimpse of an event and the people involved in it. Secondly, the use of present tense throughout the novel has allowed

the reader to grasp the story's sense of immediacy and simultaneity. And thirdly, the situation inside the train in which people can move very little has liberated the author from locking into any sort of coherent chronology. Hence, disorientation will not occur because the settings and the situations of the story are developed in a way that readers will not attempt to interpret them through temporal coherency between pages.

If there is a need to make a conclusion here, it is perhaps agreeable that Ryman clearly understands his materials. However, back to the issue, if there is no coherence in the storytelling process readers might miss the centrality of the story. As indicated by Susan Knabe and Wendy Gay Pearson in their essay entitled "Introduction: Mundane Science Fiction, Harm and Healing the World" (Knabe & Pearson, 2008), the implication of hypertext on the story is that characters often appear and disappear within the text. In such lack of coherence, there is no guarantee that readers will encounter certain important characters. In their analysis of the paper-based and electronic version of 253, they identify that one of the characters, Anne Frank, who underscores the end of the story in the print form, is greatly undermined in the hypertext. The issue of linearity to perceive the important message in the narrative development is brought into question.

Knabe and Pearson's study of the novel mainly centers on the psychoanalytic construct behind the novel's narrative in which Anne Frank's character is seen as a symbol to the public celebration of loss. A similar study has also been conducted by Eric Sonstroem with the title "Repetition and the Work of Hypertextual Mourning: Ryman's 253 and the NAMES Project AIDS Quilt" (2004, cited in Knabe & Pearson, 2008) in which he interrogates the way the formal elements and the content of the novel facilitate mourning. Such an interest in the

subject is most probably triggered by Ryman's personal reaction to the death of his best friends, "253 happens on January 11th 1995, which is the day I learned my best friend was dying of AIDS" (why.htm).

The five studies mentioned above clearly exemplify that hypertext is capable of presenting a unique yet powerful way of storytelling in new media ecology. Nevertheless, these studies mainly concentrate on one version of the novel. If there is any study that compares the two versions, it would be Robert Kendall's essay discussing the possibility of media complementation (one that is closest to the present study) entitled "*Hypertext: Foe to Print?*" (Kendall, 2000). Being a fan of hypertext and have had experiences with hypertextual production, Kendall agrees that print works and hypertexts can coexist harmoniously. However, he also asserts that some difficulties will arise when hypertext is converted to print, especially if it involves incarnating the same work. Like Ryan, Kendall also argues that the success in conversion depends on the nature of the material being used and upon the author's level of skills in tailoring the work to the peculiarities of the new medium where necessary, as in the adaptation of a novel for the stage or the screen.

A somewhat similar project is echoed in Licia Calvi's "*Text and Hypertext: Always a binary Relationship?*" (Calvi, 2000). Taking 253 as a case study, the article attempts to explore the relationship between a paper-based text and hypertext by asking if one text can be "transliterated" into the other without affecting the content. While the study lingers around the perspective of text encoding, she nevertheless argues that the content of 253 may not be altered but what is at stake in the transliteration is the creativity (Calvi, 2000). Creativity is lost when the potentials of hypertextual narrative of the story are not fully exploited in print. Hence, in order to deliver a story using two instantiations without losing its conceptual structure and

semantics, the author must find equivalence between the techniques and devices used in the two media.

Based on the studies conducted on the novel 253, the focus has mainly been given on the issue of reading from the cognitive and psychoanalytical point of view which does not provide much insight to the issue of complementation or narrative reconfiguration from one medium to another. Even though the two latter studies have provided a comparative analysis of the two versions, they do not provide a complete account of the questions at hand. Kendall mainly approached this issue thematically on the basis of his own experiences as a poet. Meanwhile, Calvi probed into the question from the structural and technical organization of text that is involved when a paper-based work is represented in hypertext (the order of the novel's mode of production that she seems confused with) but not from literary narrative standpoint. Hence, this study will differ from the previous ones in terms of a more comprehensive examination of the narrative reconfigurations of the novel 253 that are involved in the conversion.

1.9 Research Methodology

The analysis of narrative itself has seen an exponential growth of cross-disciplinary research. Generally, the objectives of this present study will be achieved mainly through a textual analysis that involves the examination of the novel's narrative techniques in the two media forms. This is done by setting up an analytical model deriving from various interdisciplinary analyses of both primary and secondary literature on narratology and both the print and electronic media characteristics through an extensive library research. This model will then be tested in the close reading of the novel 253 in the two media forms along with various

theoretical approaches. Since this present study focuses on the media complementation between the print and the hypertext in storytelling, the model itself will be restricted to two main areas of interest namely the narrative as well as the materiality of the print medium and hypertext medium. The study of narrative or narratology is an evolving interdisciplinary field which represents both the theory and the narrative structure itself. This study, however, does not intend to formulate a new narratological model but to apply its features of this area in the narrative analysis of the novel 253 where applicable. Apart from narrative, the nature of the two media where the novel's text is represented will be also looked at. Focus will be given to each medium's distinctive material component as well as its connotations of writing and reading.

1.10 Organisation of the Thesis

The study will be divided into six chapters in which each section is systematically organized to answer the issues at hand. Chapter one provides the background of this study and chapter two describes the changing theoretical perspectives of text in relation to various media. This chapter also deals with the important aspects of narrative as well as of media which will be used as the basis for the analytical model. Chapter three provides a comprehensive analysis and an understanding of both the print and the digital medium in general aspects which will be useful in the analysis of the novel in specific.

In chapter four, the narrative architecture of the novel 253 in the Internet form is thoroughly examined before the book form is dealt with in chapter five. In this chapter, the comparative analysis of the novel 253 in both versions as well as the comparative assessments based on the similarities or differences that they may have

are carried out. Some online reviews of the novels in both versions as supplementary materials to the comparative analysis are also included in this chapter. Chapter six, which is the final, provides a summary, a conclusion, some recommendations for further study as well as research contributions.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Print stays itself; electronic text replaces itself. If with the book we are always printing—always opening another text unreasonably composed of the same gestures—with electronic text we are always painting, each screen unreasonably washing away what was and replacing it with itself.

(Joyce, 1996, p. 232)

Print stays itself, electronic text replaces itself. Electronic text is as apt to evolve before it forms, as apt to dissolve before it finishes.

(Joyce, 2001, p. 14)

The first sentence in both statements above is perhaps one of Joyce's favourite lines as he keeps repeating it in two of his books discussing the issues of hypertext technology. As the author of the widely examined hyperfiction *afternoon: a story*, Joyce's books have provided not only an understanding of the communication technologies that are constantly evolving in the network cultures, but also offered a view of how the two media – the print and the computer, work distinctively in its own affordances. The two statements also, in a way, highlight several historical occasions that have been taking place since the inception of new media technologies – the cultural and technological shift from modern to postmodern, analogue to digital and one of which is central to the present study, text to hypertext. For the purpose of the research, it is crucial that these changing theoretical perspectives be understood as the criticisms could lend themselves as a

framework to understand the media in study and to account for the development of narrative of the novel in the two media forms. Hence, this chapter intends to provide a brief examination of the shift in intellectual development from structuralism to poststructuralism in which certain themes and arguments behind these critical theories are argued to resemble the nature of hypertext. Several concepts highlighting the association between the conceptions of text in critical theories and hypertext are discussed. This chapter ends with a discussion of narrative and an analysis of media text which constitute the analytical models for the analysis of the novel 253 in both forms.

2.2 Poststructuralism and New Media

Behind these changing cultural phenomena, society has witnessed a period where the world has moved away from modernism to postmodernism. Modernism refers to a period in the early 20th century where modern thoughts and practices took over traditional culture of the 19th century in various aspects such as economy, politics, social, arts as well as literature. Meanwhile, postmodernism can be seen as a continuation of the modernist movement. In terms of economic development, the former period is normally based more upon economic production or industrialisation but the postmodern society is shaped and driven, not by industrial manufacturing but information technologies, innovation, and services as part of globalization process and increased technological automation (Fuchs, 2009). Consequently, the economic transition brings with it enormous changes to our culture, art, and politics. These changes have influenced the way media theorists understand these commodities as a by-product of a rapidly developing technology and also the way they function in society.

Earlier media analysts argue that the media technologies of the modernist period have imposed an ideological meaning in which society is led to believe that media texts have only one possible interpretation, one way of seeing the world, or one absolute meaning. These texts help define human consciousness and the world the society is living in (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). However, the articulation of such ideological domination through media texts has conditioned the audience into becoming a naive and passive consumer. The society is not only powerless in the face of various oppressive media technologies; they are also offered a picture of a homogenized culture.

Croteau & Hoynes (2003) also states that the focus of the ideological analyses of the cultural products at the time has primarily been the content of the messages. These products are the primary object where structuralism mostly draws its arguments from. Originated from the French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who was interested in the structures underlying all languages, structuralism argues that the social structures are themselves object or events that contain meanings or signs (Tredinnick, 2007). These signs which form the basic element for language and meanings have always been explained with reference to their signs. Saussure divided the sign into two parts; the 'signifier' (image, sound or object) and the 'signified' (the concept it represents). These parts are closely related and meanings are generated in relation of the two. For example, a signifier 'tree' should always refer to a signified 'woody perennial plant', but not something else. This way of deriving meaning can also be understood through oppositions, or binary pairs such as tree vs. shrub or tree vs. animal. Saussure continued to argue that all signs or meaning are constructed culturally and ideologically mediated through the mass media texts. They

are able to position society in a way that their representations are taken to be reflections of everyday reality (Chandler, 2002).

However, media analysis gradually began to shift away from the idea that a media text could only represent one ideological meaning. This shift gave rise to postmodernism as a reaction and rejection to the modernist assumption of a certain and universal reality. Ideology, it is argued, is far more complex and is capable of becoming polysemic. This has become one of the central arguments in poststructuralism which also grew out from the reaction against the traditional search for a true meaning. Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Julia Kristeva were among those who rejected the structuralist idea of universal reality and stressed on the plurality of signification (Allen, 2000). Instead of focusing on the way a text is constructed, these contemporary theoreticians placed heavy emphasis on the role of the audience or reader in the production of meaning. Kristeva, in particular, argues that texts are presented in such a way that positions readers as the interpreter of its meaning (Allen, 2000). Derrida, with his deconstruction thinking, argued that a text is itself an endless stream of signifiers and a word does not have any final meaning (Derrida, 1976). For Derrida, texts exhibit 'différance' or consist of multiple interpretations in which true meaning is impossible to pin down.

As these arguments suggest, postmodernism foregrounds a profound cultural movement in which modernist approaches of the world and the conception of the passive audience are greatly challenged. This shift in cultural perspective has influenced many fields including literary criticism in which the French literary theorist Roland Barthes explored the notion of author and authority of a literary text. In one of his well-known essays, Barthes eloquently announced "the death of the author" by arguing that meanings in a literary text do not come from the author but

they come into existence through its language (Barthes, 1977). For him, the author is merely a ‘scriptor’ who does not produce a single original meaning but his/her text is a mixture of text drawn from numerous writings or traditions. Moreover, whatever meaning a text contains resides in the way readers consume it because they are the ones a text is written to.

However, a text in Barthes’s sense can be readerly and writerly. A writerly text positions readers as an active constructor of meanings but a readerly text assumes passive readers whereby the text gears them towards one meaning. Michel Foucault somewhat shares Barthes’s premise on the role of language. For Foucault, a text does not revolve around the author’s intended meaning. Its meaning is defined in terms of multiple authors and readers (Allen, 2000). However, Foucault disagrees on the total absence of an author. He acknowledged the existence of an author on the basis of the ‘author function’ (Foucault, 1994). The ‘author function’ asserts that an author only constitutes a part of a written work which includes the production, circulation, classification, and consumption of text. The author only sets out to regularise discourse and knowledge but not the entire interpretive process.

From this brief overview, it is clear that poststructuralism originated in the reaction against the structuralist interpretive tradition. Their criticisms mainly center on themes like the text meanings, text construction, and the role of author and reader. Whatever the argument is, the intellectual development along the years until 1970s has always revolved around the confinement of print text (Bolter, 2004; Lister, Dovey, Giddings, Grant, & Kelly, 2003). It is not until the development in computer technologies in the 1980s that we began to witness a heavy examination of these new media forms by scholars like George Landow, who were fascinated to see, among other things, “an almost embarrassingly literal embodiment” of theory and

technology (Landow, 2006, p. 52). In fact, Landow was among the first hypertext theorists to lay claim that poststructuralist notions of text propounded by Kristeva, Derrida, Barthes and Foucault could now be tested and realized in one of the computer writing techniques known as hypertext. In the years that followed as hypertext began to reach wider audience, poststructuralism was appropriated as a framework to understand hypertext and the formation of its theory, but the theory has in turn given new light and extended our understanding of poststructuralism.

2.3 Hypertext and Critical Theory

The idea of a hypertext system was first introduced by Vannevar Bush in 1945 with his vision of an efficient information retrieval device called Memex. As a vision that has revolutionized human thoughts, the idea was later developed and realized by Ted Nelson and Douglas Engelbart in 1965 from whom the term “hypertext” was coined (Landow, 2006). Ted’s notion of hypertext is understood by “non-sequential writing – text that branches and allows choices to the reader, best read at an interactive screen ... this is a series of text chunks connected by links which offer reader different pathways” (Landow, 2006, pp. 2-3). The term is defined in many ways since by other media theorists.

A hypertext is like a printed book that the author has attacked with a pair of scissors and cut into convenient verbal sizes. The difference is that the electronic hypertext does not simply dissolve into a disordered heap, because the author also defines a scheme of electronic connections to indicate relationships among the slips. (Bolter, 1991b, p. 35)

Hypertext is non-sequential; there is no single order that determines the sequence in which the text is to be read. [It] presents several different options to the readers, and the individual reader determines which of them to follow at the time of reading the text. This means that the author of the text has set up a number of alternatives for readers to explore rather than a single stream of information. (Nielsen, 1995, pp. 1-2)